

Vote 1: Kerry for Pope

by Kerry Cue

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The College of Cardinals
Apostolic Palace
Vatican City State 00120

Dear Your Graces,

I believe a vacancy is about to arise in your esteemed organisation and I forthwith put myself forward for consideration for the position of Pope for the 21st Century.

My credentials for the position are extensive. I have read *The Da Vinci Code*. So I'm fully aware of the lunatic nature of albino monk assassins and the dangers of carrying anti-matter in the papal helicopter (or was that *Demons and Angels*) and I've seen all the Godfather films, which, as you know, involve influential catholics.

On a personal level, I was baptised at St Kevin's Parish Church, went to the parish school and attended so many funerals by the age of 11 the smell of incense terrifies me as I think I must be dead. Mass was in Latin although the priest's sermon was often in a mashed-up Irish-accented English as in 'ut'd be moony noo at'd be nided'. Years later the penny dropped. OMG, he was asking for money. I want you to know that I'm multi-collection-plate-lingual now.

I know my school catechism by heart (Do you believe in God? I believe in God the Father almighty creator of Heaven and earth) and the Apostle's Creed (I believe in God the Father almighty creator of Heaven and earth ... Ah, bit of overlap there). I can also mumble an extensive range of hymns (Faith of our fathers! Holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!) I suspect, however, that 'Faith of our fathers, living still/In spite of dungeon, fire and sword' might need a little update.

In Grade 2 I studied the pictorial Book of Martyrs. The graphic pictures included St Sebastian at the stake stuck with arrows and spurting blood and

John the Baptist with his head on a silver platter with, I swear, a piece of parsley. To be honest, it put me off the career path of martyr. I think I'm more suited to Pope. The gold jewelry, the yards of silk, the sweet slippers, the adorable capes along with 1.5 million followers on Twitter. Celebrities would die for that PR.

I wrote JMJ (Jesus, Mary and Joseph) at the top of every work page but still got answers wrong. No miracles there. We had bible colouring books. (Noah can be purple if you want!) and we coloured in the Pope's Insignia of keys and tiara (The Pope wears a tiara! Who knew?) I know how to pray, although, to be honest; my family holds the land speed record for saying the Hail Mary. And eventually I studied Latin roots. Cent(ury). Mort(uary). Idiot(a). See, even Jesus had to deal with idiots back in the day.

I'm up to speed with techno-papal stuff such as the Catholic Droid App(Bible Stories etc), Divine Office with prayers for the office like 'Have mercy on us, Lord!' and the Confession App with auto 'cheat sheet'. So you can cheat in confession. Really? Perhaps, Dan Brown's new book could be *Angels and Apps*.

Being a married female with adult children may be a hurdle, but I'm squeaky clean! No image problems there. Besides you're always shifting the ecclesiastical goal posts. St Christopher was the patron saint of lost things then you defrocked him. Once eating a meat pie on Friday sent you to hell now it just gives you indigestion. I wouldn't be the first female pope. Some say Pope Joan did a good job until you lot stoned her to death. Fast-tracking me to Pope could rebalance 2,000 years of male domination.

As Her Holiness, I'd assume the name Pope Maria taken from *The Sound of Music*. As a virgin with 7 children, Maria is an ideal role model. Although 'Pope' is papa in Latin, I'll stick with tradition. You're not ready for a pontiff named Mama Maria yet. My modernisation program would involve rewriting the 10 Commandments (Thou shalt not kill. This includes you too America.), making St Peter's Basilica more homely (a few bean bags should do the trick), admitting fallibility (Church numbers are way down. Something's wrong) and inviting women to be priests to stop the priesthood turning into an exclusive club of celibate, frock-wearing geriatrics.

My attendance at mass has dropped off, well, permanently of late. When I last fronted a mass and saw the communion wafers and wine I thought 'a little camembert would be nice'. Obviously, I need a grace upgrade. But I do know Christ's teachings. Jesus never said 'go and grab the best real estate and build monuments to the glory of architecture using cheap labour'. Nor did he say, 'fill my churches with gold and precious stones looted from native people's in pagan dominions'. He never said 'argue among yourselves over the wording of the bible, so you splinter into fractious and violent sects' although 'transubstantiation' is a big word. But it's not in the bible. Christ never commanded the crusades, the Inquisition or the Irish squabbles so we can only assume that there have been leadership problems for about, say, 2,000 years.

Mostly, however, I want to produce a kinder, gentler, more humble and less judgmental leadership with less pomp and ceremony and more care for the poor, the sick and the neglected. Something much closer to Christ's teachings. Something, I think, more like the Salvos. And I'd be the first Pope to whip it up with the trombone.

Yours Faithfully, KC