

New pope will rise or fall by his own choices

They're not about to cut him any slack. Pollsters, especially and sadly, in this country are testing the waters of the Catholic populace as it relates to the new pope. Pope Benedict XVI was barely into his early hours as the leader of the Catholic world when the numbers started rolling in, numbers that are, to any sane mind, faulty at best. They supposedly took a look at U.S. Catholics. They didn't explain what they defined as Catholic. Was it those who faithfully live daily the teachings and respect the traditions of the church? Those who faithfully participate in the mass on the weekends? Those who proclaim the title but rarely demonstrate any personal attachment? Those who moan and groan because the expectations of the religion might be in conflict with their acceptance of situations that would merit an out-of-bounds whistle if this were a game?

Such early polling serves no notable purpose other than giving fodder to those who thrive on negativity of any significant development. The results cannot be measured with any degree of credibility.

Let the man serve. Study his performance. Pay close attention to what he says and how he puts his words into action. Then, and only then, test the waters of opinion of those who occupy the pews in the Catholic world's churches.

The polls being taken these few hours after Cardinal Ratzinger's election, are showing, primarily, how Catholics graded the 26-year tenure of the beloved Pope John Paul II. Because of the closeness of John Paul II and then-Cardinal Ratzinger there is a feeling by some that the new pope will simply continue the drum beat set by his predecessor. Thus the results of this early polling.

None of us knows what twists and turns the life of the Catholic will take under the rule of Pope Benedict XVI. Some experts see no change. This writer, however, is of the opinion that Pope Benedict XVI will provide some surprises as he makes his way along the papal highway.

Each pope is his own person. Granted, they each may look at the legacy of those who have gone before them, but they each have their own vision, their own mission. Only time will provide us with what the new pope will expect of his flock.

Look for Pope Benedict XVI to travel the globe like Pope John Paul II. Look for him to reach out to all mankind. Look for him to be a force in gathering all of God's children under the spiritual tent, out of the storms of everyday life.

His work will be difficult. And despite his age - 78 - he will muster the energies and spiritual strength needed to carry on.

As he reaches out to those of you who are not of his faith, reach back in the form of a prayer. He can use that support.

"Habemus papam" - "we have a pope."

— Tom Dreiling

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Things are looking up at the homestead

Things are looking up at the new house. Monday we were getting things ready for the guys to come to refinish the floors. After dinner I ran out of things to do so I got to thinking.

I get some really good ideas — if you don't believe me ask the hubby or Josh, the carpenter.

First, they sent me off to get some paint for the front door. The one I am not too fond of. At the store the gal suggested a paint technique to make the door look like wood grain. I love it.

Then I got a great idea for finishing the inside of the built-in china hutch.

Like I say, the hubby and Josh were just speechless at my brilliance, I could tell by how they rolled their eyes.

I found something interesting while working on the china hutch — there is a secret compartment in it. I could not get into a position to look down there but I am optimistic that's where the family fortune is hidden.

Of course, on Tuesday reality set in.

The floor guys showed up and had to give an opinion, "You got a lot of work here yet."

I was going to ask them to check out the secret compartment in the hutch and give them a percentage until that remark.

They had to replace some flooring and guess what? The hubby ended up using the chain saw. Much to his chagrin he hit two nails. I guess that really wreaks havoc on a chain saw. And he just had the blade sharpened.

Working on the house brings out the personality differences. The hubby plans.

Back Home
Nancy Hagman



Then he plans some more. He might go shopping for something he needs. Then he plans some more. The day I think we are actually going to do some work he collects his materials. Then he rethinks his plan. He probably has to go shopping again.

By then the day is over and we have to wait another month until the moon is in the right phase.

I am very goal oriented. Once I get started I just want to get done. Sometimes it doesn't even matter to me how the project ends up looking. I'm ready to move on to something else.

The longer we live together the worse it gets. It makes him more cautious about starting anything and me more frustrated about the things that aren't done.

My friend Claudia and I recently did a little sewing project together. The instructions did not make much sense. So we decided we could do better and, basically, disregarded them.

Later, Claudia was trying to explain our difficulties to her daughter. (By the way we have long since decided it is no coincidence this child's initials are M.S. just like Martha Stewart.) Anyhow, M.S.

wanted to know why we didn't follow the directions.

It's just so hard to follow directions when you are a certain age and think you know better, Claudia tried to explain.

I know it sounds arrogant but it's true. Honestly, I never had much patience and it isn't getting better with age.

There is a theory of management called "Ready, Fire, Aim". The idea being if you have ten ideas you put them all out there at once. Then you see which one works and "aim" it to be on target.

This is the opposite of "Ready, Aim, Fire" where a committee spends endless hours studying things. If they can ever come to a consensus they probably choose the wrong idea to "fire" with and have to start over.

My mom used to say, "For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, not a committee."

Somehow it all works out in the end though.

I wasn't too fond of the door but now I am happy. The husband has been upset by the planned height of the kitchen bar counter for months but when Josh finally installed it he was just crazy about it. He told me three times how much he liked it before I even got to see it.

This is historic — a man admits he was wrong.

Even more historic, Nancy admits she was wrong.

Just don't ask me to serve on a committee to study anything and we will get along great.

Christians are known by actions

My husband made an interesting comment/observation the other day. He said, "One should not call themselves Christian. The word "Christian" should be a superlative and should be bestowed on someone by others."

As I thought about it I had to agree.

One can claim to be Jehovah's Witness, Catholic, Assembly of God, Baptist or announce they go to the Christian Church, but the designation of being a Christian is an observed trait.

It is evident in how we live, not by what we profess. We live as followers of Christ. A trait others identify by our actions. We don't call ourselves beautiful, or honest. Others see those things in our appearance or our behavior.

I recently attended a conference in St. Louis with many professed "Christian" people.

One of my co-workers from Phillipsburg attended with me. She is a woman I have come to deeply admire although many of our beliefs are very different.

If asked she would tell you by way of faith she is a "Christian", but she doesn't have to announce it, it is evident in her actions and her words. She possesses a peacefulness in knowing her faith.

I admire her because she realizes she/we don't have all the answers. It isn't a matter of "proving" the correctness of what she believes, it is important to her to

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



live her faith at her level, in her own life and realize she can't know the answers for all. What she can and does do is offer up prayers for others and work on her own life.

She doesn't attack others who disagree with her beliefs. She doesn't have to. She is confident in her God, her faith, her beliefs and herself.

We do our best to interpret what we

believe is God's will, but all of us are busy trying to understand what that means in our lives. Perhaps if and when we reach the point, where there is no room for discussion, no patience for listening, perhaps that is when our will has entered the picture and God is fading from the scene.

It is hard to see "God" in the name-calling, the anger and bitterness of much of what takes place in our world. As we interact with others, watch television, read the newspapers, it is sometimes hard to "be still and know", but not impossible as is evident in my friend.

I used to tell the kids those who tell you the most about their accomplishments or their goodness are trying to convince themselves.

What is it the song says? "They will know we are Christians by our love."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Man feels immigrants are a problem

To the Editor:

It's time we stop pandering to illegal Mexicans and allowing them to be a burden on American taxpayers. In-state tuition is the last straw. They're not only not in-state, they're not even in-country!

These people make no effort to learn our language, adopt our culture or assimilate

into our society. They are here to balkanize our country. If they acted like this in their own country, they would probably disappear and never be heard from again.

Ship them back and let them try it.

R.W. Yeager
Norton