

TELL US MORE, AL

A reporter for the *New York Times* recently joined Al Gore at an informal dinner party in a New York hotel. Unaccompanied by his aides, the vice president opened up a bit, admitting that he has been guilty of pandering to Catholics. Pandering, of course, is hardly a distinguishing characteristic for a politician. But what was revealing about Gore was his favorable comment about Garry Wills, author of a vicious attack on the Catholic Church.

Here is how Melinda Henneberger put it: "He [Gore] expressed interest in Garry Wills's new book, 'Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit,' and because it is critical of the Catholic Church, said, laughing, 'I guess I won't be able to praise his work any more with any degree of political safety.'"

We only wish Al had told us more. For example, what exactly is it about the new book by Wills that Al is so fond of? Could it be the following: "Wills charges that the Catholic Church exists in a system of lies, falsifications, and misrepresentation meant to prop up papal authority." Or maybe it was this: "Wills is accusing the Church of conscious deception in fundamental beliefs. The Church knows these teachings are wrong, Wills charges, but they are taught anyway." These are two conclusions that Bob Lockwood came to when he reviewed *Papal Sins*. It would be instructive to know if this is the kind of stuff that interests Al.

Suspending judgment of Wills' work for minute, it would be fascinating to know whether Al's intrigue with the alleged dark side of Catholic Church extends to other religions as well? Or is it just his interest in books that offer dirt on Catholicism? Tell us more, Al.