

# COMMENT FROM ROME ...Is Pope Paul Getting Too Much Exposure?

By ROBERT R. HOLTON

Courier-Journal  
Special Correspondent

Vatican City — There is a growing conviction among many Church leaders here that Pope Paul has become a victim of too much exposure.

Eight trips abroad in five years, they say, has dimmed the charisma of both the Pope as a man and the Pope as the most powerful religious leader in the world today.

It is a matter of record that in his last three trips — to Bogota, Colombia; Geneva, Switzerland; and Uganda, Africa — the pontiff fell embarrassingly short of attracting the crowds forecast.

They also claim that the lessening of his personal and positional magnetism can be seen in the lack of emotional response he created in Colombia and Switzerland.

His recent trip to Kampala, Uganda, they concede, stirred up a strong emotional outpouring there.

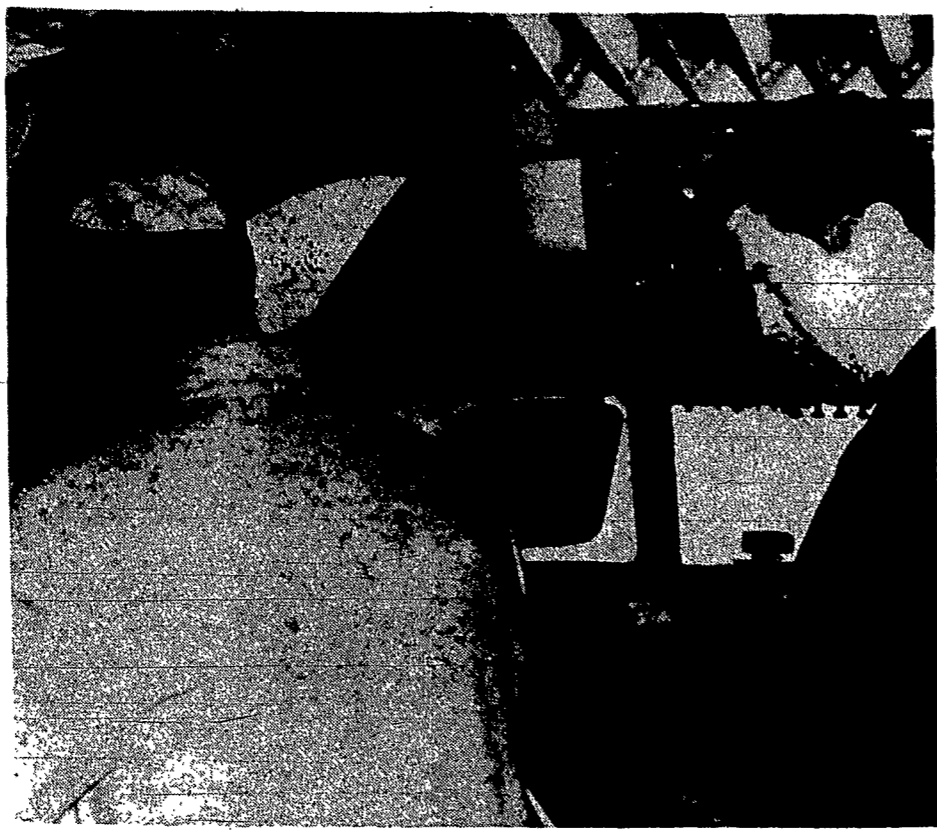
But they argue that the outpouring was far below what it could have been among a largely uneducated and primitively emotional people.

Added to this, they note the small amount of time, money and energy the mass media throughout the world spent on his most recent trips as compared with his earlier jaunts to India, the Holy Land and Turkey.

During his 48-hour trip to Uganda, he competed with President Nixon for the banner headlines and lead spots on radio and television newscasts. In America, and many other Western countries, Mr. Nixon won hands down.

During his recent pilgrimage into rock-ribbed Protestant Switzerland, the pontiff drew as much outside public attention for the numerically small and emotionally thin receptions he received at various functions there as for the historic implications of his visit to the headquarters of the World Council of Churches.

Many Church leaders argue that the Pope did far better than ex-



Pope Paul visits cockpit of plane he took on one of his trips. Pontiff sees it his duty to make use of the available modern means of transport to see the people of the world. Some in Vatican think he has overdone it.

pected in attracting crowds and charging them emotionally by his presence.

But a comparison of official Vatican and other crowd forecasts puts this contention in doubt. So do the reports of professional journalists and others who watched as the spiritual leader of the world's half-billion Roman Catholics was driven for miles through pitifully thin and somber scatterings.

In Bogota, even the Vatican had to admit that it miscalculated badly in claiming half a million peasants would gather in a field there to greet their Pope. Government officials contend that less than 50,000 showed up. To those on the scene, even that figure seemed high.

Eight trips abroad in five years is quite a bit of exposure for any leader. However, papal advisors felt at first that the Pope could take such intensive exposure and still not tarnish the charisma of his office.

They relied heavily, it is known, on the fact that Pope Paul in 1964 became the first Pope in 150 years to venture out of Italy. He went to the Holy Land in January of that year.

Then came his visit to Bombay, India, less than a year later. This was followed up by his historic one-day flight to New York where he made an impassioned appeal for peace before the United Nations General Assembly.

On these three visits the news

media pulled out all stops and those in the Vatican favoring more pilgrimages were delighted.

In 1967 the Pontiff received a spectacular welcome in Portugal and followed this up with an equally spectacular performance in Turkey.

By this time, Vatican proponents of papal travel were anxiously looking for new territories to conquer.

Nor was the Pope without places to go. Once he made it clear in speeches that he was going to travel to every section of the world humanly possible, the invitations began to stream into the office of the Vatican secretary of state.

Then came Bogota last August. Whether because of the religiously, politically and economically explosive conditions there or because of over-

exposure, the Pontiff met his first real disappointment in crowds and enthusiasm.

In addition to his travel exposure, the Pope makes regular Sunday and Wednesday appearances when in the Vatican or at his summer retreat at Castel Gandolfo.

At these he speaks at length on various topics. Such appearances, along with special Masses and other functions at which he presides publicly, are well covered by the worldwide news media.

With television as technically improved as it is through the use of relay satellites, the papal image these days is likely to appear on TV screens throughout the modern world two or three times a month.

There are some in the Vatican who suggest that different Vatican-of-

ficials pinch-hit for the Pope at regular intervals to cut down on his exposure and give the public a better first-hand idea of Church operations from the men who run them.

Despite all this, Pope Paul sees it his duty to travel as much as possible in this age when any part of the world is accessible.

In addition, the 71-year-old Pope travels well, enjoys visiting new places and gets a big lift from meeting people and moving through surging crowds of Church faithful.

Although even the most persistent of those who fear his over-exposure would not claim that his trips are failures, they wonder if more good could not be accomplished in the long run if the papal ventures abroad were held to a maximum of one every 18 months or two years.

## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

### Praise for Fellow? Authoress?

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



Some day I'd like to meet Pat Costa. He (or she) writes the weekly column AS I SEE IT for the COURIER-JOURNAL, usually on page 10. He (or she) isn't disconcerting to see these undetermined-sex names? I wonder why the CJ doesn't print his (or her) picture.

Anyway, to get back to the track, Pat (There — That leaves it generic enough to keep the sex angle out. There's too much talk and exposure about sex these days, anyway) — is a persistent propagandist. His (or her) persistency makes me guess that he (or she) is a female. For example, his (or her) persistency brought the Sunday Mass televised for shut-ins.

What I like especially about him (or her) is a consciousness of the importance of radio and TV.

I have a theory that if St. Paul were living today, he would head the Church's bureau of communications, and he would own and direct half the TV and radio stations in the world. Rather than legging it about the five continents, he would be broadcasting personally in season and out of season the Gospel of Our-Lord Jesus Christ.

He would be having Peters and Jameses, Lukes and Timothys, Doborshs and Evodias and Syntyches, Barnabases and Silases, programming and proclaiming the Good News of Salvation. The Gospel would reach not just a few, but the whole world.

On Aug. 29, Pat's column entitled: "Channel 21 — Gems to be Found"

struck a responsive cord. He (or she) lauded the station for the quality, the variety, the cultural content which they at the station produce. Now, Channel 21 is the Educational Channel from Rochester. You can't get it outside unless you are on a cable. We do have a cable in Hornell — and six months ago I discovered this station. It has been such a joy, that on Aug. 15 I wrote to the Manager of Channel WXXI at 410 Alexander St., Rochester:

"You disturb my sleep pattern. For a hospital chaplain, the morning comes early. Hence the need for early going to bed.

"However your night programs, which I usually catch some time after 9:30 p.m. frequently keep me up until 11:30, too late for the early morning.

"The BOOK BEAT reviews are tops. Dr. R. Coles' 'Hunger in America' was so effective that it elicited a donation for the hungry. Anything that elicits cash is surely effective.

"That grand old Masie Ward you had on a couple months ago! I thought she was dead and buried. Her biography of G. K. Chesterton I recall so well. And now, at 80, you present her with her latest book — on Browning!

"And a week later you gave us Jacques Barzun, with his refreshing affirmation that we are still intellectual beings.

"Many other things are fine: the

panels, the music, etc. 'Live forever' — at least if you continue as you are."

While Channel 21 seldom deals with Catholic dogmas or morals, or with religion specifically (Some months ago it did have a tape of Bishop Sheen, however) it does deal well with the things of this world. Vatican II is clear that we must be concerned about the temporal things, in relation to our Creator.

"The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. Led by the light of the gospel and the mind of the Church, and motivated by Christian love, let them act directly and definitively in the temporal sphere. As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens, using their own particular skills and acting on their own responsibility. . . ." (Decree: Apostolate of Laity — par. 7)

So, cheers for Pat Costa and all who recognize what St. Paul would have seized upon so firmly: the potential influence of TV and Radio for the spreading of the Kingdom of God. And a request of the Editor for a picture of said Pat, with or without beard.

Our contributing columnist, Pat Costa, requests that we protect his (or her) identity. Sex has nothing to do with reviewing TV or radio programs we believe — The Editor.

## COMMENTARY

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## ALL IN THE FAMILY

### Sometimes Conforming's Difficult

By Sarah Child

"Would you like to use our clothesline?"

I made the offer knowing our new neighbor did not yet have her dryer hooked up and with three little boys enjoying their first taste of suburban living the laundry was surely mounting.

She looked at me carefully. "Oh, do you have one? I didn't see any lines in anybody's back yard," she said, then went on to explain that she had wanted her husband to string some up for her, but — and she stopped short without finishing the sentence.

I laughed and understood the abbreviated thought perfectly.

Our own move to the neighborhood had been made but two short years ago.

How well I remember the apprehension of standing out like a sore thumb in a neighborhood which seemed to me to be composed of very old and close friends.

If you've ever made the move from the anonymity of a city apartment to the relative openness of a suburban home, you may recognize the symptoms.

No more yelling out the back door,

I vowed, to call our daughter, at that time our only child.

I would, I promised myself, in very ladylike tones call her quietly just once and if she didn't respond then I'd go look for her.

Before sitting out on the front steps of the house at night to read the paper I'd make sure it wasn't the custom to use your back yard for relaxing.

The garage door would be closed at all times so that any unsightly clutter would be hidden from the street.

We already had a clothesline in the rear, left by the previous owner, but I'd make very certain I saw some other housewife (or house husband) hanging out sheets first.

Nope, no one was going to be able to point a finger at us and say we weren't conforming. This was no time for individuality. By heavens we were going to conform. And conform we did for three whole days.

I knew the jig was up the night I went downtown to pick up my newspaper husband then working an evening trick. My 14-year-old sister who had been visiting us during the hectic moving week and helping keep an eye on our child was left in charge. The neighboring houses were well lit and close by and help was

but a short shout away should she need anyone.

Some 45 minutes later we pulled in the driveway of our new home to find a sheriff's car parked in our driveway, his red flasher whirling and his radio on.

My sister had heard a noise on a window screen, called the sheriff's office which had sent a deputy right out. After checking the house all around and assuring her that everything was safe, he returned to his car to find the tire flat.

His instructions from headquarters: sit tight with flasher flashing and radio on until the repair truck came.

Relieved that all was well, we brought him in, gave him coffee and became fast if temporary friends in the hour that he waited for help to arrive.

The next morning I went out, threw up the garage door, yelled long and loudly out the window at our little girl and hung out a red and white striped nightshirt left over from college days on the clothesline.

When the neighbors began hinting they'd seen the flasher I toyed with the idea of telling them the deputy'd been performing an emergency appendectomy but lost my courage at the last minute and told the truth. They didn't believe that either.



## A LAYMAN'S VIEW

### Brazil... Generous to a Fault

By Carmen Viglucchi

Last week before he suffered his unfortunate stroke, President Artur da Costa e Silva, in what must be the poorest piece of public relating and public conscience in a long time, announced that his government is donating \$1.5 million toward the construction of a new cathedral in Brasilia.

While this action was being publicized, the very same government was expelling Father Jan Honore Talpe of Belgium for "subversive action." This was reported by the National Catholic News Service but received little space in Brazil newspapers, which are censored by the military regime.

Father Talpe is the 11th priest to be kicked out of Brazil this year. Three are Americans. Their crime is helping the working poor of Brazil in their battle for better living conditions.

Angelo Cardinal Rossi of Sao Paulo visited Father Talpe in jail and later reported that he felt the priest was loyal to his Church's mission. He praised the priest for his "apostolic spirit."

There's a further cute wrinkle to the \$1.5 million donation. The president's wife was in charge of the Cathedral Construction Committee and when the donation was secured

she stepped down, saying, "My mission is now ended."

In other words she put the squeeze on the old boy and it paid off.

This is not to go into the oft-heard arguments, pro and con, over the merits of great, soaring cathedrals.

We will admit that the flying buttresses of Europe gave wings to the spirit of man enabling him to emerge from the Dark Ages; and that to the emotional religion of the Latins such a building may be soul food.

We also reverently note that such a cathedral is intended as tribute to God.

But — here in our own diocese, Bishop Sheen has declared a moratorium on any church building costing more than a million dollars until something is done about the blight of poverty.

He said at the time:

"We humbly beg our priests and people to update their thinking and in all consideration about building to keep ever before their eyes our duty to the poor."

He further stated that "the right of the poor to have a decent home enjoys priority over our right to erect a tax-exempt structure which exceeds the bare minimum."

And our poverty, not to make light of it in any way, is diminutive in comparison to the swollen-belly destitution of much of Latin America, including Brazil.

True, the government of Brazil has some reason for an inordinate interest in Brasilia, a city which it raised from the wilderness and crowned the nation's capital. And the new cathedral will add to the planned splendor.

But most of the impoverished of that country in their whole lifetime will never get to see the magnificence of their isolated capital — they're just too poor to afford it.

We hate to join the list of those popping off at the Church and most of our beef is with the Brazilian government, anyway. But it might have swelled Catholic chests around the world if the Bishop involved said, "No, thanks. In the name of God, use the money to shelter the poor."

The government has invited the Pope to attend dedication of the cathedral next April as the newest jewel in their shining showcase.

Would that the pontiff could see clear to turn them down or, perhaps, in an even more dramatic gesture, to go to Brazil but shun the capital city to visit God's poor children in the backlands and city slums.




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