

Editorials

Media and Family

We sincerely hope that more than usual attention will be paid to the significance the Holy Father has given to examining the role of the media in shaping family life. He has asked that the role of the media in this respect be made the focal point of the annual Vatican-sponsored World Communications Day, to be observed next May 18.

As of now, Pope John Paul II has not expounded at any length on his reasons or what issues he would like to see examined. We should probably assume that he wants to see the media, electronic and press, used as positive factors in strengthening the family unit.

But it is difficult, at least in our own United States, to ignore the negative aspects of the media. First, we should admit that in our business we tend to shy away from censorship, believing that it is important that all views, artistic as well as matters of opinion, be given free expression.

However, it is also difficult to deny that some blatant instances of abuse should be corrected.

For instance, we have been blessed with the magical presence of television, a modern miracle. Electronics experts have so refined this medium that we can see instantly events occurring literally around the world. We have satellites and cables and UHF and VHF. We have remote control and fine tuning and color. We have billions of dollars of advertising poured into the industry and we have all the concomitant professions on campuses, in politics, in public relations.

And what do those responsible bring us? "Soap."

And we should not single out just one arm of the media, though television seems to squander the most opportunity. Newspapers, which sell themselves to advertisers as "family" publications accept ads for porno movies (yet another medium) with vulgar and demeaning artwork meant to catch the eye. And they do, especially the attention of children - of all ages.

Instead of assisting parents and children in their responsibilities, "family newspapers" often thwart such efforts.

And radio is no exception. Programs geared to the young audience are voiced by dee-jays whose standard shtik is the double entendre. Supposedly professional men (and the gender applies specifically) sit behind microphones and spew out vulgarisms to 12-year-olds.

Yes, it is past due that we decide if the media are here to sell mascara at all costs or to serve to help guide a badly sliding society.

Dopey

As if this world didn't have enough troubles, Squibb Corp. had to come up with an Yves St. Laurent perfume named "Opium."

According to Religious News Service, the perfume was introduced with a sales promotion featuring a romanticized view of the Oriental opium habit. Not only have the perpetrators showed a silly sense of values and considerable lack of class but they also injured the feelings of Chinese-Americans who rightfully resent their culture being linked with the use of drugs. Chinese are particularly sensitive to such because opium historically has been a particular problem for them.

Squibb has pulled back its Opium ads temporarily and said it will conduct a survey on the promotion. That sounds like running it up the flagpole and if it fails, push it.

It may be expecting too much for those responsible to admit their gaff, apologize and scratch the campaign with a touch of class. But just think what goodwill they would generate by doing so.

and Opinions

Father Quinn Of MOS

Editor:

Thanks for mentioning my forthcoming history of Our Mother of Sorrows parish, The Church in the Wood, in the article announcing the Mother of Sorrows 150th anniversary (Courier-Journal, 9/5/79).

I have one reservation, however. The brief summary of the pastorate of Father John P. Quinn (1896-1929) seems to "damn him with faint praise." Father Quinn was indeed a quiet man. But if he left no new buildings to serve as his memorials, it was because his parish population was declining (312 persons in 1914) and therefore the annual church income also was declining (\$1,669 in 1914).

Monumentalized or not, Father John was esteemed by his rural folk as highly intelligent, dedicated and priestly - with perhaps even a miracle to his credit. When he was laid to rest in the old cemetery, men wept as well as women.

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Decision Backgrounded

Editor:

I appreciate having the opportunity to voice an opinion on this page, regarding the control of Taiwan, to which Kuong Rong Lee of the Rochester Chinese Association responded with some pertinent facts and figures about Taiwan.

At the risk of continuing further the exchange of letters, I want your readers to know the 1979 General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., did not take the decision to support the Taiwanese in their desire for self-determination, lightly.

We had hard evidence

that the Nationalist government of Taiwan restricts severely the freedoms of the Taiwanese. The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan since 1949 has challenged the policies and practices of the Nationalist government. The Bible in the "mother tongue" of the people of Taiwan has been banned. Presbyterian congregations have been harassed. Pastors have been prohibited from travel abroad. The legal incorporation of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan barely averted being dissolved by order of the Ministry of the Interior.

Other burdens borne by the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan are shared with the Taiwanese who have lived under martial law since the arrival in 1949 of the Nationalist government.

I have sent copies of reports, recommendations and resolutions to the 1979 General Assembly, the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to Kuong Rang Lee, submitted by the General Assembly Council, its Advisory Council on Church and Society and the Program Agency upon which the Taiwanese decision was made for his consideration.

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IRA, PLO Defended

Editor:

The editorial "Savagery" (Sept. 12) is, hopefully, the attitude merely of the writer. Charges of "Savagery" against the Irish Republican Army for whatever part they may have had in the death of Louis Mountbatten were emotional reactions which failed to take into account the oppressive conditions under which the Irish people live.

Clearly, and in spite of IRA activity, the British acts of terrorism and savagery against the people of the land have been lost under the smug pious eulogies

extended to England as a result of Mountbatten's demise. For the writer to allude to bureaucratic ecclesiastical utterances against the IRA begs the question: Does the Church support the presence and the oppression of England in Ireland?

Most students of history understand that Mountbatten was an imperialist who was central in the denial of full human rights to the Irish people. Most students also recognize that while the IRA is an aggressive organization their aggression and their origin is due to the fact of the British presence in a land that is not their own. Ireland belongs to the Irish people and to many the IRA is an organization of patriots, and not terrorists. The IRA is waging a struggle to free the land, and are no different from the earlier struggles of the Sein Finn, and certainly no different from the heroism of the French underground against the Germans, the Phillipin guerrillas against the Japanese, or the colonia Americans against the British. If one was forced to choose between loyalty and patriotism to one's country, or to a church that tolerates the destruction of self-determination against its people, the inevitable line will be drawn.

Finally, I am amazed at the Courier-Journal's lack of sensitivity in applying the tag of "terrorist" to the valiant Palestine Liberation Organization while ignoring the terrorism of the fanatical Israelis who drop American-made rockets and napalms on Palestinian women and children.

Saints above! I shudder to learn what your policy is relative to the struggle presently being waged by Afrikan Patriots.

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Editor's Note: Far from being the opinion of merely the writer, the editorial's opinion, that the specific murder of Lord Mountbatten and terrorist activities in general are unacceptable, is shared in many quarters.

In fact, the Catholic bishops of Ireland, all of them Irish, were quoted at length in condemning the murders as "horrible evil" and "abominable." Reader Walker did not mention the two innocent bystanders who were killed with Mountbatten. The editorial focused on the IRA atrocities because of their timeliness. Other terrorist groups and governments were mentioned to show that such acts are not isolated instances but sadly are gaining acceptance across the world.

Essence Is The Crux

Editor:

Re the letter of Richard V. Hussar (Courier-Journal, 9-5-79) which reprimands those "modern and muddled men" who claim that the devil and Hell do not exist. I'm afraid, Mr. Hussar, that I am in agreement with those people, and I hope here to clear some confusion from your mind and help you to understand where some of us stand on this subject.

It is true that many people, when approached with the question, will blindly denounce the existence of Hell or a devil simply because they never gave thought to the matter, or because it seems to be the "in" thing to do in these times of weak character in many of us. But there are also those of us who are conscientiously trying to look at life and religion practically, making intuitive decisions on how we feel the world should exist.

The Scriptures are certainly good guidelines in helping us to form an understanding of Good and Evil, as well as many other things; but they must be looked at in the correct perspective. The words Jesus spoke were originally meant for the ears of men far less advanced than we are today in subjects such as the nature of Good and Evil, and an after-life. Thus, Jesus explained these subjects to them in ways that they could quickly grasp and easily comprehend. The devil, as such, merely represented Evil in general. To people of that time, the thought of an ugly serpent-like man with horns on his head and a forked tail, spreading evil far and wide,

was far easier to accept than the abstract idea of Evil itself. Likewise, Hell only alludes to the less fortunate situation that one might find himself in the next life (whatever it may be) if he insists on evil over good here in this life.

So when people such as myself deny the existence of the devil or Hell, keep in mind that we are not denying the existence of evil or a miserable after-life; only its personification and simplification into something that we now can understand more fully from contemplation and meditation, and not merely from what we've been told by others. What's important is not the guise, but the essence.

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More Letters On Page 17



"SHE TALKS AND SINGS TO HER PLANTS SO MUCH, I FEEL LIKE I'M MARRIED TO A DISC JOCKEY."

Guidelines

Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

Expressions of opinions should be brief, no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed, double-spaced, with names and addresses.

We reserve the right to edit as to length, offensive words, libelous statements, or to reject altogether. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and letters will reflect the writer's own style.

We encourage readers to submit opinions but since we try to print letters from as many different contributors as possible we will publish no more than one letter a month from the same individual.

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