

**Editorials**

**Mother Teresa  
... An Apologia**

Mother Teresa, we suspect, is above it. But we, frankly, are puzzled and uneasy over the criticism being voiced about this saintly person. Such critique has come from a pair of Brooklyn Sisters and a United Presbyterian minister. We are not so disappointed by the criticism per se, not even Mother Teresa is perfect. But what is unsettling is the evidence of our human weaknesses so clear in the remarks and why, oh why, would anyone want to focus on their perceived faults of this woman in a world teeming with evil.

Sister Camille D'Arienzo of Brooklyn used her position as a writer for the Tablet, the diocesan newspaper, to imply that Mother Teresa is doing American nuns a disservice by being used by the media and men.

"I think Mother Teresa is being used as a good safe model," she said. "Every priest can put her on a pedestal and say to women, 'Be docile, do your womanly caring thing, but don't get out and criticize anything else.'"

We quail a bit at the amount of invective in that short statement. We also wonder if Sister Camille sincerely believes that Mother Teresa is simply "docile."

A columnist for the New York City Daily News claims that many American nuns are critical of Mother Teresa because of her lack of acceptance of their life style and presumably because she doesn't endorse their social protests and criticism of male domination in the Church.

This kind of pronouncement does a grave disservice to American Sisters. We have many, many Sisters worthy of nothing but respect. This newspaper has been running a series of columns, written by our diocesan Sisters, which depict, in modest fashion, the great work of our nuns in everything from missions to jails to schools to neighborhoods to minorities over and back again. All done unselfishly and well. To impute



**MOTHER TERESA  
... disinterested?**

be pettiness to these Sisters through a minority of opinion is unfair.

It is unfortunate for two Brooklyn Sisters to pop off in print. It is also wrong to leave the mistaken impression that the great bulk of American Sisters do not feel the same kind of pride and respect for Mother Teresa that the rest of the world does.

We hope that it does not reflect a growing bandwagon of diminutive thinking but the Rev. Jack Jennings, a United Presbyterian campus minister, writing in Christian Century magazine, also takes aim at Mother Teresa, couching his disapproval in prefatory compliment, such as calling her "one of the world's generally first class saints." He then goes on to question her disinterest in changing the social systems

and practices which leads to the problems she faces. He announces that "there is no element of prophetic criticism to be found in any of Mother Teresa's pronouncements."

We disagree. Her very life is a profound and meaningful criticism of the the social systems the rest of us endorse.

And when Mother Teresa asks, "Why are you (Americans) afraid of babies?" that is prophetic criticism. And we wonder how much such sharp comment has led to the present criticism of Mother Teresa.

As we said, she will probably pay little heed to these slings and arrows. But it is worrisome to see how we little people try to gain stature by attacking monumental achievers.

If we, each and every one us, were to lead our lives as Mother Teresa does, then the social problems vexing us would be erased. As for the disinterest in the world's problems ascribed to her, Mother Teresa's very life is a sign of intense concern for the socially abused. She is nearing the end of a selfless life, led emulating of Jesus Christ, which she has done better than anyone else we can think of — man or woman.

We shudder at the thought of why we need to criticize such a person — but then again isn't that exactly what her role model, Jesus Christ, encountered from the world?

**Familiar?**

Don't we all know such a person? He puts a bumper sticker on his car advising, "Nuke Iran." He favors the death penalty and proclaims the right of all Americans to keep guns, without regulation. He strongly approves of spending most of our national resources on arms, regardless of the crying needs of many of his countrymen. He is in favor of military solutions to crises and often has urged "send in the troops."

And often in the evening when looking through the newspaper, he shakes his head in wonderment and thinks, "Why is there so much violence in the world today?"

**and Opinions**

**Unequal Benefits**

**Editor:**  
Our government is investigating and questioning benefits of Social Security. Let us hope they will correct some of the discrepancies in benefits paid. Those who suffer from this are families where the husband and wife must work, and single people.

A man has deducted from his pay an amount to cover his benefit and half his benefit for his wife. As the same amount is deducted from a woman's pay for the same pay, she also pays in for one and one-half benefit.

When a man, whose wife did not work, retires, he collects his benefit and one-half his benefit for his wife. The man gets a fair deal, what was promised.

When the working couple retires, the man collects his benefit, but the wife must choose between half her husband's benefit or the benefit on her record (which is usually low due to years lost from work while raising a family).

If she chooses half her husband's benefit, all her deductions are lost to her. If she chooses her benefit from her record, all money paid for her by her husband is lost to the family. This couple is cheated.

The single person pays at the rate of one and one-half benefit, and gets back the benefit for one. This person also is cheated.

To make the system fair the formula should be: one and a half the husband's benefit plus

one and one-half the wife's benefit, divided by two, equals the amount each person to should get.

Single people should collect one and one-half benefit.

I don't want charity, but I want my fair share when I collect my Social Security. The system now works like a Robin Hood in reverse.

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**Spiritual Biology**

**Editor:**  
Difference of opinion makes betting possible at the races. It is also the cause of people voting for one or another candidate in an election.

A letter I wrote recently to the Courier in which I tried to explain the refusal of the Church to ordain women, brought responses which were quite divergent in tone and content. Reader Douglas B. Helm wrote a very caustic reply (July 8) which showed that he had completely misunderstood and misinterpreted my letter.

On the other hand, a writer from Hornell wrote: "I am sure God will bless you. What you wrote makes sense. Made me glad to read something I believe."

I think reader Helm did not quite understand my message. We speak of God as "Father" because He gives life. We speak of the Church as "Mother" because she receives the life of God and brings into the world "Children of God" through baptism. Life starts with the father in both the spiritual and

physical order. The Divine Life of God in our souls is known as "sanctifying grace." We receive this grace principally through the Sacraments. It is a sharing of the Divine Life. The priests of the Church are called "Father" because they confer the divine life through the sacraments, acting in God's name, through the ministry of Holy Mother the Church which receives her life from God.

Regarding ordination of women, the Church merely states that when the Lord ordained the Apostles, he not only instituted the sacrament of Orders, he also taught how, and upon whom, the sacrament was to be conferred. Hence the Church has always followed the example of the Lord by ordaining men only. The Church believes that this is the will and teaching of Christ, and, hence, cannot be changed.

**Father G. Stuart Hogan**  
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**Minister To All Youth**

**Editor:**  
In regards to Shirley S. Tode's letter regarding money spent on youth in our diocese:

The \$11.5 million spent to support parochial schools and the \$6 million for nine high schools in our diocese is a large amount of money. But, what funding is there for youth like myself who do not live near one of the nine high schools? Is this our only means of religious education? The diocese needs a youth ministry for ALL the youth.

**James M. Clark**  
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**Fr. John Reedy**

*Looking for the Lord*



**The Function Of Catholic Press**

Several contemporary trends are causing concern among the more serious Catholic journalists who edit the papers in which this column appears.

• Within American Catholic life there seems to be a clear desire for a more orderly system (less tension and controversy) which would support the individual and the local community in their search for the consolations of religious experience.

• Seen from the opposite side, there is a diminishing interest in — an impatience with — complex issues of social justice, theological innovation, etc. These issues remain complex, subject to conflicting opinions; they don't contribute much to my experience of religion. I really don't want to be bothered by them.

• Local churches, like the rest of our society, are being pressured by rising costs and increasingly difficult needs.

These trends could have many different effects on Catholic life, but I want to talk about one in particular: the temptation to save money and frustration by

reducing the news function of the Catholic press.

Most Catholic papers offer a variety of services in their content, everything from catechetical materials to liturgical aids to inspirational features.

But their primary service is ... news. And that service seems to be little understood, little appreciated. Under the pressure of shrinking resources, it could be slighted because the decision-makers do not really appreciate its value.

In its news function, the Catholic press tries to report and explain those things which Catholics need to know if they are going to live their personal and community lives well and responsibly.

Catholicism is not just a form of personal religious experience. It is a communal expression of faith; it is a worldwide community of communities. To be Catholic requires that we have some knowledge of, some participation in the life of this worldwide community.

Not all of the news carried in Catholic papers serves this purpose, but how else would we have achieved whatever knowledge we have of Vatican II?

How would we have come to understand the significance of the changes in the liturgy, the broad insights of recent scriptural scholarship?

The developments in the Church in Latin America are still turbulent and hard to understand. But don't we have to have some awareness of that situation if we claim to be truly Catholic?

Do you think your local daily or TIME would provide adequate coverage of the concerns and actions of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops? Would the continuing Catholic concern about the "life issues" be sustained without the coverage of the Catholic press?

How would the words and actions of the Holy Father reach the individual Catholic? How could a diocese sustain any real identity as a community with common concerns, common efforts, effective leadership, without the news service of the diocesan paper?

Some of the news is troublesome and disturbing. Not all diocesan papers provide the news service as well as they should. The same things are true of the daily press.

Still, it would be short-sighted and irresponsible to fail to recognize the vital importance of the news service being provided by the Catholic press. These papers are very familiar; they are not very glamorous; they are easy to criticize.