

Editorials

The Postal Increase vs. the Good News

Censorship, it must be stressed, was not on President Reagan's mind when he scuttled the subsidy to the Postal Service to support lower non-profit mailing rates.

No, it was not the president's intention to infringe on freedom of the press nor on freedom of religion; his motives were strictly economic.

Yet the effect of what he did was exactly that so often attempted by totalitarian governments who for selfish motives silence segments of the free press. It happens in Russia, it happens in dictatorial Latin American countries, it happens in Third World countries.

We doubt that the president will reconsider his cutback in the light of censorship. He will only see it as a financial necessity (even the rectitude of that could be argued). But Mr. Reagan should consider that the Catholic and other religious presses that make up a large part of the non-profit users of the mails have been perhaps the most critical of his arms-over-butter policies which have adversely affected large blocks of less-than-affluent Americans. He might worry that some may see it as one way of sapping the protest.

The cutback, to be sure, may cause the folding of many publications. That is unhealthy in itself but the deleterious effect goes deeper. Newspapers such as the Courier-Journal have responsibilities not shared by the secular press. We are the voice of the Catholic bishop to his flock and conversely his ears when the faithful wish to be heard. We are public spokesmen for the Good News of the Gospel. We paint the religious side of current issues. So, in effect, freedom of religion also is tainted by the cutback.

But Catholic newspapers are more than faith messengers. They operate out of a social conscience. They serve to remind the profit-motivated, the arms producers, governmental bureaucrats, proponents of abortion, euthanasia and the like, that there is a theological dimension to life and to their actions. Secular media are not so motivated.

So when the religious press is threatened, far more

than newspapers is at stake — a necessary input into societal decisions may be eliminated.

And more than the press is involved. The non-profit rates being raised also are used by such organizations as the American Lung Association, the Red Cross, March of Dimes and all such philanthropic organizations.

How serious is the subsidy elimination?

The increase varies from publication to publication, depending on such factors as percentage of advertising, in-county vs. out-of-county mailing, presorting, etc. So we will use the Courier-Journal as a fair example. This newspaper's mailing costs, already high as result of past increases, will jump from 80 to 90 percent. The 16-page newspaper we printed before this week cost us \$1,406 to mail; from now on a 16-page newspaper will cost us \$2,542 just to mail, an increase of \$1,135 a week to mail. Most of our editions are more than 16 pages and the cost rises proportionately because of the increased weight. Another way, mailing the Courier cost about \$1,000 in 1981 and will cost about \$165,000 in 1982.

And the increase by no means the final one. In a hurried memorandum on the increase (most observers were caught by surprise by the president's cutback), the National Newspaper Association wrote: "A final note of caution, the continuing resolution for this year could conceivably be reopened and revised... the rates certainly once again could be affected." And with the present economic mood in Washington, the effect will not be for the better.

What are Catholic papers going to do? To get an idea, consider that the Catholic Press Association has just announced that the deadline for its 1982 directory will be extended to allow publications to announce brand new subscription increases. Other papers are actively considering reducing times of publications to less-than-weekly periodicals.

The Courier-Journal hopes to avoid any radical departures. We will be working through the CPA and the NNA to get fair rates — we make it clear that we

do not object to paying our fair share but the new rates are nothing less than deadly. We also will be meeting with legislators to see if there is legislative recourse.

We have timely inspiration from Pope John Paul II who coincidentally last week told a Vatican City audience, "The Catholic press is not a superfluous thing but a necessary instrument for evangelization... Today more than ever one sees the importance of formative work of the Catholic press, aimed at enlightening consciences, at dissipating false interpretations, insinuations and manipulations, in respect for the opinions of others and in faithful dialogue, backed by the conviction that each man, redeemed and loved by the Lord, is called in truth."

You won't find such statements in the secular press.

In the meantime, we must remember that, although he did not intend it that way, President Reagan's action has effectively threatened a large arm of the free press in the United States.

Fun City Mission

In this issue, we begin a three-part series on Covenant House and its work in the heart of Manhattan.

Years ago, we editorialized that the prime area for missionary work in this country might very well be Times Square in New York City. Therefore, we were especially grateful on learning of the work of Covenant House and have published its worthy efforts in earlier accounts.

The present series is not light reading. Written by one of Covenant House's workers, it takes an honest and unflinching look at some of the most heinous pursuits of a degenerated area. We hope all read it because what is happening in Times Square is reflected in our neighborhoods as well.

As always, we ask reader reaction.

and Opinions

Aftermath Of Christmas

Editor:

It seems only yesterday that 1981 came to us. Yes, the year has gone and with it many memories, some sad and others joyous.

Last week as I roamed through Eastview Mall, I wondered where were the sounds of Christmas carols, the hurry and excitement of the crowds? There was so

much lacking as one looked into faces. Santa Claus was gone and in his domain just an empty space surrounded by artificial snow. Even the mechanical decorations going around in circles seemed to mean nothing. No one turned his head to listen. People were busy returning the things they didn't want.

Yes, the most blessed season of Christmas is over. We have said our goodbyes to holiday giving and now let's look upon these days as the first days of our lives.

I realized there was much more than the monetary meaning of Christmas. As the lights grow dim and the old year ends, let's not forget our friends who have gone on the past year to a better place. Maybe they try to tell us, "Fools, don't be so wrapped up in this artificial world that you cannot remember the birthday of the Lord Jesus."

Now 1982 is here. Let's not be so absorbed with ourselves that we forget a new beginning and the family life of Jesus and his father and mother.

A thought for all of us for 1982 is "deal with people as if their hearts were breaking because sometimes it probably is."

May God bless all and may our hearts open to a better understanding and a new love for our fellow man in 1982. This is the wish of a lady who is only known to a few of your subscribers as an acquaintance.

Mary T. Briggs 107 Brice St. East Rochester, N.Y. 1445

Msgr. Flynn Remembered

Editor:

I didn't really know Msgr. Patrick J. Flynn.

I knew that he had been supportive of St. Helen's choir where my wife and I have shared the joy of

participating in many liturgical celebrations with that fine group of people during the past six years.

I knew the name of the pastor who, until his retirement, regularly presented his parish with gifts of well-prepared, solid, thought-provoking homilies, but I didn't really know him.

On the morning of Jan. 2, I participated with the people of St. Helen's and Patrick Flynn's many friends and colleagues in the celebration of his Mass of Christian Burial. A memorable homily was presented by Father James Slattery, a lifelong friend of the monsignor. We were virtually spellbound as he wove a beautiful verbal tapestry in citing example after example of the kindness, humility, diligence, generosity, accomplishment and yes! holiness of this man.

When Father Slattery finished his beautiful eulogy, the Mass continued and we in the choir did our best to do our part — but it's hard to sing with a great lump in your throat and tears in your eyes.

I didn't really know Msgr. Patrick J. Flynn — and the loss is mine.

Richard B. Blankfield 2716 Nichols St. Spencerport, N.Y. 14559

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Gratitude Expressed For Friends' Concern

Editor:

I have been a member of St. Augustine's and now at St. Monica's for the past 24 years. No one is more fortunate than I to be associated with two such caring religious families. Each plays an important part in my life — St. Augustine's for weekly prayer meeting and St. Monica's for daily Eucharistic celebration.

I have a neuro-muscular disability that makes crutches and a wheelchair the means of continuing my outside work and activities. With the support and leadership of two beautiful pastors, Fathers Barrett and Trott, ramps have been laid, doors have been opened and a place has been made for me in my faith community.

This past fall, it became increasingly dangerous for me to navigate the steps outside my home, so may friends from the prayer group at St. Augustine's started a fund-raising on my behalf to purchase an automatic porch

lift. They were successful and I now begin and end my day with ease and safety. The sheer freedom of it takes my breath away! Their kindness and caring will always be with me. However, many of the donations were anonymous. I would like to use this letter as an opportunity to say thank you and God bless you, not only to Joanne, Eric, Sheila and Jim, but also to all those unknown persons who made my continued independence possible.

The Year of the Disabled has come to a quiet end. Many doors are still closed, many people are still alone and housebound, and many more are struggling with poverty, frustration and discouragement. I can only pray that someday, all of my fellow handicapped will feel as loved as I do at this moment.

Maureen Havens West High Terrace Rochester, N.Y. 14619

Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

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

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.



"I WISH IT WERE REAL SPIRITUAL JOY, FATHER! ACTUALLY, HE JUST GOT A NEW SET OF DENTURES."