

Editorials

I Got It, We'll Blame the Press

No matter what one may think of the various news media, and in many instances they leave much to be desired, it is to be hoped that all will see the danger in such actions as the Reagan administration's banning coverage of its invasion of Grenada. If nothing else, it damages a healthy image of this nation as being unafraid of free and open description of its activities -- from space missions to waging war.

Without getting into the intricacies of this particular instance, we all should imagine how different history might be if the Nixon administration, for instance, had been successful in stonewalling the media, and thus the American people, on Watergate. Again, that is only one example, but the idea suffices.

Such freedom of the press is a Constitutional guarantee. That is what makes it one of our grandest American ideals.

Look at the other side of the coin. Denial of this freedom is part and parcel of every totalitarian government that ever came arrogantly down the pike. Right now, a running debate is going in the United Nations over a UNESCO proposal that governments

should have the power to license journalists and impose other limits on their activities. The argumentation on this matter is complicated but for purposes of this discourse, suffice to say it is obvious where the Soviet Union stands -- squarely in favor of control of the mass media.

The reason why such governments want to muzzle the media is painfully obvious -- they do not want the people to know what is going on -- that is the totalitarian way. We have seen a raw practice of this in the Russian shooting down of the Korean Airliner. For days, the Russians lied about the facts. What information was allowed to reach the Russian people was orchestrated, managed, misshaped. That is also the totalitarian way.

Unfortunately, the most recent example of such government fear of the facts was provided by our own administration in the Grenada invasion. It is unsettling that more Americans did not object more strongly than happened.

Without becoming tangential, it can also be pointed out that the Catholic Church, particularly the Vatican, plays this game of secrecy. Any reporter, whether working for religious or secular media, who has ever tried to cover anything at the Holy See will complain about the seeming need for secrecy on all matters great and small by the Vatican establishment. This attitude seeps down even to the local Church at times. It is inexplicable in light of the explicit role of the Church to spread the Good News (the truth). And naturally it creates distrust of the motives of the perpetrators.

That the media may at times be inefficient in their various endeavors is true. It is also true that in some instances the failures are linked to attempts at manipulation by the powers that be. In the arenas where government control over people is paramount, where to that end subverting the masses is a necessity, management of news and a conscious disparagement of the media is at least logical.

But in a country where the constitutional freedoms are the bulwark, it is a sad contradiction of ideals when the government deliberately tries to undermine the rights of the people. How often have we heard our recent leaders say, "It's not my mistake, the press did it." Or worse, leave the implication that some sinister forces are at work behind the scenes of our media -- the Communists, the international bankers, etc. When in truth the only misbegotten influence in the media is their own commercialism, a search for the means to get rich, in some cases, merely to survive in other cases.

But as for the Church and the media. Let's grant both the noblest of intentions, the pursuit of truth. Each has been guilty of failing that calling on occasion, and will continue to do so for both are human endeavors. That is no reason for the one that is making the news, in this instance the Church, to thwart the role of the other, that is the media, from passing on that news in an unvarnished and untarnished condition.

And those who are willing to accept less than this, either from the secular media or the religious, deserve less.

and Opinions

'Feminism' Unthinking

EDITOR:
Barbara McClintock getting the Nobel Prize for her work in medicine shows how far women sill have to go and why so-called "feminists" are taking us in the wrong direction. McClintock had the intelligence and courage to think for herself, to go into a line of genetic research that conventional wisdom "knew" was wrong. The Nobel Prize vindicated her.

Today's woman can correctly complain about certain stereotypes of the past, but today's so-called "feminism" is nothing more than a demand that she change masters, and probably not for the better.

Instead of thinking for herself, she has to buy the entire "feminist" party line: Abortion is good! Housewives are stupid! The ERA is good, regardless of any bad effects it might have. On and on it goes and you are only a modern "feminist" if you once again stop thinking for yourself and buy the gospel and the epistle according to St. Bella Abzug and the rest of the self-appointed leaders of the modern woman.

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Church Music Requirements

EDITOR:
I have just read a homily of Pope John Paul II to church musicians, the St. Cecilia Association (L'Osservatore Romano, English edition, 10/17). The pope made several points, universal in application, which must be more widely known and which must be seen also in their consequences.

1. Integrity is his central theme. The music of the Church is part and parcel of the expression of the action of the Holy Spirit in us, an aspect of our "putting on Christ." Liturgy, faith, devotion, the spiritual life are not to be divorced. Musicians and all the faithful together enjoy this expression of "the new man."

2. In order to achieve this integrity, it is necessary that sacred music be true art, for it is true art that is "able to transform man's sentiment into song, to adapt music to words, to achieve that perfect and fruitful harmony with the lofty (Get that!) aims and requirements of Catholic worship."

3. The pope continues with another major concept: "At the same time this unity demands that this music be authentically sacred, that is, that it possess a predisposition suitable to its sacramental and liturgical end and that it therefore be alien to the characteristics of music used for other purposes." (Last emphasis added).

Then the Holy Father addresses the need for study and preparation among church musicians.

I know from experience that we can become terribly attached to unworthy music that has become part of the liturgies there is a terrible that even in planned Latin liturgies there is a terrible danger of substituting form for substance -- as in contemporary liturgies there is the equally terrible danger of substituting sentiment for substance.

Bringing everything down to the level of the "man in the pew" is a totally false approach as can now be seen clearly from the pope's teaching: Only true art (not a musical kindergarten) can lead to the integrity we all seek. The man in the pew is not half as stupid and insensitive as some might believe. True art appeals to and edifies the simple and the intellectual in one stroke.

What we must do is attend in our hearts to this matter of integrity in faith, liturgy and devotion, get rid of (even if it hurts) music that is in itself alien to the liturgy and let musicians -- those who have been educated in a knowledge of true art and who also have been given the gift of musicality (contrary to popular belief, it takes more than a few workshops and the ability to read notes to make a musician) and who are full of the Catholic faith -- do the musical instructing in the parishes -- not as they are ordered to do by committees that are through no fault of their own ill-equipped, but with faith-filled musicians exercising their proper lead-

ership in community for the building up of "the new man."

So much for what liturgy will be like in heaven...

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Much Merit, One Fault

EDITOR:

Bishop Hogan's article on True Marian Devotion, C-J 10-26, has much merit, even though it also contains a serious, yet removable fault. On the positive side, the bishop enlightens us with quotes from Martin Luther and John Calvin about their views of Mary. These quotes are very hopeful, especially for ecumenical progress. Of further merit is the bishop's presentation of the "uncomfortable picture of Mary," much like I recall from a talk given at the devotional hour for Our Lady of Fatima a few months ago. There, the priest also described the human fears this unmarried, early-teen-age Mary must have had while freely giving her historic "yes" to God.

The removable fault is that words in the first one third of his article necessarily cast suspicion and doubt on those of us who intelligently accept the truth of the 1917 Faima apparitions, deemed worthy of belief by the Church. Both the individual-spiritual and global-peace aspects of the Fatima message are, in the words of John Paul II, more relevant and more urgent at this very hour 1983 than they were in 1917. Paul VI, whom the bishop cites, very much approved of Fatima. Indeed the recent "nuclear letter" of the U.S. bishops confirms the urgency of our modern plight, addressed at Fatima in

1917. Bishop Hogan's unfortunate use of Father Carroll's narrow opinion which mixes some Fatima facts with unacceptable innuendo is probably unintentional but damage has already been done to us before the greater community. My wife and I are surprised at the apparent thrust at Fatima in his Oct. 26 letter because we talked face to face with Bishop Hogan on Oct. 7 on exactly the same problem, just after he spoke on the subject at St. Mary in Canandaigua.

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Misplaced Request

EDITOR:

I note with interest the d'Audiffrets asking two U.S. senators (C-J Nov. 2) to act "in God's name" to save Marxists, Leninists and other leftist world revolutionaries from the "wrath" of a Christian leader of a Christian country who is trying to save oppressed and persecuted Catholics from irreversible conquest by atheistic, materialistic Communists and fellow travelers.

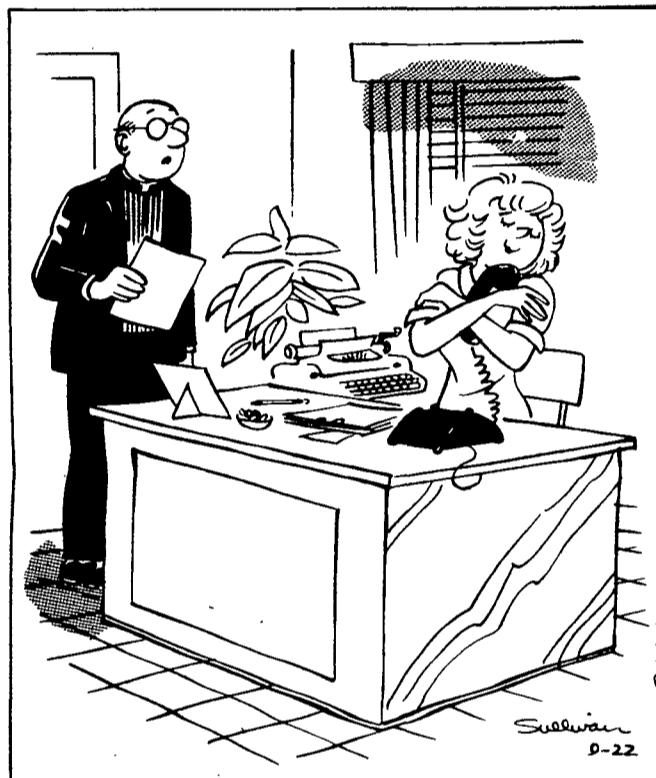
Next, they will be appealing to the devil to help the pope rid the world of sin.

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Beirut Victims Remembered

EDITOR:

At the regular October meeting of the parish council of St. Paul of the Cross Church in Honeoye Falls, it was moved and seconded that "This council enter into its



"PUT YOUR BOYFRIEND ON 'HOLD' THE REGULAR WAY, MISS NELSON."

minutes a note of appreciation and thanks for the brave young men of our military forces who were called on earlier this week to give their lives in Beirut. Their sacrifice in a purely peacekeeping effort must not be taken lightly nor easily forgotten. While this Council takes no position whatsoever on the appropriateness of the U.S. military presence in Beirut, we can still lend our moral support to the people who willingly risk themselves in the endless search for peace.

Furthermore, we feel obliged to share the anguish of the families of these servicemen who were so wantonly killed."

In the interest of publicly acknowledging our private and most heartfelt sentiments of sympathy, and pride in the honor of our fellow Americans, we decided after discussion of the motion, to forward a copy to you. The motion was passed unanimously.

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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.

