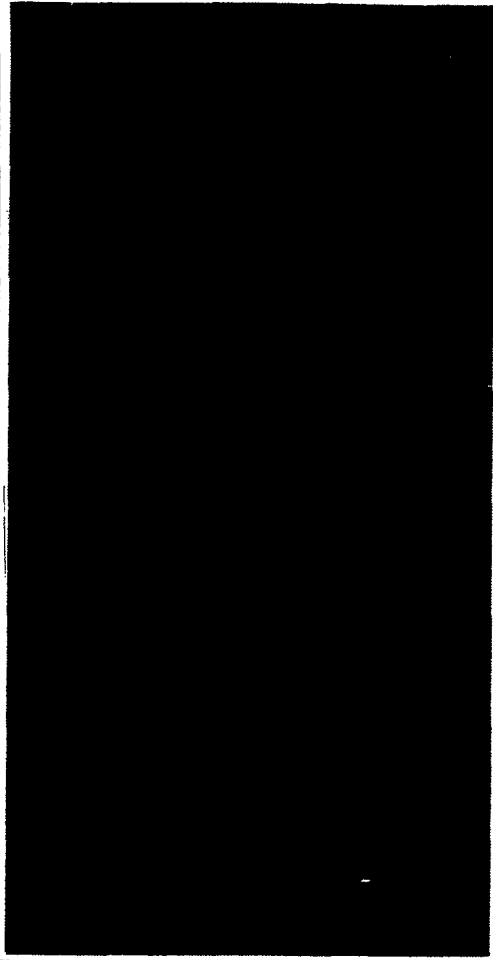


Reagan and the Violence In His Ancestral Land



criticized Irish-Americans accused of encouraging bloodshed by supporting such terrorist groups as the outlawed Irish Republican Army, which is fighting British rule in Northern Ireland.

When she met Reagan in London later, Mrs. Thatcher is said to have privately thanked him for opposing violence.

The U.S. president also cited the work of the New Ireland Forum, organized by FitzGerald, with representatives of three political parties in the Republic of Ireland and one Catholic party from the North. The forum did not include Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA, or the staunchly Protestant Unionist parties of Northern Ireland, who refused to participate in the dialogue and seek to remain part of the United Kingdom.

Reagan said he was "impressed" by the work of the forum.

In a report released in May, the forum offered three options for Northern Ireland:

- Merger with the Republic of Ireland in a secularistic, democratic state constitutionally protecting civil and religious rights for all (the forum's preference);
- A federal system with parliamentary bodies in both north and south, and
- Joint rule of Northern Ireland by both the Republic and Britain.

Before the report was released, the Catholic bishops of Ireland said that if north and south unite, the new nation should keep church and state separate,

...should not be the official religion, and Protestant rights should be protected.

Irish bishops also have frequently condemned violence in Northern Ireland from all sides.

The U.S. bishops generally have deferred to the guidance of their Irish colleagues on questions of Northern Ireland.

In a 1979 background paper by the U.S. Catholic Conference Office of International Justice and Peace, said the U.S. bishops urged the conflict to be resolved by the peaceful abolition of British rule and the unification of all Ireland in a modern democratic society.

The office of support to the IRA has been a major political American crisis event since the 1970s. St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City this year described the IRA as a "terrorist organization" and an "honorarium" for the IRA, by Michael O'Riordan, an IRA member and person convicted of "terrorist offenses" who founded the IRA in Dublin.

In 1973, the government avoided the parade entirely when Michael Plannery, an IRA member, was chosen grand marshal. Protestant and American politicians also boycotted the parade that year and the late Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York refused the parade only after Plannery had passed the doors of St. Patrick's Cathedral.



Tears of Anguish

At a meeting of mothers of disappeared persons and political prisoners outside the presidential palace in San Salvador, one mother cries as she appeals for the return of a loved one. Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte met with the women and promised to investigate. (NC Photo)

Newspersons Should Be Caretakers of Culture

Vatican City (NC) — Here is an NC News translation of Pope John Paul II's Italian-language message for World Communications Day, June 3. The message was issued by the Vatican on May 28.

Dearest brothers and sisters in Christ: This world day was willed by the Second Vatican Council



"to give reinforced vigor to the church's manifold apostolate regarding instruments of social communication" (Inter Mirifica, no. 18). It is now being celebrated for the 18th time. It has the purpose of educating the faithful ever better in their duties in this so important sector. I desire first of all on this occasion to exhort each of you to join with me in prayer, in order that, together with its operators and the multitude of recipients, the world of social communications may faithfully perform its function in service to

truth, liberty, and advancement of the whole of man and all mankind.

The theme chosen for the 18th day is of great importance: "Social Communications as an Instrument of Encounter Between Faith and Culture." Culture, faith and communications are three realities. A relationship is established among them, and on that depend the present and the future of our civilization, which is called to give ever more complete expression of itself on the planetary scale.

As we had occasion to say on June 2, 1980 (see speech to UNESCO), culture is a specific mode of man's existence and being. It creates a body of ties among persons of each community, so determining the inter-personal and social character of human existence. Man is the subject and artisan of culture, he expresses himself in it, and there finds his equilibrium.

Faith is the encounter between God and man. God reveals and realizes his plan of salvation in history. Man responds to God through faith, by accepting and making this design his own, by orientating his own life according to this message (cf. Rom. 10,9; 2 Cor. 4,13): Faith is a gift of God, and man's decisions should correspond to it.

But if culture is the specifically human way of increasingly achieving one's human existence; and if in faith, on the other hand, man opens himself to knowledge of the Supreme Being, in whose image and likeness he has been created (cf. Gen. 1,26), then anyone can see what a profound relationship exists between the one and the other human experience. So we can understand why the Second Vatican Council emphasized "the excellent stimuli and aids" which the mystery of Christian faith offers man, for him to be able to carry out with greater commitment his task of constructing a more humane world, whereby he responds to his integral vocation (cf. Gaudium et Spes, no. 57).

Again: culture is communication in itself, not only between man and the environment which he is called upon to dominate (cf. Gen. 2, 19-20), but also between men and other men. Culture is actually a relational and social dimension of human existence. When enlightened by faith, it also expresses full communication on man's part with God in Christ, and, in contact with the truths revealed by

God, it more easily finds the basis of human truth which promotes the common good.

Faith and culture are therefore called to meet and to interact exactly on the level of communication. Effective realization of this meeting and interaction largely depend — together with their intensity and effectiveness — on suitability of the instruments through which communication comes about. Press, cinema, theater, radio, television — together with the evolution which each of these means has known in the course of history — have not always shown themselves to be adequate for the meeting between faith and culture. The culture of our time in particular seems to be dominated and shaped by the newest and most powerful of the means of communication — radio and, above all, television — so much so that those means seem to impose themselves at times as ends and not as simple means, also because of the characteristics of organization and structure which they call for.

However, this aspect of modern mass media should not make us forget that they are after all only means of communication, and that, by its nature, communication is always communication of some thing. The content of the means of communication is therefore always determinant, is capable moreover of shaping the communication itself. Consequently, the communicators' sense of responsibility, as well as the receivers' critical sense, must always be elicited.

Certain disappointing aspects of the use made of modern mass media should not make us forget that their contents can become marvellous instruments for spreading the Gospel, since they are abreast of the times and are capable of reaching the remotest corners of the world. They can particularly be of great help in catechesis, as I pointed out in the apostolic exhortation "Catechesis Tradendae" (no. 46).

Those who make use of the means of social communication for purposes of evangelization also contribute to constructing a cultural texture in which man, conscious of his relationship with God, becomes more man. Let them therefore bear their lofty mission well in mind. Let them have the needful professional competence, and feel the responsibility of transmitting the Gospel message in its purity and integrity, not confusing the divine doctrine with the opinions of men. The mass media always make reference to a certain concept of man. They do this whether they are concerned with giving current affairs information, dealing with more strictly cultural matters, or being used for purposes of artistic expression or entertainment. It is exactly on the rightness and completeness of that concept that they are to be judged.

At this point I direct a heartfelt appeal to all operators in the field of social communications, in whatever latitude they may be, and of whatever religion.

- Communications operators, do not give a mutilated, distorted presentation of man, one closed to authentic human values.
- Give space to the transcendental, it makes man more man.
- Do not sneer at religious values, do not ignore them, do not interpret them according to ideological patterns.
- Let your information always be inspired by criteria of truth and justice; feel the duty to correct and repair when you happen to fall into error.

● Do not corrupt society, the young in particular, with complacent and insistent presentations of evil, nor by performing a work of manipulation, and sowing divisions.

● All you mass media operators, bear in mind that your messages reach a multitude of people. Each of them, however, is a human being, a concrete, unique person, who must be recognized and respected as such. Woe to whoever shall have given scandal, above all to the littlest ones (cf. Mt. 18,6).

● In a word: Commit yourselves to promoting a culture truly to man's measure, remembering as you do so that you so facilitate the meeting with the faith, of which no one ought to be afraid.

Unfortunately, realistic examination of the situation obliges us to recognize that the immense potential of the mass media are, in our time, often used against man, and that the dominant culture disregards the meeting with the faith, both in countries where free circulation of ideas is allowed and where liberty of expression is confused with irresponsible license. It is the task of all to heal social communication and bring it back to its noble aims. Let communicators respect the rules of correct professional ethics. Let critics perform their useful work of clarification, by favoring formation of critical consciousness in receivers of the communications. Let receivers themselves know how to choose books, newspapers, cinema and theater shows, and television programs with prudent awareness, so as to make them occasions for growth and not of corruption. Further, through suitable associations, let them make their voices heard by communications operators, so that they shall always be respectful of man's dignity and his inalienable rights. I will quote the words of the Second Vatican Council to recall that "public authority, which properly concerns itself with the health of its citizens, has the duty of seeing to it in a just and vigilant manner that serious danger to public morals shall not result from perverted use of these instruments. This goal should be achieved by enactment of laws and their energetic enforcement" (Inter Mirifica, no. 12).

Indeed, since there is a man-communicator at the beginning of the communication, and a man-receiver at the end, the instruments of social communication will facilitate the meeting between faith and culture the more they facilitate meetings of persons, so that a mass of unintegrated individuals shall not be formed, each of which are in dialogue only with a printed page, a stage, the little or the big screen, but that there shall be a community of persons aware of the importance of the meeting of faith with culture, and determined to achieve it through personal contact, in the family, in the workplace, in social relations. Culture and faith find useful, sometimes indispensable, direct or indirect aids in the mass media; they circulate in dialogue between parents and children, they are enhanced through the work of teachers and educators, and they develop through direct pastoral action, up to the personal encounter with Christ in the church and her sacraments.

With the intercession of Mary most holy, I invoke the heavenly favors upon communications workers and the boundless community of receivers. My apostolic blessing goes together as a propitiation, in order that one and all, each in his proper role, may commit himself and herself to ensuring that social communications shall be ever more effective instruments for the meeting between faith and culture.

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