

TIME ON PADRE PIO

Catholics the world over greeted with joy the beatification of Padre Pio. The Capuchin friar bled from his hands for most of his life, the stigmata being only one element of mystery surrounding this holy man. But *Time* didn't take too well to the news of his beatification, offering the headline, "Bleeding-Hands Man Gets Star Treatment" (May 10).

The short piece on Padre Pio began, "On the road to sainthood, it helps to have connections." You get the point. "A mystic with blood on his hands," is how the story develops.

The condescending tone is unfortunately all too common these days at *Time*. Though we have no personal favorite between *Time* and *Newsweek*, the file we have on the former dwarfs the latter.

P.S. We don't keep files on those that don't offend us.

SAVE THE WHALE, KILL THE KIDS

The Natural Resources Defense Council recently conducted a direct mail campaign to raise money to save the Gray Whale. It rented the membership list of several organizations to solicit them for money. One of the organizations it tapped was Planned Parenthood.

Direct mail operators know what they're doing: they rent lists from organizations, or subscribers to magazines, that very likely have members who are sympathetic to their cause. This raises the eerie question: why is it that people who support killing kids are not likely to support killing whales?

Maybe someday we'll figure this all out, but we doubt it.

CARTOON EXPLOITS SUFFERING TO BASH CHURCH

For most people, the recent events in Kosovo and the suffering they have caused are a human tragedy. For the folks at the tiny *Coshocton* (Ohio) *Tribune*, however, that tragedy represented an apparently irresistible opportunity to bash the Catholic Church. The above cartoon, which ran in the paper's April 27 edition, lashed out at the Church's pro-life teachings. It should be pointed out that the "Morning After" pill often acts as an abortifacient, destroying a newly conceived human being. Apparently the folks at the *Tribune* don't think there's enough destruction of human life in Kosovo; the Church should advocate more. Besides trivializing the suffering of the Kosovar people, the cartoon makes clear that anti-Catholicism is alive and well at the *Coshocton Tribune*.

MARGERY EAGAN'S ANGER

For longer than we care to remember, Margery Eagan has been writing a column for the *Boston Herald*. Bostonians know her well though the rest of the country never heard of her. They haven't missed anything.

There is a Margery in every city of the country—women who were

raised Catholic and will never get over it. Their problem, you see, is the Church. They want to be priests but the Church says no. So they get angry.

It so happens that Bernard Cardinal Law recently banned a dissenting group of feminists from using church buildings. The malcontents go by the name of Massachusetts Women-Church. Out of the entire state, they have amassed a grand total of 10 women to participate in their renegade group. And this is after 11 years of organizing.

In any event, Margery is predictably angry at the Cardinal for doing what her bosses do at the *Boston Herald* everyday—enforcing house rules. She accused the Cardinal of delivering a “blow to the soul” of all “serious, sincere Catholic women,” suggesting a following among Catholic women that this group clearly does not have.

We have a suggestion for Margery: do a piece on the organizational skills it takes to garner 10 members in 11 years and then instruct Frances Kissling on how to get the job done.

WHY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SUCCEED

The following is an excerpt from Diane Ravitch’s Commentary on *CH 2000: A First Look*, a publication of the National Catholic Educational Association.

“Catholic high schools have an unusually impressive track record. Studies of Catholic education usually point to certain key factors, including the schools’ strong academic curriculum, their common expectations for all students, and their sense of community. The one element that is often left

out, but that seems to be of equal, if not predominant significance, is the fact that these are faith-based schools and communities. Because they have a sense of religious mission, these schools are good places for children. The religious mission is not incidental; it creates the common expectations and the sense of community. Our society, rife as it is with danger for youngsters, has recently begun to reconsider the value of faith-based institutions. It may turn out that the secret of success of the Catholic school is inherent in its identity and cannot simply be exported to the public square.”

MYSTERY OF THE ROCHESTER RIFLEMAN

The issue is abortion. There are protesters and counterprotesters and the tempo is quickening. The police spot a man knelling in front of one group of protesters pretending to be holding a gun, aiming it right at them. The cops seize him and find that in his car he has two military-style rifles and plenty of ammunition. He is arrested on charges of harassment and possession of a loaded gun in a vehicle. But the police can't figure out which side he was on.

The scenario just described is based on a true story. This is what happened in Rochester, New York in late April. Anti-abortion protesters came to town and were dutifully met by protesters from the other side. One of the counterprotesters, James Krentel, faced the anti-abortion crowd and simulated killing them with a rifle. And yet the police chief exclaimed,

“It does not appear that he is affiliated in any way” with either group. In other words, it is just possible that Krentel might have been a pro-lifer.

Believe this and we’ll sell you the Brooklyn Bridge.

HITLER—NOT AN ATHEIST?

Just when we think we’ve heard it all, we read in *Free Inquiry*, the house organ of secular humanists, that Hitler was not an atheist.

William Donohue couldn’t hold back and that is why he wrote the following: “John Patrick Michael Murphy may have an Irish-Catholic sounding name, but his true colors are that of an atheist. And a dumb one at that. Anyone stupid enough to argue that Hitler was not an atheist—after all that has been written about him—deserves not to have an audience outside the readership of *Free Inquiry*. I have no doubt that he will get exactly what he deserves.”

Next thing you know they’ll be saying that Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot were God-fearing men who did what they could to promote religious freedom. We’ve heard of spin, but this is getting ridiculous.

PEDIGREE OF EVIL

Worse than the terrible tragedy at Columbine High School is the refusal to learn from what happened. The two killers,

Dylan Klebod and Eric Harris, were admirers of the Satanic rock singer, Marilyn Manson. The Trench Coat Mafia, taking after Manson, also adored Hitler.

"They sing Marilyn Manson songs and joke about killing people." That was how one of the Columbine students characterized the killers. "They're really into Nazis. They take pride in Hitler."

The connection between Manson and Hitler and the Trench Coat Mafia is this: evil is the driving force. That is why Manson entitled one of his albums, "Antichrist Superstar": his goal is to convey the message of evil.

"I am so Anti-American, I'd sell you suicide/I am totalitarian, I've got abortion in my eyes." That is what Marilyn Manson sings about. He also sings about suicide. And, of course, he has gone out of his way to attack Catholics.

Now compare this to what the two killers put on their website: "What I don't like, I waste."

The experts tell us that parents and teachers need to take serious certain "warning signs" that are useful for spotting troubled kids. Among them are the following: joining a clique of weird kids; sporting swastikas, skulls and gravestones; listening to music with satanic or violent lyrics; obsessing with the occult, warfare or gory video games; self-mutilation, such as sticking safety pins in the ears, or excessive body-piercing, etc.

The saddest part of all is that there are millions of parents and teachers for whom such knowledge would be a revelation.

Look for things to get worse as we get closer to the year 2000: the crazies will be coming out of the woodwork.

SENSITIVITY POLICE AT SYRACUSE

Since 1965, students at Syracuse University have been walking by a law-school building that features a sculpture of Moses with horns on his head. Not until this spring did any student group have a problem with this. But then Michael Steinberg saw it and everything changed. Mike is president of the Jewish Law Association on campus. With dispatch, he asked the university to remove the sculpture, saying that at the very least they should put a plaque next to it that would reassure Jews that it was not meant to be offensive.

No sooner had Mike spoken up when Sivan Kaminsky chimed in, arguing that the local chapter of Hillel did not find the sculpture offensive; Sivan is the executive director of the Jewish group's local chapter.

This left the administration in a pickle. But not for long: school officials quickly came down on the side of Mike and that is why a special plaque will be placed alongside the artwork.

Now just imagine what would have happened had the two conflicting groups been Catholic and were fighting over some alleged anti-Catholic artwork on campus. Is there any doubt which side the administration would have taken? Indeed, would not the objecting group have been branded extremist and overly-sensitive? Would there not be cries of censorship in the air?

Those who think we're not giving Syracuse officials their due should consider this. Last October, when Pat Buchanan gave a talk at Syracuse, gay activists not only disrupted his talk,

they actually burned a Bible outside the chapel where Pat spoke. Yet not a word of protest was heard from the administration's sensitivity police.

You get the point. If some Jews see anti-Semitism, college officials see anti-Semitism. If some Catholics see anti-Catholicism—even when the incident is a Nazi book-burning event—college officials see freedom of speech. Welcome to college.

CODA ON TURNER

I just want to thank all those members who flooded Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig's office with complaints about Ted Turner. Though I was persuaded by Mr. Selig that the Turner case is not strictly analogous to the Schott case (Turner, for example, never goes to any of the owner's meetings—he does not own the Atlanta Braves—Time Warner does), I still feel it was important to register our concerns with the Commissioner's office. There is no doubt in my mind that our message was heard loud and clear.

The fact that the investigation is still proceeding is a good sign. While it may be difficult to sanction Turner the way Marge Schott was, the threat of a letter of censure, or something to that effect, looms. Look at it this way, several years ago, we probably wouldn't have gotten Turner's initial apology. But now there are few who don't take us seriously, and for this I have you to thank. Good going.

Bill Donohue