

Tired of Fuzzy, Feel-Good Catholic Journalism ?

There was a curious exchange in the Nov. 28, 1999 *Our Sunday Visitor* (OSV) between letter-writer Jack Ferguson and M. Francis Mannion, who's been writing the Q&A feature in OSV. Ferguson complained that certain of Mannion's answers are "fuzzy." Indeed! For example, Mannion said that "God...may be referred to as 'she'.... However....God is normatively understood and spoken of as 'Father'.... There is a question of proper balance...." Balance between what? Between feminism and Revelation?

Ferguson asked Mannion, "Why can't you give it to us straight...?" Ferguson concluded with this indictment: "You are too afraid to offend people" (which could be said of OSV generally). Mannion answered that he is indeed afraid to offend people, "appropriately afraid," adding that "I avoid the practice whenever I can, not thinking it a virtue." Mannion went on to say that he tries to give "subtle" and "balanced" answers to questions, which "often creates a 'both/and' rather than an 'either/or' approach to issues." Mannion concluded by saying that if he wrote in the no-nonsense manner Ferguson was urging, "My mother...would slap me...."

Obviously, Mannion's mother is *not afraid to offend people*: A slap in the face is quite offensive. Nothing fuzzy about her! And, in an ironic way, she's onto something that applies directly to Catholic journalism. The Church is deeply divided between the orthodox and

the dissenters — the situation *is* "either/or." In this context, fuzzy Catholic publications such as OSV and many diocesan papers which try to please everyone will ultimately please no one. Moreover, if Catholic periodicals avoid offending anyone, they will likely not inspire or energize anyone either. Which is why feel-good Catholic journalism is in decline.

St. Peter noted that the Gospel is inherently a "rock of offense" (1 Pet. 2:8). Indeed, inoffensive writing about the Faith could have dire consequences, for Christ our Lord warned "the lukewarm" (the fuzzy?) that He would spew them out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16).

That sounds worse than a slap in the face from dear old mom!

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a robustly orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, aren't afraid to offend people, and we give our readers the story straight. If you think we're exaggerating, consider the fact that OSV and all its sister periodicals — and other feel-good publications — have banned our trademark ads from their pages. Yes, we've got "attitude" (as Karl Keating says) and "cheek" (according to Newsweek). And we're unusually cheap (see below).

The freight train of decadence, dissent, and heresy is headed right at faithful Catholics. Don't let yourself be run over! Get yourself some ammo — by subscribing to our explosive magazine — and together we'll blow up that juggernaut!

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