

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TO THE RIGHT

Being both Catholic and conservative

Dear Editor:

In response to the letter, " 'Right Reason' contradicts its own terms", (Nov. 28, D. Macisaac), I submit the following. It is wholly erroneous to state that one cannot be both a faithful Roman Catholic in good standing with the Church, and, at the same time, a modern political and economic conservative (Phrases like the "New Right", Macisaac, are merely liberal lingo for a political constituency our elite press loathes). To support his contention otherwise, the author gives us a quote made sixty-four years ago by Pope Pius XI denouncing what was then known as "free market" economics (The term "free market economics" has literally adopted a new meaning today versus sixty years ago - a fact that D. Macisaac was assuredly and regrettably unaware of). Macisaac then takes a great leap in faith - something like that of a Canadian Elk on ice - and applies that quote to today's conservative politicians - evil ideologues whose economic views are decidedly anti-Catholic.

What exactly was Pope Pius XI referring to in his encyclical condemning so-called "free market economics"? (What exactly is 'free market economics'? The term is attributed to a British economist/philosopher named Malthus. Malthus held that all markets - product, commodity, labor etc. - should be completely self-directing. Accordingly, only when completely unfettered by outside regulations could these 'free' markets best serve society at large. Even though such a policy may bring about serious economic hardship - severe food shortages for half a continent etc. - the market in the end would be self-correcting and result in the highest utility for society. The Church, rightfully recognizing Malthus's philosophy as one where utility presupposes morality, spoke out against it. In the quote Macisaac gracefully disembodied, Pope Pius XI merely reiterated the Church's position against any economic system which leads to a rejection of God and morality. (Pope John Paul II, in like fashion, has also written subsequently condemning any economic system - whether it be atheistic Communism or materialistic Capitalism - which threatens to subjugate the spiritual needs of the people.)

Our author regrettably confuses the term 'free market economics', as it has been used traditionally, with the term as it is used - in only the very loosest of terms - in modern political rhetoric. Not one country in the world today has an economic system that would be described traditionally as "free market." The United States, on the contrary, is one of, if not the predominant, 'socialist' trading countries in the world. Our tariff regulations, and quotas are of the highest - if not the highest of any country spanning the globe. We do not have an economic system which even remotely resembles that Contrary to Macisaac's completely erroneous claim, there political major party today - Conservative or Liberal - which is "free market" economic system. On the contrary, a truly free market economy would be completely foreign to our American way of life.

We have grown comfortable with the SEC, the FDA, and literally thousands of consumer protection agencies (and so forth) all designed to regulate the workings of the market. Furthermore, Bill Clinton, a bastion of the liberal left (though he masquerades otherwise), has proven to be as much a student of so-called "free-market" economics as his counterparts on the right. NAFTA, continued trade with China, and GATT are all measures which Clinton favored (as Malthus would have as well).

What then does the term "free market economics" mean today as it is applied to the so-called "Far Right"? Many Americans feel that the same government, designed to protect all citizenry, has itself become somewhat of a nuisance. A growing number of Americans, today, are feeling a similar sense of alienation. Consequently, the political movement towards a smaller, less encroaching federal government is growing. The people who comprise this movement are the evil ideologues our author condemns, borrowing an ill-placed quote from Pope Pius XI.

Consequently, the student newspaper, "Right Reason" may be both politically conservative and, at the same time, in complete harmony with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, not only are there no moral encumbrances associated with being a political and economic conservative, there are a few crucial teachings of the Church which the so-called "New Right" strongly support. This "New Right", for example, believes in the right of a child to have his/her own life. Pope John Paul II has commented that without respect for life, justice cannot exist in society. This represents the most paramount of any issue facing our nation today. The "New Right" is also opposed to anything which threatens the integrity of the nuclear family. This includes opposition to laws legalizing/condoning same-sex relationships, adoptions by homosexual couples, pornography and the exploitation/abuse of women and children. (We have been witnessing the effects of a breakdown of the nuclear family for the last thirty years. Suicide, for example, today, is one of America's leading killers of children.) The "New Right" also recognizes a need to return to an education based on values - not cultural goobly-gook steeped in relativism - and incorporating such things as school prayer. (It is no secret that our educational system is a complete failure. Yet, Catholic schools, who spend twenty-five percent of their public rivals produce pupils who vastly outperform their public school educated peers.) These are all reforms that are much needed, and, which are in complete support of Catholic teaching. Consequently, "Right Reason" may be proud to support this broad ranged group of Americans desperately seeking reform.

NICHOLAS VAKKER
Freshman
Off-Campus

Students defend writing program

Dear Editor:

As graduate Creative Writing students we feel it necessary to respond to John Day's November 28th attack on our program. While Matthew Apple is a member of the Creative Writing program, the opinions expressed in his weekly column are strictly his own. They do not necessarily reflect the sentiments of the rest of the writers.

We trust Day appreciates the importance of personas. Columnists who regularly appear in newspapers frequently adopt them in order to distance their private lives from the very public and sometimes controversial views they express. Perhaps this is true in Apple's case, and he intends his "bratty" and "temper-tantrum" prone persona to incite his reading audience to action or reaction, as the case may be.

Basically, we are dismayed by Day's sweeping generalizations about the Creative Writing program and its students. After all, he attended the University of Notre Dame three years before realizing the existence of the program. Yet, he brands the "world of graduate-level Creative Writing" a "sheltered" one. Furthermore, can someone exposed to our program solely through the bullet that appears below Matthew Apple's name be acquainted enough with the various academic backgrounds and interests of the graduate writing students to be sure he "wouldn't dare attempt to match intellectual wits against" us?

While we value Day's critical assessment of Apple's journalistic pursuits, we caution him not to adopt the same "lack of tolerance" he finds so disturbing in Apple. In order to foster Day's commitment to growing up and assuming a responsible position in society and the work force, we invite him to deepen his acquaintance with the creative community of Notre Dame and attend our next graduate student reading.

KATHY EATON
ESTEBAN GALINDO
Creative Writing students

How to regain ND's Home Field advantage

Dear Editor:

The student body is the key, but unlike the "old days" (pre 1990) the student body isn't enough by itself. To explain:

In the old days, the student body was incohesive enough to make ND Stadium a tough place to visit pretty much on their own. The rest of the crowd never was that great (though granted they are much worse now).

It will be next to impossible to bring the student body back to the old level of 7,000 totally crazed hormonally overdosed young men who all feel closely bonded with the team (because they live with them in the same dorms and go to the same classes), because the demographics have changed forever (higher SAT scores, lots more women - see below).

The trick is to use the fervor for the team that still exist among the student body to act as a catalyst to raise the level of the rest of the crowd to previously unheard of heights. (Here the intelligence and mixed gender composition of today's student body can be assets, in figuring out innovative and clever ways to focus crowd participation as well as to involve the many women who attend the games.)

Reference crowd dynamics:

Working a big crowd is an art (look at any large stadium rock concert). Someone needs to be in charge with good communication to all the folks who can help (PA announcer, band, cheerleaders). That person needs to have a feel for the game (when to cheer, when

to make overwhelming noise to stun the visiting offense and prevent them from hearing their own plays in the huddles, when to sing, when to drown out visitors bands, when to let them have 20 seconds of glory) as well as crowd dynamics. (Tough to train a student each year to do this, at least without a "faculty advisor" of some kind for continuity.)

The cheerleaders appear to have outlived their maximum utility as presently conceived (this is pretty much true across America). They are too "show" oriented. An idea: leave them as is, maybe a bit smaller, put them to useful work, but supplement them with a whole new legion of crowd rousers who are spotted (in cheerleader uniforms, why not, or at least instantly recognizable) throughout the stadium, every ten rows or so, with a set of key signs ("noise" "sing" "quiet" etc.) The can take their cues from the field cheerleaders, and can help counteract today's wine and cheese crowd.

Somebody needs to come up with a few good cheers. Maybe a couple of oldies could be dusted off, like "Who's a person, he's a person, he's a Notre Dame person" for the injured guys, or "We are ND, but basically updated stuff for the 21st century is needed."

Reference music:

Music may be the ideal way to help keep momentum going during the incredibly long TV timeouts. Cheering alone simply won't cut it; if they've been cheering right the crowd needs a change of pace.

The band needs to be gotten under

control. The students in the bank understand their role in the games, but their faculty leaders do not. Halftime is "musicianship" time.

The PA announcer needs to be gotten under control. (There may be times to announce real interesting scores, but before a big play is not one of them.)

As a typical TV timeout sequence: Maybe let the visitor band do something for 20-30 seconds, then jump in on the end of their feeble effort with our own band. Then get the whole damn crowd to sing one of our four different fight songs. (Witness a rock star getting the crowd to sing along; when done right, this can be very powerful. How to do? Try distributing the lyrics at the gates with an explanation that this is important and we need your help; then get the PA announcer to announce it (with enthusiasm: "Now we're going to sing the Hike Song, join in please, the lyrics are on page 49 of your program.") [Note: Get all the lyrics printed prominently and well in the program!] Then get the band to play the song at the right tempo.) Then maybe go into a cheer, which should segue right into the play. At which point if it's our offense everybody quiets down (but the offense is jazzed) but if it's our defense everybody cuts loose. Learning all the songs will have other positive effects for the culture, and will also spill over into the:

Pep rallies:

Way too artificial. Need to get the team seated on one side, and the students out in the middle of the floor ("festival seating"). Need to make it a stu-

dent-oriented event. Bag the cabaret acts for the visitors.

Figure out ways for the band to make an entrance with all the students collected in a giant swing through the campus. Bring back the pre-rally bonfires and the mini-rallies. Sure, sure, the coach and the administration don't want to "lose control" and the insurance people will shudder at the thought of a sprained ankle. But there is enough space in the ACC (terrible place, but let's make the most of it) to do all this safely.

Let the leaders on the team have a role in how it's all orchestrated. It should be fun for everybody, and some genuine inspiration for the team.

Again, using similar music/cheering techniques will help get the visiting fans fired up. They basically don't have much else to do Friday night but to come, so let's at least get them off their behinds. Use the rallies as a tutorial for the new fans on cheering.

Interaction with other sports:

This may be a way to help enhance concerted involvement by the women's dorms. Try working out ways to support women's teams with more enthusiasm, and at the same time get the women's dorms organized and behind the effort to rejuvenate the crowd in the football stadium.

Same for the men's sports. Maybe some of these other players will be vigorous enough and help do things like bring the student tunnel back before the games.

COLONEL PETER HERRLY
LILLIAN PFLUKE