

quite suddenly, in office. What we need to adopt is a mind-set that, if and when such an event occurs, we better be prepared to cast a cold eye and ask all the right and the upsetting questions. ●

Is God A Man?

by M.N.R.

The flap even made the pages of the magisterial *New York Times*. Cardinal John O'Connor of the New York Archdiocese had preached a Father's Day sermon denouncing the

feminist perversion of the Catholic faith that refers, *inter alia*, to God the Mother. The sensationalist tabloid the *New York Post* interpreted the sermon with a roaring headline, "God is a Man, Cardinal Says." When the Archdiocese issued a statement denouncing the headline as a gross distortion, *Post* editor Jerry Nachman defended his exegesis. The Cardinal said that Jesus was a male,

Nachman replied, and that Jesus himself referred to "God the Father." Triumphantly, Nachman concluded: "Male. Father. Not mother. All terms used by the Archbishop. If His Eminence now insists these terms do not translate into the word 'man,' his differences with *The Post* involve se-

mantics, not theology." [*New York Post*, June 18.]

As the great Jackie Mason might say, "these days, every schmuck is a semanticist." The roly-poly, street-smart Nachman might have many virtues, but theologian he ain't. Let's see if we can set this straight. In the first place, as uncomfortable as it might be for feminists, Jesus Christ was, indubitably, a man. Male. He was, moreover, in Christian doctrine, the visible, human embodiment of God the

Son (not Daughter). And Jesus did indeed refer to God as the Father. None of this, however, implies that God is physically a man; as Creator, indeed, he incorporates the masculine and feminine.

There is another important aspect to all this that has not been mentioned in the press. Jesus, as in the case of every human, had two parents. His mother, the Virgin Mary, was human; the *other* parent,

who impregnated Mary, was another aspect of the Triune God, the Holy Spirit. So what does this make the Holy Spirit, if not *father* of Jesus? Eh?

As Cardinal O'Connor quite properly put it: "Christianity is not a philosophical speculation, it is not our work. It is a revelation. . . . We have no right to reconstruct

as we like or choose."

Contrast the voice of outraged feminism over the Cardinal's sermon. Said Ms. Melody Behan, president of the New York City chapter of NOW: "It's astounding that he [the Cardinal] can take something as personal as people's image of God and say what that's supposed to be. People should be free to create the image they worship."

Bill Buckley once referred to the "infinite capacity of liberals to be surprised." Why should Ms. Behan be "astounded"? Where has she been all her life? It is precisely the Cardinal's role to be defender of the faith and part of that defense is to reiterate and expound on what the Christian faith believes to be the correct portrayal of God.

The tipoff, of course, is Ms. Behan's final sentence. This is, as they used to say in the good old days, "a free country." Ms. Behan is entitled to create any image she wants to worship, from the Earth Mother to the graven image of Baal. But why shouldn't the Cardinal, and countless millions of other Christians, be "free" to expound what *they* believe to be the revealed path? Or is Ms. Behan attempting to deny that freedom?

No one, then, is stopping feminists from finding Goddesses to worship, and many of them have, from Gaia the Earth Mother to various adored objects of witchcraft. Or better yet, they could create their own new religions, and perhaps find a She-Messiah who will be crucified and then rise again on the third day. I'm sure many of us have our

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favorite candidates for that glorious role. ●

Degrees Of Punishment

by M.N.R.

There is no generally accepted punishment theory among libertarians, but it is commonly agreed that there should be degrees of punishment, in some way proportioned to the offense. Some prisoners make it to maximum security prisons; others are quartered in comparative luxury. Tops in luxury, perhaps, is the treatment accorded to the alleged No. 1 drug kingpin in Colombia, Pablo Escobar, who worked out a deal with the government that he would only surrender if there were no longer any dread extradition to the United States (as indeed, why should there be? since Pablo's crimes, such as they were, were not committed on U.S. soil).

Well, Escobar is getting the royal treatment. The government has constructed a special luxury fortress just to house Escobar and his entourage, which includes his security guards. Friends come in freely, his mother cooks Pablo's meals, television abounds, and the jail is placed in Pablo's home town, where he is considered a hero. On his first day in the hoosegow, the Mayor greeted him and they had a special dinner together.

It seems that various other prisoners in Columbia, smitten with egalitarian envy, are protesting this treatment that they deem unfair. My favorite comment on this question was by Father Garcia Herreros, the 82-year-old

Catholic priest who mediated Escobar's surrender. When asked how Escobar's palatial jail conditions could be justified, Father Herreros replied: "It's just the way life is. Some people can go to five-star hotels and some people can't." [USA Today, June 24]. Hey, I like that. That's *my* kind of Catholic social theorist! ●

Nobel For Buckley?

by M.N.R.

I see that my old friend, libertarian Idaho businessman Ralph Smeed, has just launched an unauthorized Nobel for Buckley Committee, taking out a large ad in *Human Events* for the cause. Ralph and his colleagues make sure to dissociate themselves from what they themselves call Buckley's "fascist-type" national youth service scheme, but they claim that a Nobel for Buckley's "mountain of good works" would supply a great impetus for the work of "polemicists and purists," among whom they are kind enough to name Mises and myself. As for myself, in my favorite phrase from Sam Goldwyn, kindly include me out. I don't know what this "mountain of good works" may be; as far as I am concerned, Buckley's life-long accomplishment was to transform the largely isolationist, libertarian Old Right from a movement that I admired to a global war-mongering, statist Establishment movement that I abhor. For this monstrous achievement I am supposed to help strew his path with laurels? Note what I am saying: *not* that Bill Buckley is an "impure" member of the same general movement to

which I as a "purist" belong, but that Buckley's entire life-role was and still is to act as a Trojan Horse for the other side, and to convert a largely libertarian opposition movement into a vital bulwark of the Leviathan State. For this I suppose Bill deserves some sort of recognition, but a Nobel Prize is not the sort I have in mind.

To put it another way: I am all for civility and cooperation among different wings of the same general movement; but *first*, it is necessary to figure out who's on which side.

More particularly, and setting this broader view aside, what is Bill supposed to get a Nobel Prize *in*? Somehow, I don't think that Buckley's contribution to physics or chemistry is quite enough to get him an award, and the last I looked they don't hand out Nobels for prowess in sailing. Literature? Even I, a devotee of spy novels, would not propose a Nobel for Buckley's CIA-espionage trash. And surely, even his closest friends would not claim that Buckley knows enough about economics to get a Nobel Prize there. So in what then? No, don't tell me, Ralph: *not* the Peace Prize! Surely it can't be *that*? There must be *some* standards left in our culture. His entire adult life, Bill Buckley has whooped it up for every war in which the United States has been engaged: whether it be the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, or the latest adventure in the Gulf. I suppose you can say that if Kissinger got the award, anything is possible, but surely there is *some* shame left in Scandinavia. ●