NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Q & A: Michelle Boorstein

Michael Sean Winters | Jul. 9, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

This feature poses one question to a group of newsmakers, analysts, and experts. On the subject of the Church and the media, we have already heard from a variety of voices: Sr. Mary Ann Walsh of the USCCB, ABC's George Stephanopoulos, Whispers in the Loggia's Rocco Palmo, NPR's Michel Martin, and, yesterday, from the Archdiocese of Boston's Communications Director, Terry Donilon. Today we hear from the Washington Post's religious correspondent, Michelle Boorstein.
This week's question: "What is the principle impediment to good media coverage of Catholicism/religion?"
Michelle Boorstein:
The premise of the question is flawed. What's "the Church"? The pope? Anyone who calls themselves Catholic? Catholics can't even agree on whether one can even be called a "Catholic" if they support reproductive freedom or same-sex unions -- how can you agree on what is fair press coverage?

And is there such a thing as "press coverage" anymore? Today there are newspapers, sophisticated blogs, extensive aggregators, essay sites, news mags from around the world translated into English. While useful for rousing emotion (and fundraising), I think this "hostile media" image is inaccurate, and won't resonate to most Catholics around the world.

That said, I've found certain elements of the Church - especially the hierarchy - are struggling in today's open, Wild West communications culture. They just won't get into the intellectual mosh pit and exchange ideas. The pope is maybe the world's only figure who is totally unavailable for comment or even explanation. Forget seeing him on Larry King, his own spokespeople really can't even elaborate on his views. I've traveled with him and he does not answer sufficiently the questions many Catholics really want to know.

Next week: What is the best reason to vote to confirm, or not to confirm, Elena Kagan?

Source URL (retrieved on *03/26/2015 - 19:04*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/q-michelle-boorstein