

Reminders of those who afflicted the comfortable

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It's a rare day when *The New York Times* features the wedding of "radicals," let alone when one of them is named Berrigan.

But this past Sunday, the nuptials of Frida Berrigan, the first of three children of Philip Berrigan and Elizabeth McAlister, was spotlighted in grand style.

They were accorded such notice undoubtedly by dint of Berrigan notoriety and uncle Daniel's Jesuit background, a credential that the paper places in the realm of elite institutions that deserve at least formal respect.

All the same, the attention was welcome inasmuch as it made me aware that Frida Berrigan continues to carry the flame of resistance to lazy, status-quo approval of war and to the horrors of torture. Her husband, Patrick Sheehan-Gaumer, flies the same flags.

Frida's parents earned the admiration of many Americans by doing acts of conscientious objection and landing in jail. The same actions also evoked scorn and condemnation from a broad range of Christians. Establishment newspapers were fascinated by the daring but always held the law breakers at arms length as uncomfortably scandalous.

Thus the wedding announcement felt the need to note that Philip and Elizabeth had "left their callings" and committed such crimes as pouring blood on draft files, just so we'd know they weren't being given kid gloves treatment. The possibility that the couple had found their callings by leaving their religious communities behind probably never occurred.

The bolstering news is that Frida has been immersed in Catholic Worker service and is active in Witness Against Torture, an effort to abolish the Guantanamo prison. While embodying the passion for justice in both her parents, it's worth noting that she carries on the remarkable example of her mother who has often been unfairly overshadowed by the more dramatic (and male) actions of her father and his brother (Dolly Pomerleau was similarly undersung as perhaps the prime mover at the Quixote Center).

Overall, the wedding announcement portrays the couple as kindred spirits with similar callings though chastened by the persistent and growing obstacles to achieving them.

Halting war and closing Guantanamo remain among their respective, elusive goals, Patrick noted in the wedding article, so "If you're going to be involved in seemingly futile undertakings, you might as well do it with someone you love."

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