

Presidential Apologist

To the Editor:

As a Catholic who has been educated by Jesuits, I am appalled by the statements of Dr. John McLaughlin in defense of Mr. Nixon's conduct.

He excuses the President's immoral actions as mere "damage control" while in fact the lies and evasive tactics embraced by the White House have caused and are still causing more damage than the original Watergate break-in ever could have accomplished. Father McLoughlin interprets Mr. Nixon's deceptions, hypocrisies and cynicisms as an "acquittal with honor" and brands as "erroneous, unjust and hypocritical" anyone who comes to a different conclusion.

Well, Father, many good citizens differ with your conclusion—including a number of the politicians who will decide Mr. Nixon's eventual fate. If these transcripts, as damaging as they are, were supposed to prove Mr. Nixon's innocence, I wonder what dynamite is contained in the material that he is fighting so desperately to hold on to.

STEPHEN J. LOMBARDO
Brooklyn, May 9, 1974

Un-Awesome Impeachment

To the Editor:

Representative Hutchinson, in his opening statement to the House Judiciary Committee, referred to the power of impeachment as "the most awesome power constitutionally vested in the House of Representatives."

It is no such thing. The House, jointly with the Senate, has the power to declare war. A declaration of war brings with it all the national chaos, trauma, tragedy that are claimed as results of impeachment. And these dislocations cause havoc not in one country but in many.

Impeachment is not awesome at all;

it is a useful tool to initiate the peaceable removal of an office-holder from the office he has sullied. It is not violent; it brings no death or destruction; it causes no chaos. Its chief characteristic is its legality.

CAROL BERNSTEIN FERRY
Scarsdale, N. Y., May 11, 1974

All-American Glass House

To the Editor:

The Presidential transcripts of the so-called Watergate tapes prove one thing at least: People do not listen to themselves.

Outcries of disbelief and chagrin over language and attitude used by the President and his coterie reek of a certain "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." Are we aghast that the President should think and speak as deviously as ourselves? His greater sin, perhaps, is not what he said but that he permitted the tapes to be transcribed and distributed to expose us all.

We humans are often a low-minded crew. Our saving grace is that we often show compassion for those who fail as we fail.

STANFORD ERICKSON
Mamaroneck, N. Y., May 9, 1974

The Big Defense Fund

To the Editor:

The enormous price paid by the public to defend President Nixon is a disgrace. Mr. St. Clair's salary of \$42,500 plus millions of dollars spent for the services of the White House staff should not be the responsibility of the American taxpayer. Where is the legal or constitutional precedent for such payment? Why should we be penalized to help President Nixon defend his role in the Watergate incident?

ALICE F. KESSLER
Old Westbury, L. I., May 3, 1974