

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

February 28, 2014 at 4:15pm

While you watch the Oscars

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NCR Today

On *Interfaith Voices* every week, we scan the news and upcoming events and ask, "Is there a religion angle to this story?"

When the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia were in the news, for example, we produced a feature on the Russian Orthodox Church and its important political role in Putin's administration.

This week, it's the Oscars. And my senior producer for *Interfaith Voices*, Laura Kwerel, who is Jewish, asked quite innocently, "Have you ever heard of the Legion of Decency?"

Had I ever heard of the Legion of Decency? Just about every week in grade school and high school! "But it's not around anymore," I said "but we soon discovered that Catholic News Service has its own contemporary ratings service for movies (Diocesan newspapers typically publish them).

But a little research told us that the Legion of Decency had enormous power in the 1930s, 1940s, and into the 1950s "when the Catholic "word from on high" could actually keep audiences away from any motion picture deemed lurid or out of bounds.

Want to stroll down memory lane and hear that history? Visit our website and hear my interview on the history of the Legion of Decency and Laura's interview with the current Catholic movie reviewer.

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