

# Father Curran among Four Criticized by Vatican

Vatican City (NC) -- Pope John Paul II's focus on procreation as a central theme of marriage in his July 11 general audience was part of a series of talks on the issue which a Vatican official said were necessitated by "confusion and doubt" created by some Catholic theologians regarding birth control.

At a press conference after the audience, Msgr. Carlo Caffarra, president of the Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, named Father Charles Curran of The Catholic University of America in Washington as one of a group of theologians whose opposition to the "clear teaching of the church" on marriage and procreation "can have caused confusion and doubts in the minds of the faithful."

(Father Curran is a priest of the Rochester diocese.)

Msgr. Caffarra also named Father Hans Kung of Tübingen University in West Germany, Father Franz Bockle of the University of

Bonn, West Germany, and the late Father Marc Oraison of France.

Msgr. Caffarra said the theologians "have contested 'Humanae Vitae' from the time it came out."

"They have helped prevent 'Humanae Vitae' from being effective," he said.

Father Curran was a leader in the dissent against the encyclical in 1968. In 1979, he told the Italian magazine *Espresso* that the teaching that "contraception is always and everywhere wrong has to be rethought."

Reacting to reports of Msgr. Caffarra's remarks, Father Curran told NC News in Washington, "I think it's a little ludicrous to blame four theologians, including one who is dead," for the widespread Catholic rejection of the encyclical's teaching on artificial contraception.

He noted that some "600 people with degrees in the sacred sciences" signed the 1968 statement of dissent with the encyclical and that

"about 75 percent of Catholic married couples in the United States practice some form of artificial contraception."

He also said he was "amazed and dismayed that they would accuse a dead man" among the individuals singled out for criticism.

Pope John Paul said a key teaching of Pope Paul VI's encyclical is that "each marriage act must remain open to transmitting life."

Father Curran, asked about the specific criticism that dissenting theologians have accepted contemporary thinking on sexuality too uncritically, said, "Most people in the modern culture who have commented on my writings consider them too conservative and too critical of contemporary thinking."

He said he agreed with Msgr. Caffarra's comments that biological reductionism and reduction of human relationships to property or use are theological errors.

"Human relationships should be governed by human norms" and not merely biological ones, he said.

The American theologian said that one of the chief criticisms of "Humanae Vitae" by dissenting theologians was that the "reasoning behind" its insistence on every marital act being open to procreation "is based on a faulty anthropology that ultimately does absolutize the biological."

Dissenting theologians also tend to place much greater importance on "the experi-

ence of married people" than Pope Paul did in the encyclical, he said.

Referring to an intervention on artificial contraception by Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster, England, at the 1980 world Synod of Bishops on marriage and family life, Father Curran said the cardinal argued that "the experience of Christian people is a locus theologicus," or appropriate source for theological insight and reflection.

This does not mean "absolutizing" people's experience or reducing theology "to a Gallup poll approach," said Father Curran, but it means taking that experience seriously.

"I think the responsibility of these theologians is very grave," Msgr. Caffarra said.

He accused such theologians of having "a vision that has accepted without sufficient criticism many 'pseudo-dogmas' of the contemporary sexual culture." Examples of theological error, he said, were "the failure to see that the creative capacity of man is not a purely biological fact," and "the failure to understand that the relationship between human bodies is not a relationship of property or use."

Msgr. Caffarra said the pope planned to use audiences throughout the next 12 weeks to highlight the lessons of "Humanae Vitae" on the regulation of birth, focusing particularly on its prohibition of the use of artificial birth control.

"The pope intends to re-

establish the teachings of 'Humanae Vitae' and (the apostolic exhortation) 'Familiaris Consortio,'" Msgr. Caffarra told reporters.

Msgr. Caffarra, a moral theologian, is a member of the Vatican's International Theological Commission and is a consultant to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Council for the Family. He has been president of the Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family since it was established by Pope John Paul as a separate branch of Rome's Pontifical Lateran University in 1982.

Msgr. Caffarra said he was invited by the Vatican press office to brief reporters on the significance of the new series of papal talks.

## Abortion Rate

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boggles the mind in and of itself."

Calling pro-life services for women with problem pregnancies and anti-abortion education a factor in stemming the tide, Father Bryce said these must be reinforced and expanded.

Dan Donehey, public relations director of the National Right to Life Committee, called pro-life education a factor in slowing the abortion rate as well as reports by women who have had abortions to their peers about the physical and psychological dangers.

He also pointed out, however, that the U.S. population is aging, putting fewer women in the

under-25-year-old category that has the largest percentage of abortions. This demographic shift "gets at the heart" of the decline, he said.

Donehey said he believes that attitudes are shifting and that there is a trend for younger people to be more opposed to abortion.

Nellie Gray, president of March for Life, said: "No American can take comfort in these statistics. Abortions are increasing; it is only the rate of killing that is slowing down somewhat. The American abortion holocaust remains at staggering and incomprehensible levels and shall be a shame on our country until CDC reports that the number of abortions plummeted to zero."

## Ferraro

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of Archie Bunker, the fictitious, bigoted character in the 1970s television series "All in the Family."

Married to John Zaccaro for nearly a quarter of a century, Ms. Ferraro retains her maiden name to honor her mother, who struggled financially to raise her daughter after the death of her husband.

Ms. Ferraro said her faith is important to her, and Msgr. Gerald Langelier, pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Forest Hills, said Ms. Ferraro is a "very faithful, regularly attending member" of the parish, along with her husband and three children.

She has served as an adviser to the parish on such programs as work with the elderly.

## Rome and SSJs

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which major homework needs to be done; and items presently suitable for discussion.

The congregation will shortly begin work with a consultant from SCRIS, Sister Mary Linscott, a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur of the Ipswich Province in Massachusetts.

Such a process, Sister Elizabeth Anne said, is a fairly common phenomenon.

She named two other congregations of Sisters of St. Joseph in her immediate acquaintance to make the point.

Sister Agnes Catherine Battersby, a member of the SSJ committee and assistant superior general, said, "We never expected 100 percent acceptance (of the constitution). But we felt very good about the letter in response, just by the very fact of the tone of the wording."

The congregation has written to Sister Mary describing the history, the course of the chapters and the processes used in developing the constitution, Sister Elizabeth Anne said. "And we want to talk about them. We're not going with tons of answers," she said.

And, she acknowledged, it is possible that the meeting with Sister Mary "could take care of it."

Sister Patricia Schoelles, also a member of the group which will meet with Sister Mary, said, "I like the idea that we will understand (SCRIS) terms better."

Sister Agnes Catherine sees the meeting as "furthering the process, bringing it one step farther... (an opportunity for) clarifying things for us and for her."

The meeting with Sister Mary will take place Aug. 5 in Ipswich.

Sister Mary was unavailable for comment.

## CARA Head In New Post

Washington (NC) -- Passionist Father Cassian J. Yuhaus, president of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, has been named executive director of the Institute for World Concerns at Duquesne University.

The announcement was made by Passionist Father Brendan Keevey, the order's eastern provincial superior, and Holy Ghost Father Donald S. Nesti, Duquesne president.

The purpose of the Duquesne institute is to influence corporate and government leaders to increase global interdependence.

Father Yuhaus worked with CARA for 15 years. He was appointed president of CARA in 1980. He will begin at Duquesne in September.

## Humane Vitae

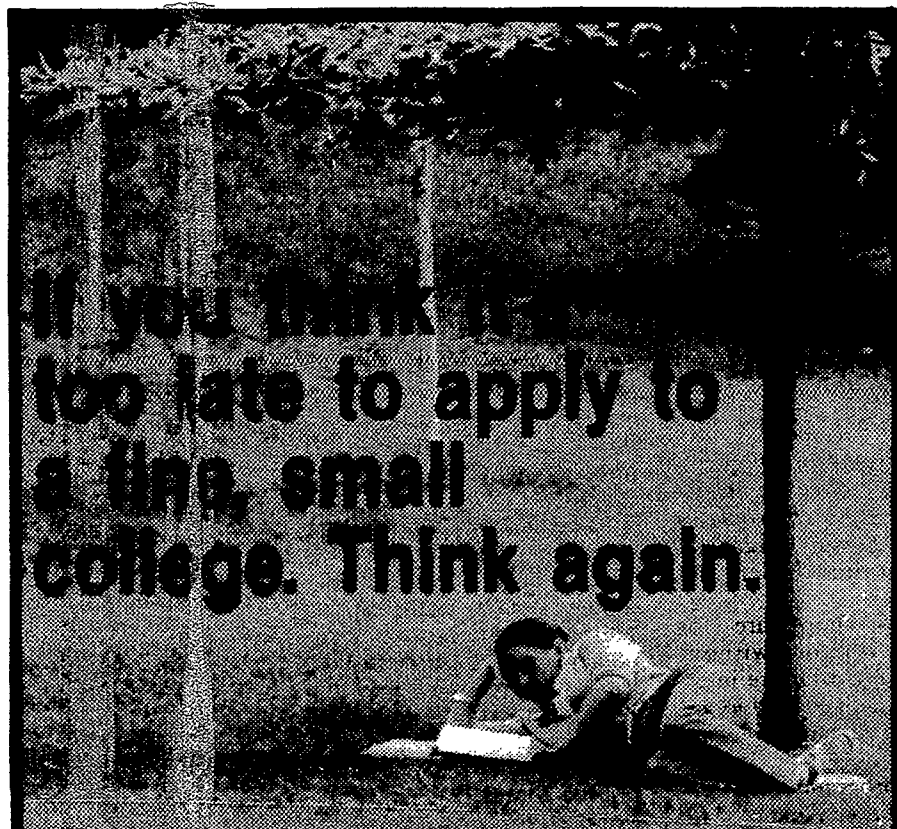
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such a moment that is so rich in significance," he said.

Such an understanding is an "indispensable condition" for acting "in conformity with moral law and moral values," the pope said.

The foundation for the moral law, Pope John Paul said, is in "the nature of this same act and, even more deeply, in the nature of the people who act."

The pope prefaced his remarks by explaining that the subject of conjugal and family morality would complete the intermittent series of audience talks on human love, which began several years ago.



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