



### Religious Treasures

Six architecturally striking and historically significant Rochester churches were included in a recent Landmark Society tour. See Pages 10 and 11.



### Coaching Conflict

Describing his position as "transient," Aquinas basketball coach Mike Ruff leaves his post on the heels of a winning season. See Page 14.

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## World & Nation in Brief from NC News

### World

#### Peace Mass in Peking

**Peking (NC)** — A Mass for world peace has been celebrated in Peking, the first such Mass in China's capital in more than 30 years.

Celebrated March 9 in the newly reopened Cathedral of Our Savior, the Mass reportedly was attended by more than 2,000 Catholics.

Chinese-appointed Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of Peking celebrated the Mass. China's official New China News Agency quoted Bishop Fu as saying:

"Our Chinese Catholics are very concerned about world peace, as well as the development of a more human society. We Catholics are responsible for safeguarding and defending world peace, and when it is threatened, we are obliged to build peace."

#### End fratricide in Angola

**Vatican City (NC)** — Bishops in the southern African nation of Angola have called on the international community to help end a 10-year-old "fratricidal war" between guerrillas and the country's Marxist government, Vatican Radio has reported.

The bishops made their appeal in a pastoral letter entitled: "Firm in Hope: Pastoral Reflections After 10 Years of Independence," distributed March 16.

"The flowering of our youth is dying on the battlefields," the statement said.

"A fratricidal war is wearing away our country. Even foreign forces are making a battleground of our land. We are decimated physically and morally," the bishops said.

### Nation

#### Reverse gay rights bill

**New York (NC)** — The Archdiocese of New York has said it will investigate the possibility of legal action to reverse New York City's newly approved homosexual civil rights bill. The bill, backed by the City Council March 20 on a vote of 21-14, had been the focus of intense debate. Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York and Bishop Francis J. Mugavero of Brooklyn, whose diocese includes two of the city's five boroughs, had jointly condemned the proposal as an attempt to secure "legal approval of homosexual conduct."

#### Vatican norms supported

**Washington (NC)** — The head of Fellowship of Catholic Scholars said his organization, made up primarily of Catholics working in higher education, supports a set of controversial norms proposed by the Vatican to govern Catholic colleges and universities. Msgr. George A. Kelly, a teacher at St. John's University in Jamaica, N.Y., told a Catholic University of America audience in mid-March that it is "inconceivable that a school at any stage of education can call itself Catholic without simultaneously relating itself to the magisterium (teaching authority) of the church." The proposed norms, prepared and distributed last year by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, have been criticized by many Catholic educators.

World

## Implications of Curran case interpreted at symposium

By Karen M. Franz

The case of Father Charles E. Curran has stirred up a wave of controversy within the diocese and in Catholic communities throughout the nation and world.

Yet within the controversy, some local ministers find "a teachable moment" — an opportunity to educate the faithful on the doctrine of infallible and non-infallible Church teachings, the history of dissent in the Church and the specific issues of Father Curran's dissent.

The Friends of Father Curran — a group comprised of priests, religious and lay persons — presented the first of three forums for pastoral staff on Father Curran's case on Friday, March 21, at St. Anthony's Church, Rochester. Rather than debating whether Father Curran is "correct" in his dissenting opinions, the group used the two-hour forum to discuss the broader question of legitimate dissent and the pastoral implications of the case.

"This is a symposium, an exchange of information," explained Father Daniel Tormey at the outset of the presentation. "It is not a rally; it is not a debate." He said that the case is an opportunity to learn about ourselves and about the institutional Church.

The first presentation on the agenda was made by Rebecca Gifford, associate director of the diocesan division of Urban Services. Gifford, a former student of Father Curran, outlined the chronology of his case, reviewing the high points in the seven-year Vatican investigation which has led to the present stalemate.

Kenneth Weare, professor of theology at St. John Fisher College, then discussed the historical background of dissent from and change in Church teaching. Theology, he asserted, "in order to fully serve the Church, must be free to go beyond merely repeating itself."

Weare then addressed himself to the question of whether it is possible to say that Church teaching is changing, asserting that such change is "quite evident" in the history of the Church. As an example of such change, he cited the Church's insistence during the 19th century that the human being did not have a right to freedom of religion. Since Vatican II, however, the Church has looked upon religious liberty as an inalienable right, he explained.

Similarly, he noted that during the Middle Ages, the Church held that there was no salvation outside of the Roman Catholic Church. "The Council of Florence in 1445 insisted that only Catholics have access to eternal salvation. Vatican II repeatedly taught that there is plentiful salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church," Weare continued, citing from Vatican II documents *Gaudium et Spes* and *Lumen Gentium*.

Weare said that during Father Curran's recent meeting with the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Bernard Hering, Father Curran's former teacher who acted as his counsel during the meeting, presented the Congregation with a two-page paper outlining earlier dissent and change, not just within the Church but in Holy Office itself. "The Holy Office once taught that slavery was not intrinsically evil," Weare said.

Weare noted that in questions of dissent, a distinction can be drawn between the expressions of *Lumen Gentium* #25 and *Gaudium et Spes* #62. He cited from *Lumen Gentium*: "... in their authoritative teaching concerning matters of faith and morals (the



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

### Easter Ukrainian-style

Helen R. Masely's annual Easter visit to Ss. Peter and Paul School in Auburn links students with the cultural heritage of the Ukraine. See Page 8 for story and more photos.

bishops) are in agreement that a particular teaching is to be held definitively and absolutely."

In seeming contrast is the following quote from *Gaudium et Spes*: "... the faithful, both clerical and lay, should be accorded a lawful freedom of inquiry, of thought, and of expression, tempered by humility and courage in whatever branch of study they have specialized."

Those who wish to defend the authority of the Magisterium emphasize *Lumen Gentium* #24, he said, while those defending the faithful's right to inquiry and dissent emphasize *Gaudium et Spes* #62.

Weare also discussed the question of assent of soul as reflected in the documents of Vatican II and in the earlier Manuals used to prepare seminarians. Based upon these documents, Weare said, "assent may be withheld if a decree of the Magisterium seems false." He asserted that dissent is acceptable, in so far as the dissenter accepts that the presumption of truth is on the side of the Magisterium.

He noted, however, that the Manuals do not legitimize public dissent. "The Manuals fail to see that public dissent may be the instrument of the Holy Spirit to correct a

teaching that is in error," Weare said. The Manuals offered the option only of one-way discussion, Weare said, but Vatican II opened the door for two-way discussion.

Quoting from *Gaudium et Spes*, #92, he said: "... the Church shows itself as a sign of the spirit of brotherhood which renders possible sincere dialogue and strengthens it. Such a mission requires us first of all to create in the Church itself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony, and acknowledge all legitimate diversity, in this way all who constitute the one people of God will be able to engage in an ever more fruitful dialogue, whether they are pastors or other members of the faithful." Thus, Weare asserted, the Magisterium must elicit opinions from a diversity of persons. It must be the learner as well as the teacher and cannot place itself above the faithful.

Weare then turned attention to several models of dissent in the Church, and asserted that change in the Church could not have developed if the faithful were not free to criticize papal views. "There must then be room for legitimate criticism of the ordinary teaching of the Church," he said.

Common to these models of dissent is the

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