

Father Curran

Continued from Page 1

basically believe in the system itself, but disagree with A, B or C, and I want to work to change them," he explained.

He stressed the need to understand the existence of various levels of teaching within the Church. "I have never disagreed with the core of the faith," he said. "Most of moral theology has admitted throughout history that it is based not on faith but on human reasoning."

He emphasized that throughout history, the Church has changed its positions on several moral questions, citing in particular changes in earlier prohibitions against receiving interest on loans and on the right to religious liberty. He also noted that the Church once declared that slavery was not intrinsically immoral.

On sexuality, also, the Church has modified its positions. "The early Church taught that the only thing that could keep sexual activity from being sinful was the intent of procreation," Father Curran said. In 1949, he noted, the Church changed this position, allowing that Catholics could engage in sexual activity during periods of infertility to avoid procreation.

Father Curran said that an understanding of history has allowed him to avoid feelings of bitterness about being singled out for sanctions. "One thing about the Roman Catholic Church — they take their theologians seriously," he observed.

He spoke of a continuous tension between theologians and the hierarchy. Theologians, he said, are the Church's advance team, scouting out the territory ahead.

"People have always seen it (theology) as all or nothing," Father Curran commented. As an example, he said that after Vatican II many lay people asked, "Now that you've given up the rule against eating meat on Friday, are you going to throw out Jesus Christ too?"

He acknowledged that his case has upset and angered many faithful Catholics who may see his dissent as an attempt to radically change the Church. "Obviously, I have to be very cognizant of that," Father Curran said. "People have looked on the Church as an absolute, unchanging rock of security in a changing world."

Father Curran said he has purposely gone out of his way to explain the issues of his case in an effort to avoid hurting faithful Catholics. "I do this because I think it is for the good of the Catholic Church in the long run. I wouldn't be responsible if I didn't realize that some Catholics are going to be hurt."

Yet he said, "one of the greatest dangers in the United States is that we have made the marks of Catholic identity not so much the core and central aspects of the faith, but the peripheral ones — meat on Friday and sexual regulations."

"There are some levels where we recognize that change is possible ... St. Peter would have flunked a first-grade catechism test," he said, noting that many of the principles of

'Roman Catholic theology never said to rely on scripture alone. You have to constantly try to understand scripture in the light of the contemporary world. Not everything contemporary is good. Sometimes you have to severely criticize the world; sometimes you should learn from it.'

catechism came long after St. Peter's time. "It was not until the 7th century that we accepted seven as the number of sacraments," Father Curran noted.

He again stressed the need for a constant reinterpretation of scripture in the light of the contemporary world. That need is related to the topic of the remarks Father Curran was to make to the medical community in Highland Hospital's symposium that afternoon.

During the symposium, Father Curran was to talk to doctors about the moral questions of treatment of handicapped newborns. In outlining his remarks, Father Curran told reporters, "I argue that in the Roman Catholic theological tradition you don't have to do everything possible."

As early as the 15th century, Father Curran noted, the Church began to distinguish between ordinary and extraordinary means of treatment. Extraordinary means do not have to be used in every case, he said, because the Church contends that the value

of human life is not absolute.

"I think my position is in accord with Vatican teaching," Father Curran continued, referring to a Vatican study made public last October on the artificial prolongation of life.

Father Curran spoke of a tension between opposing emphases within the Church — the quality of life and the sanctity of life. Determinations on the use of extraordinary means, he said, must be decided on an individual basis, relying on some general norms. "The genius of Roman Catholic faith and theology is that you do that all the time."

"Roman Catholic theology never said to rely on scripture alone. You have to constantly try to understand scripture in the light of the contemporary world," he concluded. "Not everything contemporary is good. Sometimes you have to severely criticize the world; sometimes you should learn from it."

Contributing to this story was Jerry Filteau, NC News

DINING AROUND THE DIOCESE

Conesus Inn, ON BEAUTIFUL CONESUS LAKE
 2170 EAST LAKE ROAD 1-716-346-6100
 (East side of Conesus Lake)

"For the Prime of your life"
SERVING DINNERS
 TUESDAY THROUGH SUNDAY
 MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY

DINNERS SERVED NIGHTLY
 Except Monday

HOURS: Tues, Wed, Thurs 5-9 P.M.
 Fri. & Sat 5-11 P.M. — Mother's Day 1-9 P.M.
 Your Host & Hostess, Joe & Evelyn Scardella
 Special Attention
Conesus Inn Given to
 Banquets & Parties

THE HISTORIC OATKA

A Fine Dining & Drinking Establishment Since 1824
 17 Main St., Scottsville
 We honor VISA, MASTERCARD & AMERICAN EXPRESS
 889-2560
 Reservations Appreciated (except Friday)

For Your Dining & Dancing Pleasure
ROBERT MAXWELL CASE
 EVERY THURSDAY THRU SUNDAY
 EXCEPT SAT., MAY 3rd & Sun., MAY 4th
 Thurs. 7-10 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. 8:30-12:30; Sun. 6-9 p.m.

FEATURING:
 SATURDAY, MAY 3rd & SUNDAY, MAY 4th
 DIRECT FROM NEW ZEALAND
 ART ST. HILAIRE

BOSDYK'S

RESTAURANT and COCKTAIL LOUNGE

430 Spencerport Road,
 Rochester, New York

247-7690

Featuring Daily Lunch & Dinner Specials
 Entertainment Thursday thru Sunday, Evenings
 Banquet Facilities Available

MOTHERS DAY MENU
 SUNDAY MAY 11th
 SERVING 12:15-6:00

Featuring

Roast Loin of Pork with Apple Walnut Dressing	6.95
Filet of Sole Florentine with Hollandaise Sauce	7.95
Roast Prime Rib of Beef	7.95
Crabmeat Stuffed Chicken	7.95
Top Sirloin Steak with Sautéed Mushrooms	8.50
Veal Parmesan	8.50
Veal Oscar	9.95
Top Sirloin Steak & Broiled Shrimp	10.95

Make your Reservations By Calling 889-2560