

C-J Opinions

Controversy in Church is no new phenomenon

To the Editor:

Controversies are not new phenomena in Christ's Holy Church. They have raged in every age, back even to the time of the apostles. At times, they centered on theological questions; other times on moral or even political issues. St. Peter and Paul (even our Blessed Lord) could have avoided persecution and death if they had only preached a theology of compromise. St. Athanasius, that lone voice in the battle against the Arian heresy, would never have had to suffer. In 16th-century England only one bishop, St. John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, remained loyal to the faith and to the pope. His fidelity and courage resulted in his martyrdom and the terrible persecution of the faithful, continuing in Northern Ireland to this very day.

Still, we do not learn our lessons from history — so each age repeats them anew in striving to assert independence from the Christ-given authority of His Church. When, dear Lord, will someone proclaim loudly and clearly, **Vatican II did not change one iota of Catholic doctrine** — neither did Vatican I, nor did the Council of Trent, nor the Council of Florence, nor any other council back to the Council of Jerusalem.

Our current problems arise in part from quoting isolated texts from the documents of Vatican II, and are identical to those arising from snatching isolated verses of Holy Scripture. But we believe that Christ founded

His Church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic, to teach His truth for all ages.

This truth is still taught through the voice of the Holy Magisterium, and those bishops united in teaching with the "Rock," Pope John Paul II has been lucidly clear. In an address to U.S. bishops in September, 1983, he counseled: "... the compassionate bishop will proclaim without fear or ambiguity the many controverted truths of our age. Hence the compassionate bishop proclaims the indissolubility of marriage ... the incompatibility of pre-marital sex and homosexuality ... the doctrines of *Humanae Vitae* and *Familiaris Consortio* ... not passing over in silence the unpopular truth that artificial birth control is against God's law. In a word, the bishop, as a sign of compassion, is at the same time a sign of fidelity to the doctrines of the Church. Like Jesus, the bishop proclaims the gospel of salvation, not as a human consensus, but as a divine revelation."

Advice from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius seems quite relevant: "We should put away completely our own opinion and keep our minds ready and eager to give our entire obedience to our holy Mother the hierarchical Church, Christ our Lord's undoubted spouse" (Rules for Thinking with the Church n.353).

Dorothy H. Polzinetti
Troy Street
Seneca Falls

Church again rejects pleas for appeasement

To the Editor:

As the Synod of Bishops met in November, 1985, many dissident groups with their own particular pet gripes became infuriated when they learned that the agenda of the synod had completely ignored their impossible anti-Catholic exhortations, suggesting action that would have reduced the Church to an organization governing by appeasement, factionalism and power plays.

Instead, true to its central theme — celebration, verification, promotion of the Second Vatican Council — the synod, in prayer and action, worked in body and spirit to propose suggestions: For the continued needs of people worldwide in expression and interpretation of the deposit of faith formed in sacred scripture and in the living tradition of the Church as well as the social doctrine of the Church as it relates to human promotion in ever new situations — with the preferential option for the poor, etc.

A particular recommendation, the op-

portunity use of the means of social communication — mass media — is recognized.

December 8, 1985 ended the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops. January, 1986, came and with it the 1985 World Synod Final Documentary. The official Vatican English translation of the final document of the synod states: "The Church, in the Word of God, celebrates the mysteries of Christ for the salvation of the world."

The bishops had committed themselves to its promotion, when suddenly appearing at the Vatican March 8, 1986, seeking appeasement on his own terms, came Father Charles Curran, and all hell broke loose.

Hear him clamor to the courts and the secular press for sanctuary and tenure when he's not doing the job.

Please Good Lord assist him.

William T. Constable
Cynthia Drive
Geneva

In accordance with God's plan, nothing on earth goes to waste

To the Editor:

There's a line in "God's Grandeur," by Gerard-Manley Hopkins, that says, "And for all this, nature is never spent." Hopkins means that everything in nature is recycled so that nothing is wasted.

Most of us are familiar with the ocean food chain in which small plankton are eaten by bigger animals, which are in turn eaten by bigger animals, and on and on until the chain gets to man at the top. So any pollution from chemicals that get into the food chain at any level is passed on until it is eaten by man in concentrated form.

This is why it is most important to plan

your spring gardening activities with care. When you order supplies from catalogues, make sure the products you order are free from unneeded toxic chemicals. There are many alternatives we can use.

Fifty years ago, no one would have thought of drenching his yard and garden with a barrage of poisons. The skull and crossbones symbols were put on bottles of poison for a good reason. Our attitude toward poisons has become too careless and casual.

Mary Rita Crowe
East Main Street
Rochester

Bishop Clark is image of 'circumspect bishop'

To the Editor:

Over the centuries, literature has presented various images of bishops. Some are the quiet types of good shepherds, others the

stentorian. Some, like the medieval ones, are the warrior-bishops, mounted or afoot, slashing, flailing, slaying. In times of siege, some appear contentious, disputatious and even bellicose.

The cowardly and venal ones were condemned to hell by Dante; the self-serving and rapacious ones remain forever characterized by Milton's stinging "blind mouths."

Bishop Clark, by his carefully nuanced defense of the rights of Father Curran and the rights of the whole Church, presents an admirable image of the truly circumspect bishop.

In the genre of episcopal polemics, his is unusually irenic: it is not peace, blindly, at any cost, that is desired, but peace achieved through the respect of the rights of all concerned.

E. Leo McManus
Professor, Department of English
Miami-Dade Community College
Miami, Fla.

Curran moratorium, article called hypocritical

To the Editor:

It would appear that the Courier-Journal reached a new low in reporting with the most recent issue, dated May 1, 1986.

About two weeks ago, after what seems to have been a lively exchange of readers' letters pro and con with respect to Father Curran, it was announced that there were other concerns to be addressed, and that this subject would therefore be dropped.

Nevertheless, almost the entire front page of the above paper and a good part of another page were devoted exclusively to this same individual defending himself and his actions. The inference must be that a) the producers of the Courier-Journal are actively pro-Curran; b) totally biased in their presentation; or c) hypocrites.

The Courier-Journal would do its readers a much greater service if it really tried to present all sides of any cause it espouses, than to attempt to force its opinion on people who are not necessarily stupid because they happen to disagree with the opinions of a noisy, vocal minority.

Joyce P. Szwagiel
Drummond Street
Auburn

EDITOR'S NOTE: The moratorium on letters regarding the Curran case was not designed to cut off reader input on this controversial case, but to allow readers to make comments on other issues. As you know, letters on Father Curran literally monopolized the Opinion page for several weeks. At the same time, we were receiving letters from readers on such other issues as youth ministry, the appointment of a Native American bishop, the availability of copies

of pastoral letters written by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the situation in Nicaragua, etc. Because of the flood of Curran letters, we were unable to print even one of these letters. When we called the moratorium, we were merely attempting to open the floor to other issues.

Furthermore, when we called the moratorium, we were unaware that Father Curran was scheduled to speak in Rochester. When we learned of his appearance here, we felt it was an opportunity to ask him some of the questions readers had posed in their letters. It was also the first chance we had to directly report on the Curran controversy; previously we had been forced to rely on the reports of the National Catholic News Service.

We at the Courier-Journal have taken no editorial position on the Curran case. We do not wish to convince readers of anything. We only attempt to provide readers with information, leaving the decisions to them.

Appreciates 'Fatima' publicity

To the Editor:

Thank you very much for the publicity you gave the WXXI TV-21 showing of "Fatima."

I am sure many people will draw closer to God after seeing this film. Our Blessed Mother's message at Fatima can bring peace to our world if we follow it, each one of us.

Marian Buchheit
County Line Rd.
Webster

Father Paul J. Cuddy

On the Right Side



Church booming in Africa

Jesuit Father Jerry Aman is a "boy of our parish," Holy Trinity in Webster, and a graduate of McQuaid High.

I first met him in our sacristy when he came for Mass, just returned from studies in Europe. When he remarked he had studied under Hans Kung, I cast a suspicious eye at him. However, Father Aman is the son of solid German farmers, Harold and Julia. They have four sons and three daughters, all of deep faith and integrity. One son, Leo of St. Charles Borromeo, Rochester, will be ordained June 7 as a deacon. And Father Jerry is an admirable son of an admirable father.

Seven months ago, Father Aman's superiors sent him to a Jesuit mission in Nigeria. Recently he sent me this exhilarating letter.

"Greetings from Nigeria. The heat is oppressive, the traffic is impossible, poverty is dismaying, education is appalling, but the people — oh, the people are charming! And what a profound sense of religion they have. The Church is growing rapidly, with much of the enthusiasm that was witnessed in the Acts of the Apostles. On March 21, 22 and 23, St. Joseph's held a parish retreat. The planning, preparation and actual running of the retreat involved a large number of parishioners, and was a fine example of the critical role of the laity in the Nigerian Church.

"Lay people were involved in giving talks, leading small discussion groups (30 small groups at one time), praying over the sick and acting out a drama of the Crucifixion. On Palm Sunday, to reinforce the theme of the retreat, there was only one Mass for the whole parish, including the blessing of the palms and a procession to a nearby school field for an open-air Mass. What a moving experience to witness 7,000 to 8,000 people surrounding the altar, waving palms and singing "Hosanna in the highest."

Comment: When Fathers Heisel and Wohlrab and I were in Kenya two years ago, we celebrated Mass with the newly ordained Bishop Peter Kairo, who had studied at St. John Fisher. We had a similar experience: outdoor Mass; over 4,000 people to welcome the new bish-

op; singing, singing, singing from several choirs and all the congregation.

"When one of our Nigerian Jesuit priests began reading the Gospel, the P.A. system broke down," Father Aman's letter continued, "so while the system was being repaired, the essential part of the liturgy was begun — the collection. By the end of the Offertory, we were ready to proclaim the Gospel."

Comment: During our Kenya experience, about 30 men and women took up the collection, using cloth bags, and placing the offerings before the altar. We were highly amused to notice, among the offerings, cabbages and other vegetables, as well as a live chicken, tethered in the middle, pecking away happily at the vegetables.

"At Easter Vigil, 250 people between the ages of 11 and 71 were baptized. The first 200 came forward three at a time and leaned over a huge tank of water in the shape of an ark. We three priests scooped water over their heads with our hands. The last 50 climbed right into the tank, and I pushed them under three times. Fortunately, all 50 of them came back up again as the whole Church cheered, clapped, sang and danced for joy. There was no question Jesus is risen and that He is Lord."

Comment: I wonder if a great reason for Pope John Paul's trip to Africa was not related to the burgeoning and enthusiastic Catholicism, in contrast to the confrontations and rejections within the Church of the West.

When Father Curtin, longtime pastor of Clyde, died, Propagation of the Faith Father George Wood said to me, "There are more native priests, sisters and brothers working in India and Africa, thanks to the generosity of Father Curtin above all priests." Father Curtin was great for a bargain, and when he could educate many more native sisters, seminarians and brothers in the mission fields than in that States, for the same money, he considered this good spiritual business.

If readers are inclined to help vocations in the Mission lands, the training of seminarians, sisters and brothers in their own countries is a great bargain.

Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes readers' opinions on issues related to the Church. Letters must bear the writers' signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They must be **brief, typed (double-spaced, please) and no longer than 1 1/2 pages.**

Letters should be mailed to: Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made, and the letters will reflect the writers' own styles.

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