

C-J Opinions

Society must re-examine arms race, align priorities toward aiding hungry

To the Editor:

Our society must re-examine the morality of the nuclear arms build-up. World leaders must find a way to control our "wild arms race."

How can we justify spending \$2 trillion on defense over the next five years when one-third of the human race is plagued by starvation and hunger? This year alone, the United States will spend approximately \$340 billion on defense, nuclear warheads and missiles. All the countries of the earth together are expected to spend more than \$650 billion this year on bombs, guns and defense.

In massive rallies in European cities and in some Third World countries, people have condemned the super powers for their policies on nuclear deterrence and their bellicose rhetoric about "limited nuclear warfare" and "winnable" nuclear wars.

How — so many people are asking — can we even contemplate such a possibility when it is estimated that a first strike by any country would mean the deaths of millions of people?

On Thursday, April 10, 1986, the United States resumed underground testing of nuclear weapons. This was a dark and gloomy day for the people of the world. That same day, the Soviet Union lifted its moratorium on underground nuclear testing,

saying that the American tests threatened its security. The Soviet statement said: "The USSR has declared that from now on it is free from the unilateral commitment made by it to refrain from conducting any nuclear explosions. The Soviet State cannot forgo its own security and that of its allies."

The U.S. test of April 10 was the second such test this year. It was the ninth U.S. test since the Soviet moratorium began August 6, 1985.

By continuing to test nuclear weapons, the United States missed an extremely important opportunity to begin a serious disarmament process with the Soviet Union and to create a whole new beginning.

We are reminded all the more today that as followers of peace, we must seek to understand the meaning of peace so that we may become instruments of that peace. We must call people and governments to pursue peace and to stand against those forces and elements that militate against true peace, creating an atmosphere of fear, intimidation and repression. Among these elements are personal pride; selfishness; power; greed; and unjust political, social and economic structures. As destructive and intolerable as these harsh realities are, we possess the gifts and talents to meet the critical challenge that confronts us.

Nuclear weapons have a potential for

devastation and annihilation on a scale unprecedented in human history. The arms race radically distorts the priorities of nations by diverting massive natural and human resources from the policies and programs necessary for the basic survival needs of a large segment of the human family. On a global scale, the nuclear arms build-up is unquestionably the major obstacle to peace in our day. From the first use of an atomic weapon at Hiroshima to the present reality of the neutron bomb and the Strategic Defense Initiative, mankind fears nuclear holocaust.

The popes of the nuclear age, from Pius XII to John Paul II, have pleaded and warned us to get off this insane collision course with worldwide destruction.

The Holy See repeatedly has said that the arms race is to be condemned unreservedly and has called it a criminal act of aggression, because even when the arms are not used, by their high cost they starve the poor to death. Just 5 percent of the money the world spends on armaments would save the lives of 40 million people who die each year as a result of malnutrition.

The American bishops have issued pasto-

ral statements concerning the immorality of the nuclear arms build-up and have called for national and international actions to control this wild arms race. The bishops question the rationality and the morality of continuing to stockpile nuclear weapons when both the United States and the Soviet Union have the capacity to destroy each other many times over.

We are called in a special way to be peace makers, to meet the difficult challenge of this obsession with the proliferation of nuclear weapons — to learn, to work at and to assist with the development of a prompt nuclear disarmament process. As an Easter people, we have this responsibility for our children and the children of the world.

Brother Patrick T. Flanagan
McQuaid Jesuit High School
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: Saying his action was a result of concerns raised by the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has reinstated the test moratorium, which will remain in effect until August 6.

Commends professionalism of shroud display

To the Editor:

Appropriate to the penitential season of Lent, Father George Rosenkranz, CSSR, has in recent years expertly and professionally mounted a Holy Shroud exhibit with great reverence during Holy Week in the concourse of Midtown Plaza. He did the skillful carpentry, painting and assembly in the cramped, low-ceilinged basement of Our Lady of Victory/St. Joseph's Church, jack-knifing his six-foot-plus height into a stooped posture during those hours of work. He used actual enlarged photos of the Shroud which show the awful wounds of Christ's hands, feet and side; the crown of thorns; and wounds made by the Roman flagrum, a whip with bone or metal attached to the end of each thong.

Father Peter M. Rinaldi, SDB, not widely enough known as a foremost Holy Shroud expert, and who was instrumental in bringing about the 1978 exposition in Turin, has written in his latest book, *In Verdent Pastures*, "... the Shroud is the most awesome and instructive document of Christ in existence, one which indeed deserves to take its place alongside the New Testament books. For what we have on it is the most shockingly graphic rendering of the sufferings and death of Jesus that can be possibly imagined. Unbelievably, too, the Shroud reveals to us a portrait of the Savior so unique that it has bewildered art experts and medical scientists, and has stirred millions of people."

Father Rosenkranz deserves the commendation and gratitude of the community for his gracious generosity and skill, and for

his presence each day to answer questions from the public. This unique exhibit assuredly deserved space in the pages of the Courier-Journal, other than the paid advertising by Father Rosenkranz. My suggestion is that a timely interview with Father Rosenkranz, plus pictures, would have evoked the interest of readers, so that more people would have been aware of the exhibit, other than those fortunate to work in the environs of Midtown or casual passers-by.

Mary Tickner
Hillside Avenue
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to a series of unfortunate circumstances, the editorial department of the Courier-Journal was unaware of the exhibit until after it had closed. Had we known, we would have been very willing to cover the display. Let's hope things work out better next year!

Writer asks if ideas are conducive to true growth

To the Editor:

We are being repeatedly reminded that we belong to a "growing" Church and must be open to new ideas. The point is, are these "new ideas" being espoused conducive to a growth in virtue and holiness in the Church, or rather to the growth of the secular humanistic values of the world?

May Holy Mother Church never "grow" to the point where she embraces error.

Arlene O'Connor
Haddon Road
Rochester

Reader finds fault with Curran statements

To the Editor:

As a mild-mannered housewife, I find fault with some of Father Curran's comments in the May 1 Courier-Journal.

Saying of his appointed attorney, "Obviously he wasn't very good, because I flunked," is like blaming the messenger for the bad news. It was Curran's message that flunked, not the messenger.

When he states, "I can't retract now and maintain my integrity," I pray for his soul, that his eternal life may gain greater importance to him than his passing grade.

On his remark that "most of moral theology ... is based not on faith but on human reasoning," the fact that he reasoned that out shows the weakness with human reasoning.

He states, "St. Peter would have flunked a first grade catechism test." Yes, he probably would have. He did even worse than that — he denied his own Lord. But the Lord, as always, kept His word, that He would be always with him, and left the Keys and the authority with him nevertheless, and even

affirmed Peter at Tiberias so we would never have any doubt who spoke for Him.

I pray for Father Curran that he may learn that there is nothing in this life so important that it's worth more than God.

Kathy Crane
Martinot Avenue
Rochester

Count him against Curran

To the Editor:

For my part, I wish to stand and be counted as one who strongly supports the judgment of the Holy See against the erroneous moral teaching of Father Charles Curran. To Father Cuddy and those who have written letters to the editor, convincingly defending Cardinal Ratzinger and the true teaching of the Catholic Church, I add a most gracious "Amen."

Frank M. Kinsky
Lochnavar Parkway
Pittsford

Writer ponders query: Are theologians nuts?

To the Editor:

I have been reading and listening to all the pros and cons on Father Curran.

Just one thing puzzles me. With all due respect to our theologians, I would like to know, are they nuts or am I nuts?

I have been around well over 50 years, and we were always taught that the Holy Father was our boss, and what he said was never questioned until 20 years ago. Now, everyone can do their own thing, and it sure is taking its toll on the Roman Catholic Church.

I would like to quote Pope Paul VI. I

believe that it was in the Netherlands that our Holy Father said, "The Church position on promiscuity, homosexuality, birth control, and abortion will remain the standard for all times." I don't know how much plainer he could put it.

Do the theologians think that they know more than the Holy Father? I wish someone could give me a good answer to that question.

Veronica B. Hogan
Clark Street
Waverly

Father Paul J. Cuddy

On the Right Side



The Church falling apart?

Q: Don't you think the Church is falling apart? The papers are full of contestations: Father Curran against Rome; lawsuits against dioceses; broken marriages; rebellious teenagers. It all seems a mess to me.

A: Cheer up. If one has an ulcer, he concentrates on the problem without appreciating the general health of the body. We often lament the woes of the Church and fail to realize its strengths, the fidelity of the many. But I suppose we should define more clearly what we mean by "The Church."

Q: Well, isn't the Church the Church everywhere?

A: Yes. But there are differences in the local parishes and dioceses; the Church in specific countries. For example the Church in Poland is fiercely contestatious, almost to the point of schism. With the Father Curran doctrine, some factions of the Church in the States seem ready to ape Holland. The Church in Africa prospers. The Church in South America is full of plusses and minuses.

Q: What is your own experience?

A: During my 10 years as a chaplain in the Air Force, I was always stricken by the general fidelity of our men and women. Away from home and family influences, so many of them were not only faithful but also zealous. Since these came from all over the country, I could ascribe their fidelity to a unity of faith learned from the catechism; a conscientiousness about Mass and the sacraments developed from good homes; and much of the strength from Catholic schools where sisters, brothers and priests were dedicated to the vocation of teaching. I left the Air Force in 1956, which was a time of unity and religious enthusiasm. Thomas Merton's "Seven Storey Mountain" was having a glorious spiritual impact. Vocations zoomed, non-Catholics began to appreciate the Church. Catholics were proud and secure in the Church, and conversions poured in. Then came Vatican II (1962-1965), with the subsequent

confusion and defiance and nuttiness.

Q: So you are against Vatican II?

A: Don't be silly. All General Councils have the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Vatican II documents were frequently twisted or ignored by radicals. As a result, traditional devotions were undermined or eliminated; banal songs and bouncy pop music took over from the God-centered hymns and majestic sacred music. Sacramentals — including statues, religious paintings, shrines — were relegated to cellars or even to the dumps. Organized sisters and priests formed into anti-Roman phalanxes that persist today.

Q: Isn't that a terrible indictment?

A: It is a fact of history. However, for all the opposition and dissenters, the people largely have been faithful. Most are more concerned with their jobs and families than with church dissidents.

In my own observations in our Webster parish, we do have problems: some broken marriages; some recalcitrant children; some from traditionally faithful families not going to Mass, marrying outside the Church, spiritually indifferent.

But every Sunday at Mass, commemorating the death of the Lord, I see single adults: some transients, some locals, trooping into church. I see families pour in: fathers, mothers, teenagers and beautiful younger children manifesting the vibrancy of the Church. I observe young fathers with families, frequently carrying babies in their arms, with an obvious pride and love and happiness in their fatherhood. These are not the people who have thrown away the statues or holy pictures, the grace before meals, the instruction of the children, a concern for the parish and civic activities, the beauty of the church grounds, the care of the cemetery, the athletic programs, the school plays.

The lax, the fallen-aways and the faithful in our parish are a microcosm of the universal Church. And there is much to be happy about.

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