

Editorial

World-class wrestling

The situation seems not unlike that of a schoolyard scuffle. Pulled from the ground by the lunch monitor, the recalcitrant youngsters are asked what started their wrestling match. "He hit me first," one youngster pleads. "I did not," the other asserts, "you hit me first."

Without any reliable means of verifying either boy's claim, the teacher is forced to punish both — after all, weren't both violating school rules, regardless of who threw the first punch?

Thus goes the global wrestling match, sparked again last week by Secretary of State George Schultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. The United States is justified, they say, in violating the terms of SALT II because the Russians broke the treaty first. We must, therefore, deploy more

nuclear weapons to keep up with the Soviets' illegal arms build-up. Let's punch them back — hard — so they'll learn that they can't bully us.

In response, of course, the Soviets deny that they have broken SALT II's provisions, but affirm that they will begin to do so as soon as the United States enlarges its store of warheads.

Who really is to say which boy is telling the truth? Could they not — like the boys in the playground — both be telling the truth as seen from their own perspectives?

Yet, as both sides scramble to accumulate more and more tools of world destruction, we must wonder: will the side that is "right" be any better off than the aggressor when the punishment is meted out by our own hands?

And opinions

Theologians like Curran lead faithful astray

To the Editor:

I would like to testify to the way in which Father Curran and other liberal theologians have influenced me and my family.

I received much of my religious education at Manhattan College under the guidance of the Christian Brothers. I am grateful for what I learned there, and it has given me a strong faith which I have tried to pass on to my four daughters.

All of my daughters went to college. Two have graduated and two are still in school. All of them have continued to practice their Catholic faith. None of them seem to have any disputes with moral teachings of the magisterium and neither have I.

To safeguard their faith in the Catholic Church that I was raised in, my wife and I made a special point of discouraging them from attending so called "Catholic" colleges where they would be indoctrinated in false teachings from such theologians as Father Curran. We thought it would be safer for them to attend secular colleges where "modern" concepts of morality would be delivered by easily identified enemies of the Catholic

Church.

When I consider the discouraging statistics on the percentages who disregard the Church's moral teachings, I have to wonder how many of them have been led astray by "Father Curran's" who were in positions of authority and abused their authority by teaching false doctrines.

Father Curran and others dispute the infallible nature of the magisterium's teachings on abortion, birth control, homosexuality, masturbation, etc. It seems to me that they accept their own versions of morality as being infallible. There seems to be no consideration that their own theology might be flawed. Apparently they think that the Holy Spirit has granted to them that which it has denied to the magisterium and the Holy Father. I am quite willing to accept the testimonies regarding the admirable character of Father Curran, but I would not want him interpreting Catholic teachings to my daughters.

Richard C. Shipley
Mumford Street
Seneca Falls

Study theologians' efforts; stop name calling

To the Editor:

Being a great booster of the Catholic Church, I continue to read with interest the letters and articles about how much respect a Catholic theologian should or should not receive. But I get a little angry and very grieved by the name calling practiced by fellow Catholics who write letters to this and other newspapers.

Now, intra-mural name calling is not new to the Catholic Church. Theologian St. Thomas Aquinas was called a "dumb-ox" before he became famous, and the critics of theologian Duns Scotus coined the word "dunce" still occasionally used today. But I like to think that we of today's Church can spend our time in better pursuits. The difference between "then" and "now" is the widespread literacy of Catholics today, and the availability of books

about our Catholic faith.

As an alternative to name-calling, I propose reading — not what newspapers and magazines say religious writers say, but what they say when they have a chance to elaborate on their views and give reasons for their viewpoints. We do not have to agree with everything, do we? But we can at least respect their mastery of scripture, tradition, and contemporary sciences of thought.

Name calling may be more fun, and reading may seem like a lot of work. But in the long run — and the Catholic Church is a long runner — reading and discussion produce understanding, respect, and charity for the many men and women who are the Catholic Church.

Father Edwin B. Metzger
Exchange Street
Geneva

Challenge physicians on abortion services

To the Editor:

The surgical holocaust otherwise known as "legal" abortion continues to rob this country of 4,000 innocent lives a day. This massacre wouldn't be possible without the misused genius of countless doctors.

Have you ever thought to ask your doctors — especially OB/GYN specialists — if they perform abortions? Have you ever wondered how a physician can brutally end the life of an unborn child and then turn around and put his "best efforts" into safely delivering a "wanted child"? I myself would question that physician's value of life, and the safety of my child would then be in question. If your physician is in partnership with another doctor, even if your doctor doesn't do abortions, question whether his partner does, because they both share in the "fruits" of abortion's profits. If your physician *does* perform abortions, let him know that you fear for the safety of his eternal soul and are concerned with the fact that he kills innocent children for money.

There are a few doctors in this area who refuse to murder unborn persons for any reason. We as followers of Christ and believers in the preciousness of each and every innocent life should support these physicians and let those

who profit from the blood of unborn children fall by the wayside, for what you sow, also shall you reap!

Mary Ellen Frisch
285 Gillett Road
Spencerport

Providing for older sisters requires attention of bishops

To the Editor:

A current and future concern of the Church is the plight of older religious who cannot rely on younger religious to take care of them.

The wholesale flight of religious from their orders has interrupted the usual flow of younger sisters to staff the motherhouses. The good old times will not return.

Rather than spreading their talents in areas in which they have no competence, the bishops should attend to the needs of the religious who have faithfully served the Church with little recompense. No doubt, contending with the hard realities of life is harder than sounding off about undigested theories.

John F. Starkweather
Middle Road
Rush

In keeping with history

Rochester returned to its roots Tuesday, May 27, with a city council resolution making the onetime underground railroad stop a "city of sanctuary."

Like the black Southerners who fled through Rochester en route to freedom from the shackles of slavery, Central American refugees come to this city and this country — the land of liberty and opportunity — to escape persecution.

The city council vote in favor of the resolution evidenced a tactical error on the part of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Instead of dissuading city officials from approving the resolution, the INS' May 23 arrest of Salvadoran refugee Alejandro Gomez may have instead fortified sanctuary supporters and rallied others to the cause.

Moreover, the INS claim that Gomez was detained "for reasons of national security" is ludicrous. Gomez has been in Rochester for nearly two years. As one observer commented, if he is subversive or a terrorist, he must be pretty inept. And in our pluralistic society, in which the individual is free to espouse any religious or political beliefs short of taking illegal or genuinely subversive action, it seems incongruous to assert that Gomez is undesirable simply because he may — like many others in the United States — have communist leanings.

If we are to remain true to our ideals and our roots, we must provide the same protection to those who are persecuted for the color of their political beliefs that we provided to those persecuted for the color of their skins.

Finally Church acts to discipline Curran

To the Editor:

Finally, Father Curran has been disciplined by our Church for his unorthodox teachings. Is not it sad to think that there are still some who call themselves Catholics and question our pope's decision on a matter such as this?

Let us look at the record of this priest. He has a long history of teaching matters contradictory to the Catholic Church. Perhaps before this, but as far back as 1967, Patrick Cardinal Boyle, then-chancellor of Catholic University, attempted to deny tenure to Father Curran to teach at Catholic University because of his unorthodox teachings. A number of students went on strike because of this action. The board of trustees of the university acquiesced, and as a result, Father Curran was granted tenure.

Further, because of these teachings, Bishop Joseph Sullivan of Baton Rouge, La., refused to permit Father Curran to speak in his diocese. He was thus denied the privilege of speaking at the Catholic Center on the state university.

It disturbs me to think that our own Bishop Clark, because of the decision of the Holy Father, "fears some serious setback to Catholic education."

At least we in the Rochester diocese can be thankful that Bishop Malone, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bish-

ops, and Bishop Hickey, chancellor of Catholic University, unhesitatingly supported our pope in this matter.

Again, I think, it is sad that of all people, our bishop would not be the first to come forward and agree with our Holy Father that the action taken was necessary — rather than the luke-warm position that he hoped "an agreement will be reached which would allow Father Curran to continue serving the Church as a theologian."

It certainly would have been more desirable if Bishop Clark had, like Bishops Malone and Hickey, aligned himself with the pope so that our Catholic teachings would be strengthened, not only throughout the world, but in our particular diocese.

Eugene J. Bowe
R.D. 1
Lowman

Correction

In Father Cuddy's column of May 22, a typesetting error — two sentences condensed into one — produced an erroneous statement.

The passage should have read: "For example, the Church in Poland is fiercely loyal and devout. The Church in Holland seems to be fiercely contestatory, almost to the point of schism."

We regret the error.

Father Paul J. Cuddy

On the Right Side



Whither the Church?

I have known Father John Norris well since he was assistant pastor to Father William Davie at Holy Family, Auburn, which is my home parish. Father Norris might have been considered then, as now, a kind of "diocesan irritant." He is observant of conditions, policies and activities which he keenly questions. He is not loath to expose them.

But, as in the human body, when we perceive an irritation that results from such conditions, it is the part of wisdom to acknowledge it, to study it, and, if possible, to remedy it. In his April 27 Sunday Bulletin for Fairport Church of the Assumption parishioners, Father Norris published some startling statistics, with comments following. They are worth the consideration of all who love the Church. (These statistics are from the 1965 and 1985 *Official Catholic Directory*: P.J. Kennedy and Sons.)

	1965	1985
1] Hierarchy:	247	394
2] Priests:	58,432	57,317
3] Seminarians:	48,992	11,028
4] Permanent Deacons:	-	7,204
5] Sisters:	179,954	115,386
6] Brothers:	12,271	7,544
7] Parishes:	17,637	19,244
8] Ed. Institutions:	14,296	9,942
9] Students:	6,095,846	3,517,951
10] Teachers:	198,756	37,639
a) Religious:	123,653	37,639
b) Lay:	75,103	134,520
11] Catholic Population:	52,286,043	45,640,619

Father Norris comments:
"1] & 2] — It is noteworthy to observe that

the number of bishops has *increased* by 147 while the number of priests has declined by 1,115. Every new bishop ends up with a diocesan staff, including priests. More chiefs than Indians?

"2] & 7] — Parishes have increased in number by 1,607 and yet priests have declined by 1,115.

"3] — Here is dramatic proof of why seminaries are closing and why there is a 'vocation crisis' — a drop of almost 37,000. Also note 6] & 7].

"4] Was the permanent diaconate restored for an affluent, well-staffed country like the U.S. or for poverty-ridden, understaffed areas of the Church in South America?

"8] & 9] — Significant decrease in number of Catholic schools, but a dramatic decrease (3½ million) in students in those schools. The decrease in teachers hardly reflects this dramatic decrease, which accounts for the burdening costs of Catholic Education.

"We have come a long way, but perhaps we must go a much longer way in using these statistics to rearrange priorities and evaluate prayerfully what is happening to this Christian community of the 20th century!"

Father Keller wrote: "Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." Sister Angelica of Birmingham, without any help from dioceses or hierarchy, has established a TV network which reaches three million people each day.

Father Norris' statistics may provide an impetus to start resolving some grave problems of the Church. It's the business of all of us.