

# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## World & Nation in Brief from NC News

### World

#### Ortega, bishops plan talks

**Managua, Nicaragua** — Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said his government and the country's bishops plan to open a dialogue sometime in September. In an Aug. 14 press conference, Ortega said the dialogue was agreed upon in an exchange of letters between the government and the Nicaraguan bishops' conference. Ortega said that in early August, the government also told the new papal nuncio to Nicaragua, Archbishop Paolo Giglio, it wanted to reach an "understanding" with the Vatican.

#### Priests want freedom upheld

**Vatican City** — Priests in Lithuania have written a letter to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev urging him to uphold constitutional guarantees of religious freedom, Vatican Radio reported Aug. 13. The priests complained that local authorities continually interfere in church matters, pressuring parish councils and individual believers, the report said. It said the letter also deplored discrimination against believers in public life, appealed for the release of three Lithuanian priests imprisoned for religious activities and asked that two Lithuanian churches be restored to the faithful.

### Nation

#### Church leaders criticize aid

**Washington** — Church leaders have denounced Senate approval Aug. 13 of a \$100 million aid package for Nicaraguan contra rebels as ill-designed and immoral. Father William Lewers, director of international justice and peace for the U.S. Catholic Conference, said Aug. 14 that he seriously questions the wisdom of the vote and believes such U.S. military assistance is "illegal, immoral and bad public policy." Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit called the aid "an evil" and said he rejected any argument for the aid that drew on increasing tensions between the church and the Nicaraguan government.

#### Franciscans meet deadline

**New York** — A year ago Franciscan Fathers John Felice and John McVean of New York faced a dilemma of how to spend \$2 million in 100 days.

On Aug. 7 the two priests took legal ownership of a rundown building they bought to meet the deadline. The building is to be renovated as a 90-room shelter for homeless mentally ill persons.

The two priests said the renovation is to begin immediately so residents can move in by late winter.

In May 1985 Fathers Felice and McVean, who run two similar residences in the city, were told they would receive \$2 million if they submitted a proposal to the city on the purchase of a building within 100 days. The priests submitted their proposal three days before an Aug. 15, 1985, deadline.

## Vatican verdict:

# Curran 'ineligible' to teach theology

From local reports and NC News Service

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has declared that Father Charles Curran is "no longer ... suitable nor eligible to exercise the function of a Professor of Catholic Theology." This declaration was made public Monday, August 18, by Archbishop James Hickey, chancellor of Catholic University of America. Father Curran has been a professor at the Washington, D.C., university since 1965.

Archbishop Hickey had been directed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation, to announce the Congregation's decision and to give Father Curran a letter outlining it.

Archbishop Hickey announced that he has "initiated the withdrawal of Father Curran's ecclesiastical license to teach Catholic theology" at Catholic University.

"Father Curran," he added, "will enjoy the right to the procedures of due process set forth in the statutes" of the university.

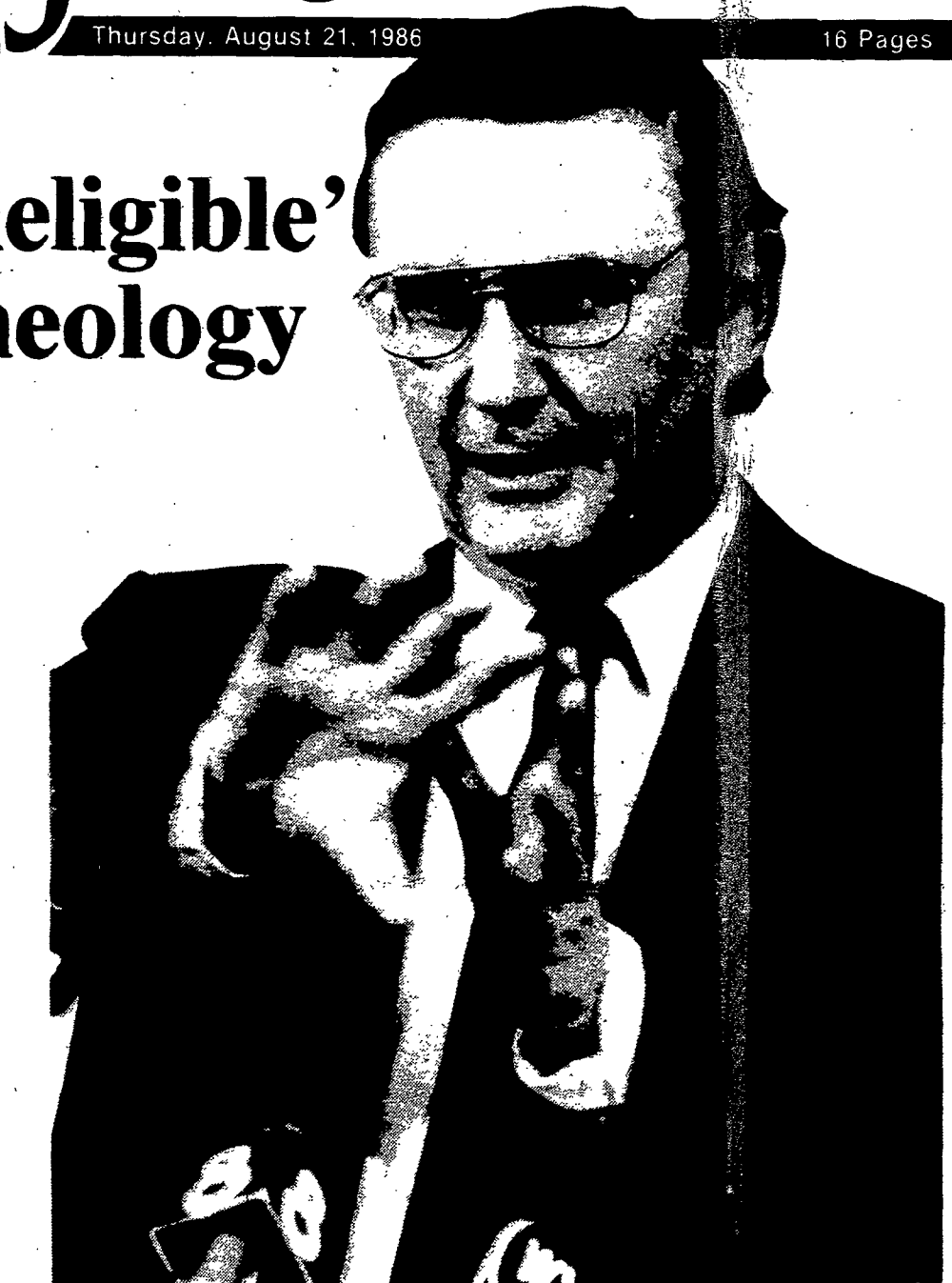
Archbishop Hickey said he "fully" supported the Holy See's judgment on Father Curran. "The Holy Father and the bishops have the right and the duty to ensure that what is taught in the name of the Church be completely faithful to its full and authentic teaching," he said.

Cardinal Ratzinger's letter to Father Curran, which was dated July 25, acknowledges receipt of Father Curran's "definitive reply" to the Congregation's demand that he retract his statements of dissent on such matters as premarital sex, homosexuality, masturbation and abortion. The letter also informed Father Curran that "the Congregation has confirmed its position that one who dissents from the Magisterium as you do is not suitable or eligible to teach Catholic Theology."

"Consequently," the letter continues, "the Congregation declines your compromise solution because of the organic unity of authentic Catholic Theology, a unity which in its contents and method is intimately bound to fidelity to the Church's Magisterium."

Father Curran originally offered the compromise — which he has restated on several occasions — in December of 1985. He offered to discontinue teaching courses on sexual ethics and to accept a document in which the Congregation would outline what it considers to be errors in his teaching, "while still recognizing that I am a Catholic theologian in good standing."

In his letter to Father Curran, Cardinal



Ratzinger disputed the premise upon which the Rochester native had based his case.

"Your basic assertion has been that since your positions are convincing to you and diverge only from the 'non-infallible' teaching of the Church, they constitute 'responsible' dissent and should therefore be allowed by the Church," the prefect wrote.

Citing from section 25 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the cardinal wrote that the Second Vatican Council "clearly does not confine the infallible Magisterium purely to matters of faith nor to solemn definitions ... The Church does not build its life upon its infallible magisterium alone but on the teaching of its authentic, ordinary magisterium as well."

Moreover, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote, "the faithful must accept not only the infallible magisterium. They are to give the religious submission of intellect and will to the

teaching which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate on faith or morals when they exercise the authentic magisterium, even if they do not intend to proclaim it with a definitive act. This you have continued to refuse to do."

The prefect also refuted Father Curran's assertion that he had not been told who his "accusers" were and that he was not given the opportunity of counsel during the investigation of him. Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: "The Congregation based its inquiry exclusively on your published works and on your personal responses to its observations. In effect, then, your own works have been your 'accusers' and they alone." He also stated that Father Curran had been urged to take counsel and had in fact done so during the course of the investigation.

"In conclusion," the prefect wrote, "this Congregation calls attention to the fact that you have taken your dissenting positions as a Professor of Theology in an Ecclesiastical Faculty at a Pontifical University. In its letter of September 17, 1985, to you, it was noted that '... the authorities of the Church cannot allow the present situation to continue in which the inherent contradiction is prolonged that one who is to teach in the name of the Church in fact denies her teaching.'

"In light of your repeated refusal to accept what the Church teaches and in light of its mandate to promote and safeguard the Church's teaching on faith and morals throughout the Catholic world, this Congregation, in agreement with the Congregation for Catholic Education, sees no alternative now but to advise the Most Reverend Chancellor (Archbishop Hickey) that you will no longer be considered suitable nor eligible to exercise the function of a Professor of Catholic Theology," he wrote.

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*The Vatican decision barring Rochester's 'native son' Father Charles Curran from teaching Catholic theology draws quiet, prayerful reaction from both sides of the ideological fence — Page 7.*