



The case for space

Inspired by worship-space consultant Bill Brown of Indiana, parishioners of St. Mary's strive to achieve consensus on structural alterations. See page 6.



Freedom of the press

A minister's defense of anti-Catholic literature prompts an Elmira newspaper to speak out against the "limited wisdom" of bigotry. See page 7.

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World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Bishops want ban lifted

Vatican City — The Ghanaian bishops' conference has asked the government to lift its ban on the country's Catholic newspaper, the Catholic Standard. The bishops also criticized the government of the West African country for prohibiting publications with which it does not agree. The conference made the plea in a pastoral letter after numerous private efforts on behalf of the paper had failed, Vatican Radio reported Aug. 28. The weekly newspaper was closed last December by the government, which accused it of disturbing "the national unity."

Lebanese adversaries meet

Beirut, Lebanon — Lebanese Christian and Moslem leaders agreed to meet Sept. 2 to help resolve the nation's 11-year civil war. Members of the Lebanese Cabinet — five Christians and five Moslems — are to meet at a racetrack on the Green Line, a zone dividing Moslem-controlled west Beirut and Christian-controlled east Beirut. The meeting was scheduled after Christian leaders called for an immediate truce in the war and expressed support for new peace efforts by Prime Minister Rashid Karami, a Sunni Moslem. In mid-August, Karami broke a nine-month stalemate by meeting with Christian Cabinet members.

Nazi-hunter seeks memorial

Vatican City — Veteran Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal asked the Vatican to commemorate Jewish Holocaust victims at a church built on the site of a former extermination camp near Lublin, Poland. In his letter Wiesenthal said the church, built during the last two years by Capuchin Franciscans in the village of Sobibor, had no inscription or memorial to the Jews who were tortured and died there. He said it was built on a location once occupied by a chapel used as a Nazi torture chamber.

Nation

Swaggart called anti-Catholic

Lafayette, La. — Fundamentalist TV evangelist the Rev. Jimmy Swaggart is anti-Catholic "beyond all doubt" and has revived the ancient Nestorian heresy of confusion about Jesus' divinity, said a Louisiana Catholic theologian. In weekly columns appearing in Lafayette-area newspapers this summer, Father Richard Greene called Swaggart "today's most anti-Catholic TV personality" and a preacher who "deliberately distorts" Catholic teaching and "bears false witness" against the Catholic Church.

Emigration from Cuba begins

Washington — Processing Cuban political prisoners for admission to the United States got off to a smooth if at times heart-rending start, according to a U.S. Catholic Conference official. Msgr. Nicholas DiMarzio, director of the USCC Migration and Refugee Services, was in Havana Aug. 20-23. The Cuban government has granted permission for a group of about 90 prisoners and their families to leave the country. Father DiMarzio's agency is working with 56 prisoners and helping resettle those ruled eligible to enter the United States.

Fighting dismissal:

Curran states decision to use CUA channels

By Liz Schevtchuk

Washington (NC) — Father Charles E. Curran has notified Catholic University of America officials that he plans to use the university's internal procedures to fight dismissal from his job as a professor of Catholic theology.

In a letter dated Aug. 29, Father Curran told the university's chancellor, Archbishop James A. Hickey of Washington, that he would use internal appeal procedures "without waiving" any academic and legal rights. The theologian noted that he was conforming with the Sept. 1 deadline Archbishop Hickey had "unilaterally imposed" on his decision whether to invoke these university procedures.

In a separate statement issued Aug. 30, the priest declared his belief that he is "suitable and eligible" to function as a Catholic theologian and pledged to promote "the legitimacy of ... dissent" from some Church teachings.

On Aug. 18, Archbishop Hickey had released a letter from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in which the cardinal told Father Curran that "one who dissents from the magisterium (Church teaching authority) as you do is not suitable nor eligible to teach Catholic theology." The letter had been approved by Pope John Paul II.

As university chancellor, Archbishop Hickey had also informed Father Curran on Aug. 18 that steps were under way to revoke the priest's ecclesiastical license to teach in the CUA theology department and that the priest had until Sept. 1 to announce whether he would appeal his dismissal through university channels.

At issue are the theologian's dissenting views on the right to dissent itself, as well as his statements on artificial contraception, abortion, premarital intercourse, masturbation, homosexual relations, divorce and euthanasia.

Father Curran said in his Aug. 29 letter that he was asserting "all my academic and legal rights to remain a professor of theology at the university, including all my 'due process rights' under the statutes of the university."

He also wrote of a desire to know whether loss of his "canonical mission" will end his role as a professor at Catholic University.

"As I told you," he wrote to Archbishop Hickey, "it is important for me to know, and to know reliably, whether in the view of



Jeff Hilding/Courier-Journal

Having a ball

As students throughout the diocese enjoy the last few days of summer vacation, Cardinal Mooney soccer players begin practice for the fall season. For a preview of Mooney soccer, see page 10.

university officials withdrawal of my 'canonical mission,' should it occur, will or will not operate to terminate my professorship in the department of theology and my professorship at the university.

"You deferred to the board of trustees on this subject, and I await their position," he added.

Father Curran further noted that he is on a university sabbatical until January and said he will discuss the significance of that factor with others at the university.

In the separate statement provided with his letter, Father Curran promised he will continue his scholarly activities.

"I consider myself suitable and eligible to exercise the function of a professor of Catholic theology," he said.

"No matter what happens in the future, I am committed to carrying on my theological endeavors," he said. "As part of my theological enterprise, I will continue to work for the legitimacy of theological and

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Colleagues urge internal resolution of Curran case

By Jerry Filteau

Washington (NC) — Immediate superiors and colleagues of Father Charles E. Curran at the Catholic University of America have supported the dissenting theologian in his decision to use internal university review procedures to fight dismissal from his job.

In separate public statements released Aug. 20, the executive council of the school of religious studies — which includes the theology department in which Father Curran teaches — and the dean of the school, Dominican Father William Cenkner, said they supported Father Curran.

They expressed hope that through the university's review procedures a "resolution" of his conflict with the Vatican over his job could be achieved.

Without some such resolution, Father Cenkner said, "the credibility of theology

undertaken in our institutions of higher learning stands in jeopardy." He expressed "regret" at the Holy See's action, but acknowledged "its right to come to such a decision."

Father Cenkner said several possibilities remained open, however, short of terminating Father Curran's contract.

"The present action against Father Curran does not invalidate his position as a tenured ordinary professor of this university," he said. "Moreover, it does not deny him a role as teacher and scholar in a non-ecclesiastical department within the school of religious studies, or in other non-ecclesiastical schools of this university."

"Furthermore," he continued, "as a tenured professor, Father Curran has the right to continue his scholarship in various research sectors of the university. These are

some of the avenues and options that need to be considered in the months ahead."

The executive council statement, signed by Father Cenkner and seven other officials of the religious studies school and its five departments, expressed hopes that the university's internal review processes would help bring out a "necessary examination" of the relationship between the rights of Church teaching authority and the demands of "scholarly freedom of inquiry and expression."

Among signers of the executive council statement were Dominican Father C. Gerard Austin, outgoing chairman of the school's theology department, and Oblate Father David Power, who takes over that post at the start of the new school year in September.