

C-J Opinions

'Water-Down Charlie' column raises several questions in priest's mind

To the Editor:

In a recent issue of the Courier-Journal (C-J, Sept. 4), Father Paul Cuddy took Father Charles Curran to task for some of the moral positions Father Curran has taken. Father Cuddy referred to Father Curran as "Water-Down Charlie." In support of this reference, Father Cuddy quoted Christ as saying: "He who is not with me is against me." Father Cuddy was probably taking that quote from Matthew 12:30 or Luke 11:23.

I have been wondering since then about many questions that Father Cuddy's remarks have raised in my mind. Let me share some of those questions.

Why didn't Father Cuddy also quote from Mark 9:40, where Jesus says something quite different: "Anyone who is not against us is

for us"? Is this a case of "Water-Down Jesus," which Father Cuddy wishes not to recognize? What does Father Cuddy think about the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:13? In that passage, He says, "Go and learn the meaning of the words: 'What I want is mercy, not sacrifice.' And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous but sinners." Would that be another case of "Water-Down Jesus"?

Father Cuddy is worried about a public discussion of what the theologians are saying. Why do some people want to prevent the laity from learning what the theologians are discussing? Why do some people have such little confidence in the ability of the laity to use God's gifts of mind and intellect?

Why do some people have such a negative attitude toward new knowledge and information that might help us to grow in better understandings of our faith? Why do some people insist on holding on to the old theological formulations to the problem of another era, when these times need new theological formulations of the enduring gospel to today's problems?

In the past, Father Cuddy has often cited Cardinal John Henry Newman as a great scholar and loyal member of the Church. Why does Father Cuddy not quote Cardinal

Newman about the history of the development of Church teaching and about the importance of consulting the faithful in matters of Church doctrine? Is it not wrong to give the impression that the Church and its teachings never change? Have we forgotten that immutability may be attributed only to God?

I am very interested in reading Father Cuddy's answers to these questions.

Father William Lum
Catholic Chaplain
University of Rochester

Pray for enlightenment of those being deceived

To the Editor:

In recent weeks, Pope John Paul II has given a series of talks on angels, closing with the Church's teaching on the real presence of the devil and his agents in the world. I hope all will have the opportunity to read his words.

The Courier-Journal article (Aug. 21: "Rochester sisters reflect on sesquicentennial celebration") by Sister Beatrice Ganley on the sesquicentennial celebration of the Sisters of St. Joseph tells of Robert Mueller's addressing the sisters. Mr. Mueller is a prominent member of the New Age Movement. This organization's purpose is to bring people to worship Lucifer. Any organization that knowingly invites an agent of the devil to deceive them further is to be pitied.

Today I spent a few moments in the chapel at Auburn Memorial Hospital and found

there the *Messages of Merciful Love to Little Souls*, which is Jesus' message to Marguerite, a Belgian woman, on January 19, 1966:

"Under pretext of doing good, they abandon their God. They put aside what was their force. They no longer have time to devote to prayer, for the world and what is of the world monopolizes them. They run towards their perdition. Seduction is there. They are blind. When they would like to return, let them take care that it be not too late. When evil has been done, it is difficult to uproot it."

Let us pray and offer our sufferings that the Holy Spirit will enlighten those who are being deceived by the evil one and his agents.

Thomas D. Maher, MD
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Read article with disbelief

To the Editor:

I read with utter disbelief Father Lum's critique of "Hail Mary" (C-J Commentary, August 28: "Catholic chaplain reflects on recent UR showing of film 'Hail Mary'"). He summarized the movie by stating that it was simply (an essay on the) philosophical imagery of body and soul. Father Lum saw nothing blasphemous in the Virgin Mary writhing naked on her bed *complaining* to God for allowing her to become pregnant with the Child Jesus. She calls God a "vampire" feeding on her body. She calls God a *coward* and a *creep* who is interested in her body, (and crudely states that he is particularly interested in her

genital area).

Another scene (depicts) the game "whale" in which Jesus — at age 12 — daily crawls under his mother's negligee to feel around her naked body.

I would rather go back to the days of the Arian heresy, when the great St. Athanasius was exiled five times for defending the divinity of Christ, rather than read (articles by) the puny theological milksoops of the 20th century who will not recognize blasphemy when they see it, but pretend it is philosophical imagery.

Ann Christoff
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Rochester

Victor Bartolotta Jr.

A Closer Look



Asphalt houses

Construction work is strangling travelers throughout Monroe County, but, construction work is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the two-and-a-half-mile stretch of Route 490 from the Can of Worms to the downtown area.

I am told that this short but intensively traveled stretch of miles is costing approximately \$7 million to repair. According to my calculations, we are spending about \$53 of taxpayer's money to repair every linear foot of pavement.

This roadway is probably the most-used area of space in the county. Nevertheless, I can't stop myself from expressing surprise at the immense amount of money we are spending on the 490 project and the immense amount of money that Americans spend on other roadway projects. The end product of all this work and money allows each of us (myself included) to get into his or her little road machine, and zip down the highway at 55 mph to get to appointments and places that are important mostly because we think they are.

Mass public-transportation advocates, among whom I count myself, will say that the money we spend on roads could be better invested in mass transportation for the public. In many places of the world but not too many places in this country, mass public transportation is cheap and economical.

But in America where what is big is best, and where achieving individuality is a much sought-after goal, the smoother, the faster,

the way to get to a place the better. And, more often than not, that means smoother and faster roadways for our smoother and faster road machines.

Trying to put things into perspective, I listen to a visitor from a Third World country tell me how self-centered Americans are and how generally unconcerned they seem to be about the plight and the conditions of other people. I begin to wonder: Do people who own cars get or deserve special treatment? In America, is it un-American if one doesn't own a car? Are carless Americans then provided fewer services than those who can afford cars?

In retrospect, a mile from the \$7 million Route 490 construction site, 12 units of housing for 12 very low-income families are being built at Mt. Carmel Church for \$500,000. And further down the road from that, 32 units of low-income housing are being planned at a cost of about \$2 million.

Once again I am left wondering: Is it possible to build housing for poor people out of asphalt; or, if we could decide not to pave a few feet of highway, could we give the \$53 per foot we would save to a family to buy, not a bag of asphalt patch, but a bag of groceries?

John J. Clark III, perhaps the Courier Journal's most prolific writer of letters to the editor, died three weeks ago, and bade good-bye to this world in style; apparently, he was engaging in the things he liked to do, or felt compelled to do right up until the end.

While I, like editor Karen Franz, never had the privilege of meeting Mr. Clark, I got a chance to know him a little bit, I think, through the many letters he wrote to this newspaper.

Since I only started writing for the Courier in April of this year, my articles were not the object of many of Mr. Clark's thoughts. But my articles were the object of enough of his thoughts, I think, to say that even though he appeared to be my ideological opposite, I learned to respect his right to opinion and the public expression of it.

Mr. Clark was sometimes the subject of conversations I had with Karen Franz. At different times, Mr. Clark had found fault with Karen's views and my own. She and I even discussed the possibility of driving out to Wayland where Mr. Clark lived, to pay him a surprise visit. I guess we both wondered what kind of person he was.

Upon some reflection, I have come to believe that Mr. Clark was an analyst as well as an idealist, a man who formulated opinions and then had the courage to express those opinions as a means toward improving the world.

Mr. Clark's own strong opinions, of immeasurable value in and of themselves, were also a personal challenge to me and to my subjective view of things. Frequently, as I wrote for this column, I wondered what Mr. Clark would have to say in response or refutation to my opinions.

I am grateful to Mr. Clark that despite our philosophical differences, he read the things I wrote. I respect him for that. I respect him for his deep faith. And in dedicating this space to him, I don't mind publicly sending him my best wishes and prayers and asking for his.

John J. Clark III, may you rest and write in peace forevermore.

Glad to have participated in protest

To the Editor:

The commentary in the Courier-Journal of Aug. 28 (C-J: "Catholic Chaplain reflects on recent UR showing of film 'Hail Mary'") leads to these reflections. For many years the Church was united in every way with no conflicting views given to the laity by authoritative figures. Gradually, a spreading liberalism sent a wave of disobedience through the very structure of its universal sameness. A few people, such as Citizens for a Decent Community, are still trying to hold onto moral values which have never changed, changed, but have simply been ignored.

The chaplain insults some very intelligent and faithful people who protested in a very gentle and kind way the showing of a film whose very title was disrespectful to our Blessed Mother. I felt the joy of Mary as voices rose to heaven with 15 decades of the rosary being led by priests who had the guts to stand up and be counted on the side of true faith. I will always be glad that I had the privilege of being there to share in the rosaries and sing the "Ave Maria" in a very quiet, peaceful march around the building where that movie was being shown.

The chaplain also stated that "this was not a film made for entertainment. It is a dense, philosophical film made in the context of the French intellectual and artistic society." We Americans are supposedly nourished only by simple plots. I do not believe that.

The Courier-Journal printed a movie rating in past history and I believe in the judgment of the raters! Today we get the impression that one must see a movie to give a comment or even protest it. No wonder we are losing young people in the Catholic faith. We give them no stability and sell them on

conscience without helping them to form a right conscience. Confusion abounds and will until unity is restored through prayerful consultation with the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ whose mother, Mary, awaits people returning in humility to ways of obedience.

There is no excuse for being "concerned" about censorship. Every book we pick up has the four letter words, the obscenity, the language of the streets, etc., to ensure that the reader gets an exact picture, and yet in the past when these words were not used, people enjoyed reading and fully understood the blanks without exposing the mind to the decay of such printed words. Movies were made for entertainment and were also enjoyed and understood without the explicit. The term "liberty" is being abused while every commandment that God set forth is broken.

If St. Thomas Aquinas lived today, he would have marched with us in body and spirit because that is the way it was for all of us who prayed that night on the U of R campus.

Barbara A. Fischer
Harwick Road Rochester

Hopes for cauterizing schism

To the Editor:

A priest recently remarked that the Vatican's decision on Charles Curran might cause a schism. I'd like to clue him in.

There is already a schism in the Church. It started when the liberal modernism following Vatican II became apparent. It continued with the bishop's pastorals on defense and economics, where they revealed their ignorance of history and of human nature. Liberal modernism is disrupting the traditional Church.

Every time I go into a modern church — unreligious, irreligious, un-Catholic, vandalized not by Huns but by priests and bishops — I feel exceedingly schismatic, maybe persecutorial. Clerics come and go; the churches remain a continuing sacred presence — conveyors of our Catholic heritage, uncontaminated by faddish ideology — until now.

Now they are but warehouses, dark and ugly, and cheaply flashy. I am ready for a cauterizing schism to counteract the liberal rejection of the past.

John F. Starkweather
Middle Road Rush

Prefers to shut window

To the Editor:

Many of Father Curran's supporters spout such lovely phrases as "fresh air," "opening windows" and "openness and stronger foundations on which to build a new and better Church."

I ask you, the cheerleaders of this new and modern way of thinking, what kind of Church is built on the tiny corpses of millions of unborn babies killed in the name of modernism by the "sacrament" of abortion? Father Curran's stand on abortion is so elusive as to be dangerous and makes me step back and take a close look at the kind of "fresh air" these folks want to let into the Church. I'd just as soon slam the window shut on this one.

Mary Ellen Frisch
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Seeks Stamp Collection

To the Editor:

May I ask your readers if they would send their cancelled stamps to me? The proceeds from the sale of these stamps are used for our retired and sick sisters.

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