

C-J Opinions

'Hail Mary' protestors weren't an angry crowd

To the Editor:

They marched on, 450 in all, their weapons firmly in hand, their battle cries rising in what seemed one voice. A formidable crowd to be sure — enough to make one run to a strong sanctuary, safe from their abominable threats! "The passions of (this) angry crowd," as Father Lum wrote in his commentary (C-J, August 28: "Catholic chaplain reflects on recent UR showing of film 'Hail Mary'"), shouldn't be allowed to "be the sole representative of the Church of Jesus Christ."

But wait: let's examine the situation I've described above a little more closely, for you see, I was an eye witness to those passions, one "of angry crowd" you might say, even though I can't recall my being the least bit angry. Sad might be a better word to describe my emotional state.

Let's look again at those 450 angry, passion-filled folks. What were they doing? Actually they were calmly, devoutly, obediently standing behind a barrier put up by the University of Rochester during the showing of the film "Hail Mary." Their weapons? The Rosary — formidable indeed, but it's a weapon against sin and evil, a weapon for peace — one I assume to be

feared only by the godless. Their battle cries? *Prayer*, conversation with God — the Our Father and Hail Mary to be exact, prayer that Mary has repeatedly asked us to pray for peace.

Can one possibly, in the name of intellectual honesty, say this was an impassioned *angry* crowd and insinuate that we, members of that crowd, misrepresented our Church?

Father Lum speaks of using our reason. Openness to reason, however, doesn't mean we ought to dialogue with the devil! Our spirit should be master of the body and the mind, not vice versa. Our spirit is infinite; our minds a mere speck of finite knowledge changing as time changes. Which should be our master, remembering that we cannot in truth serve both?

Mary indeed had the right idea when she said her "yes" to God. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." It was not a yes of predominantly mind and body, though they were incorporated in that yes. But the focus of Mary's yes was obviously the spirit. Should ours be anything less?

Jan E. Fredericks
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Writer draws inferences from UR chaplain's 'Hail Mary' commentary

To the Editor:

As one of the 500 who protested the film "Hail Mary" and are now branded by Father Lum as "angry," "unbalanced" and "false pietists" in his "calm and objective" observations (C-J, Commentary, Aug. 28: "Catholic chaplain reflects on recent UR showing of film 'Hail Mary'"), I would like to add an observation of my own.

From his commentary, one can directly

infer that:

1. American film audiences are stupid. How could they ever hope to understand a film by a French intellectual, unless they were accompanied by a coterie of "experts?"

2. A correct understanding of the Church's teaching of the basic unity of body and soul demands a tolerant view of the movie. Maybe this explains why Mary curses God in

Annulment process is 'beautiful beginning'

To the Editor:

I wish to commend you on the August 28 Courier-Journal article written by Teresa A. Parsons about the annulment process ("Intern finds tribunal work means of expressing Christ's love"). It was clear and very good. I plan to cut that article out and mail it to my cousin, who wants to be married in the Church. She needs an annulment, but I believe she is a bit frightened and, having been raised as a Protestant, I imagine a bit incredulous that men could declare a marriage null and void. The article explains the reasons for annulment and the process beautifully.

Regarding the annulment process — something I, myself, went through with the assistance of the late Sister Kate McCarthy and Father Gene Weis, formerly of my home parish of St. Anne's, Palmyra, and now on

sabbatical — I view annulment not as an ending any more, but as a beautiful beginning.

Yes, I had to call my ex-husband to obtain some information, and I'm not saying that it wasn't painful, but, in retrospect, it was good to hear him say, "I'm fine, thank you, and how are you?" after all these years.

I encourage any Catholic who needs to go through this process to received the sacraments again or — as in my case, to enter the Roman Catholic Church — to find a sympathetic priest, religious or lay minister. There are plenty of them out there.

I was surprised as to how close I felt to God (as a result of) going through the process and obtaining the decree.

Lorelei A. Radulski
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Macedon

Praises deceased priest for beliefs, books

To the Editor:

A very special priest, Father Joseph Pelletier, AA, of Worcester, Mass., died on Sunday, Aug. 31, 1986. He was buried Sept. 4 at St. Ann's Church and Shrine, Fiskdale, Mass. I felt that many people in the Rochester area who knew him either personally or through his writings would want to know. He was ordained in 1937 and had been associated for most of his priestly life with Assumption College,

Worcester.

With his calm and humble ways, this great priest had a strong influence on me from the few times that I met him and especially from his books and articles. He was the author of: *The Sun Danced at Fatima*, 1951; *Fatima Hope of the World*, 1954; *God Speaks at Garabandal*, 1970; *Our Lady Comes to Garabandal*, 1971; *The Immaculate Heart of Mary*, 1976; and other books.

He wrote many articles for *Garabandal Magazine* about the apparitions of Our Lady at San Sebastian de Garabandal, Spain. These apparitions to four girls in northern Spain from 1961 to 1966 are presently under investigation by the Church. Dr. Luis Morales, who heads the investigating commission, speaks favorably of Garabandal. It is because of the Garabandal apparitions that I came to know Father Pelletier in 1968.

Father Pelletier frequently said that in everything that happened at Garabandal — through the Blessed Mother and St. Michael the Archangel — the faith was being taught. At Garabandal, the Virgin prayed the rosary with the girls and taught them to say it slowly. She particularly urged visits to the Blessed Sacrament and prayer for priests.

If any readers want to order Father Pelletier's books, they are available through: Assumption Publications, 50 Old English Road, Worcester, Mass. 01609. Also available is his latest book, *The Queen of Peace Visits Medjugorje*.

Marian Buchheit
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Webster

'Shocked' by Courier's coverage of Father Curran

To the Editor:

I was shocked by your August 21 issue (which gave) 75 percent of the front page to coverage of the "Vatican Verdict" on Father Charles Curran, replete with a large 5" by 7" picture of the priest gesturing and speaking before microphones.

That constitutes an obvious favorite treatment of the priest in his dispute with Church authority, which on August 20 he called a form of "creeping infallibilism."

It is most regrettable, and disheartening to practicing Catholics — and especially to us older senior citizens — to have our diocesan newspaper give preferential news coverage to a priest who defies Church authority and our beloved pontiff, Pope John Paul II.

Father Curran insists on teaching in the name of the Church, while in fact he denies the Church's teachings. That constitutes a contradiction.

I suggest prayers by the faithful for Father Charles Curran, that he will accept divine authority created by our Lord and God, Jesus Christ Himself.

Leo J. Gangl
Indian Creek Road
Ithaca

Father Robert A. Meng
Holy Rosary Church
Rochester

Await Curran's reinstatement

To the Editor:

In the history of the Church, a number of brilliant thinkers and dedicated Church figures have felt the sting of disapproval by authority. These figures include Thomas Aquinas, Teilhard de Chardin and John Courtney Murray.

The same Church that found these figures lacking eventually reinstated them. Moreover, it adopted their insights for the good of many.

It is our heartfelt belief that our brother and friend Father Charles Curran, who has experienced a similar rebuke, will likewise one day be vindicated.

We look forward to the day when dialogue and honest grappling with moral issues and searching for truth in light of the gospel will be the hallmark of our faith community.

The pastoral staff of St. Mary's,
Rochester: Father James Lawlor; Sister Loretta Poole, SSJ; Jean Pope Boyle; Joan Sobala, SSJ; Sue Clifford; P. David Finks; and Donna Fitch.

Prayers answered in censure

To the Editor:

At long last prayers were answered in the denial of the right to teach theology to Father Curran by the Vatican, and now, may Father Andrew Greeley be next in the censoring line for his erroneous concepts in his various publications.

His profits he gives to Catholic institutions; is this furthering his mistaken views? They become so important that they lose perspective of adherence to their priestly vows, relishing the adopted role of pleasing the public in lieu of God.

Edna C. Faulkner
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Victor Bartolotta Jr.

A Closer Look

Ask the children

It's 4 a.m. Three male bartenders emerge from a Winton Road bar and are immediately confronted by a dealer anxious to sell them crack.

"These bartenders make a lot of money," explains a co-worker, "but they're always broke." The co-worker alleges that crack addiction is the reason for their lack of money.

On a residential street in Irondequoit, a well-dressed man driving a Volvo pulls up to two young girls and hands them a white envelope. He pockets the money and drives away.

Unobtrusively, drug deals like the ones I've just described are made on a daily basis all over Monroe County and all over America.

Perhaps because this is an election year, politicians of every major party have announced a war on drugs and on drug dealers. These same politicians have indicated to the public that tough measures can cure drug abuse, all the while ignoring the spiritual dimension of the problem.

Admitting that drugs are a spiritual problem does not mean that we then can automatically find easy answers, however. Experience teaches us that finding answers to spiritual problems is at least as difficult as our latest search for answers to drug problems.

Allow me to draw a parallel between solving spiritual problems and solving drug problems. Spiritually, for example, one way we have tried to satisfy the human need for God and for spiritual things is through preaching. But even preaching about God

or about spiritual things often does not yield the best results. Sometimes preachers are urged to find ways of preaching, so that the one preached to does not feel as if he or she is being preached at. When preaching isn't as effective as we would like, we then look to other ways in which we can help people satisfy their spiritual needs — like, for example, asking the people themselves how we should best minister to them.

Similarly, overly strict drug laws or drug testing — which violates the rights and privacy of the individual — imposed from an autocratic authority are not the answer to the very complex problem of drug abuse. Such plans should not be presented as solutions.

Admittedly, finding real solutions to the drug problem is difficult. However, perhaps admitting the difficulty in finding answers is the first step toward discovering answers. Perhaps the next step is to ask possible victims of drug abuse what they think could solve the problem. And that means asking the children.

God, liver!

I just finished a book on child rearing that suggests parents use a single word to get their children to do what the parents want the child to do. For example, instead of telling my daughter, Lynn, over and over again to please stay in her chair until she has finished eating supper, I follow this method: I first fully explain the instructions I want her to follow and repeat them several times until she understands. Then, I remind her by saying simply, "Lynn, chair!" This method saves the parent from constantly having to repeat instructions and, in the long run, saves the parent

energy and anxiety.

It's supposed to work. Only sometimes when I use the one-word method it backfires, and my daughter says, "Daddy, why are you saying 'Lynn, chair!?' Why don't you say, 'Lynn, please stay in your chair!?' Anyway, it works most of the time.

So, I've been thinking. If the method works on children — with no disrespect intended, maybe it would work on God. After all, there's nothing like a clear, direct message that precisely captures what one is trying to communicate.

So, this week, my prayer to God has been "God, liver!" because the person for whom I am praying has a non-functioning liver that needs some divine attention, fast! Likewise, my prayer has been, "God, Michael!" when I think of the thing that needs to be done in Michael's life. In both instances, I know that God knows what I am asking Him to do.

Of course, as with anything that has value, repetition or constant reminding is necessary if the thing we want done is to be accomplished. Therefore, I say over and over to my daughter, "Lynn, chair!" to remind her to stay in her chair; or, I say, "Lynn, blanket!" to remind her to not leave her blanket lying on the couch.

In the same way, I keep reminding God about the things I would like Him to work on, not because He forgets and needs reminding like my daughter does, but because I want God to know how serious I am about the things for which I am praying.

I think I'm going to keep using the one-word method in praying about these people. In fact, I think I'm going to keep bugging God until he fulfills the promise he made to us human beings from generation upon generation to heal our livers and to heal our lives.

So, once again, Lord, let me say it — only this time a bit louder — "God, liver!"