

C-J Opinions

Fr. Curran, Buckley cases different

To the Editor:

In his letter (C-J Opinion, Sept. 18: "Emphasis on sexual morality diverts laity from need for economic justice"), Walter O'Hagan decries an alleged de-emphasis on "world justice and love of neighbor" on the part of his excellency, Cardinal Ratzinger and the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I find Mr. O'Hagan's letter to be flawed in all of the above considerations.

As a priest, a moral theologian, a professor in a pontifical university who can boast that his articles appear in 90 percent of American theological journals, Father Charles Curran does appropriately come under the scrutiny of the sacred congregation and the good cardinal. The scandal of Father Curran is more pervasive, internal and on a graver level than "conservative spokesman William Buckley." Perhaps Mr. Buckley has reformed of his anti-magisterial statement, as I have always heard him upholding the magisterium in his programs. It was merely this reform which the congregation sought in

the Father Curran incident. By contrast, Father Curran's anti-magisterial and dissenting stance is ongoing and supported by personnel whose positions pose a danger to faith and morals.

Is there any greater world injustice at the present time than the legal institutionalized mass murder, annually and globally, of 50 million of the pre-born? Yet there are always the "Catholic" politicians — Gov. Cuomo, Sen. Kennedy and Sen. Moynihan — voting for abortion funding, its legality and continuance. To be sure, Gov. Mario Cuomo falls back on "Catholic theologians" for support in this heinous crime. Against this "liberal" blood letting stands one of the boldest and most prophetic documents of our time, *Humanae Vitae*. Its rejection by pollster Catholics is the cause of many of today's problems in the Church and in the world. This includes "justice, love of neighbor" as well as sexual morality.

Louis J. Pasqua
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Censure not enough; defrock Father Curran

To the Editor:

The Vatican decision barring Father Curran from teaching Catholic theology is not severe enough. He should be defrocked. He has defied Church law, which in essence is God's law.

The only people who would accept his immoral teaching are the theologians who believe that if they persuade enough theologians to join their movement, they can overturn the Vatican decision.

The Courier-Journal in its October 2 issue mentions some of the above theologians who would support Father Curran's immoral teachings.

Father Curran's immoral, accepted way of life is wrong and unacceptable by God's people. It has been prophesied by the Bible that many false teachers will appear to deceive God's people. These teachers will appear to be godly in every way, even in the way they dress. So, beware, lest you be deceived.

They will infiltrate our churches and our

schools, where they will be free to conduct their immoral teachings. If a theologian is not in accord with Christ's teachings according to the Bible, he then must be regarded as anti-Christ.

Patrick S. Tudisco
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SSJs thank diocese for mission contributions

To the Editor:

Through the Courier-Journal, we wish to express our gratitude to you, the people of the Diocese of Rochester, for the monetary donations we recently received as a result of your generous response to the diocesan Missions Appeal of last May. It is your continued strong support which makes possible our service to the people of Brazil and Alabama. You have an important part in making possible new life for literally hundreds of men, women and children, as they discover their unique values as

Refutes writer's claim that no one analyzes substance of Father Curran's theological view

To the Editor:

Ronald E. Jodoin, in his recent letter (C-J Opinion, Sept. 18: "Fr. Cuddy's column 'last straw'"), criticized Father Cuddy and others for siding with the Vatican against Father Curran.

Mr. Jodoin complained that no letter he read made any attempt, "beyond a brief listings of topics, to clarify the questionable area of his (Father Curran's) studies in light of his publicly professed acceptance of the main body of Church teaching."

One questionable area of Father Curran's teaching is abortion. He uses the word "individuation" to describe at what point

the fetus becomes human. Since the Church teaches that a human being is created at conception, Father Curran's views are simply wrong.

Another such Father Curran teaching involves the subject of homosexuality. According to Father Curran, no serious sin takes place between sexually active homosexuals when there is a loving relationship. Again, this is in clear violation of Church teaching.

What critics of Church teaching want us to believe is that they are the Church, that they know best, etc., etc., etc.

This is evident in our daily and Sunday Masses when certain lectors diligently replace masculine nouns with neuter nouns (in scripture readings). They should read what is written.

Perhaps they feel that the Holy Spirit has bypassed John Paul II and the Vatican and is now hovering over Father Curran and company.

In any case, I hope they either obey official Church teaching or staff their own church.

Robert W. Bart
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Let Church handle problem; leave writer to pray in peace

To the Editor:

Concerning Father Curran, I, too, have an opinion.

Let the Church handle the problem. It doesn't concern us Catholics who are supposed to take no sides. The pope is the Church, and what he says should be obeyed by all. I'm tired of hearing about Father Curran. When I go to Mass, I go to worship, not to listen to problems that don't concern me as a Catholic.

It's not up to us to judge whether Father Curran is right or wrong. I am not taking sides. I just want to go to church and say my rosaries and do my thing.

C.M. Fagg
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Canandaigua

Youthful disobedience stems from dissent

To the Editor:

In his most recent letter to the editor (C-J Opinion, Sept. 25: "Water-Down Charlie" column raises several questions in priest's mind"), Father Lum quotes Mark 9:40: Had he but gone on to the very next paragraph in Mark (9:42), he would have read, "If anyone should cause one of these little ones to turn away from his faith in me, it would be better for that man to have a large millstone tied around his neck and to be thrown into the sea."

How do the teachings of our "Catholic modernist theologians" affect the youth of today? I suggest that confusion, separation and disobedience in our youth are the fruits of their teachings.

What folly to think that our society is the "exception" and that God's and his Church's rules should change for it! What pride to think finite theologians could find in error the Bible and a 2,000-year tradition, both of which have been and are being overseen by those theologians' maker! What irony that the very folks these theologians want to "help" will suffer due to their, yes, "watered-down religion!"

Isn't it amazing how Mother Teresa can lovingly, caringly help sinners, yet call them away from their sins, too?! Through humility and obedience she has and does practice an undiluted religion!

Barbara A. Fredericks
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Thanks bishop for statement accepting verdict on Curran

To the Editor:

I would like to use some of our Courier-Journal's Opinion space to express a heartfelt thank you to our Bishop Clark for his statement, which was quoted in Our Sunday Visitor on Sept. 7. The article stated: "Bishop Matthew Clark of Rochester, N.Y., Father Curran's home diocese, said, 'In recognition of the ultimate authority of the Holy Father who has confirmed this decision and in a spirit of collegiality with him, I accept the decision as the final word on this matter and urge all of our community to accept it in a similar spirit.'"

After so much negative response to this controversy, as the saying goes — at the risk of repeating myself — again, thank you, Bishop Clark, for your positive confirmation of our Holy Father's decision.

Clara Pysto
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Corning

'Women talk too much'

To the Editor:

Reasons for not admitting women to the priesthood refer to tradition, to the maleness of Christ and the apostles.

There are other reasons. Women talk so much. I couldn't stand a priestess who was a compulsive talker.

John F. Starkweather
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Victor Bartolotta Jr.

A Closer Look



Evangelist-turned-politician Pat Robertson could be a very scary and damaging presidential candidate and president. Robertson's candidacy is so potentially volatile because of — among other things — his good looks, his extraordinary verbal skills, his money, his educational background and, most importantly, his religious fundamentalism.

I can appreciate a little bit of Robertson's thinking. After all, there certainly are some things about fundamentalism that tend to appeal to a lot of people.

Perhaps the most attractive yet most dangerous aspect of Pat Robertson's prospective candidacy is his faith in a life that is filled with "ought to's." The fundamentalist beliefs Robertson espouses assert that because a given thing is a certain way by nature, then other things "ought to" follow.

Sometimes, this way of thinking is not all bad. For example, we expect fathers and mothers — because of their duty to care for dependent children — to act in benevolent ways. Naturally, few people would have difficulty accepting this very natural cause/effect relationship about parents. Yet because of the temptation for fundamentalists to believe that everything has only one correct conclusion attached to it, this kind of thinking about the essence of things can also result in questionable or erroneous conclusions.

For example, fundamentalists assert that if we believe that the Bible is the Word of God, then we must take every word of the Bible literally. I believe, however, that it's possible to accept the Bible as the Word of God and yet ignore passages that don't

make a lot of sense. The difference between this approach to the Bible and the fundamentalists' approach is the differing "ought to's" implied by the two belief patterns.

One way to read the Bible is to consider what scholarly research has taught us about the context of scripture — when the scriptures were written, to whom they were written and what the words meant to those people at that time. With those considerations in mind, we can reach certain conclusions about what God is trying to say through His Word.

Fundamentalists, on the other hand, tend to ignore the context of scripture, because they believe the Word of God should not be subjected to scholarly research — it should be accepted on its own, as is.

In addition, other, perhaps more serious, subjects exist. Of primary concern to humanity is how God has revealed Himself in history. Certainly all Christians can point to the life of Jesus — to the incarnation — as the premier act of God in the affairs of men and women. Yet we must look beyond the incarnation to determine how God continues to manifest Himself to us in the world.

Fundamentalists tend to be dogmatic in deciding when God has or has not manifested Himself to us; non-fundamentalist Christians generally are less rigid in trying to determine when and what God is speaking to humanity. Still, fundamentalists — who tend to see things in black-and-white terms, rather than in more complex ways — disallow the notion that God's voice can be obscure.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of

trying precisely to determine God's message to us is that such a determination involves judging human behavior. Fundamentalists are willing to decide quickly and easily whether a human act stems from God's urging. Naturally, all of us must evaluate human behavior, but we must be forever mindful that in doing so, we risk the curtailment of human freedom. Fundamentalists, apparently, are willing to overlook that possibility.

Because he is a fundamentalist, candidate Robertson may force Christians and non-Christians alike to make decisions about God's nature and about how He works in our lives. Oftentimes, it is better to leave our understandings of God's nature imprecise or without summary. Moreover, Robertson's candidacy and — God forbid — his presidency — have the potential to wreck what little agreement Christians of different faith traditions have on religious matters.

Aside from the possibility that as president, Robertson might proclaim one day that he has answered God's request in ordering the bombing of Russia, the evangelist's entry into the political arena cannot, in my mind, bring anything but a confusing attempt to provide concrete answers to some aspects of life that are inherently mysterious. My fear is that when religious and political answers appear obscure, as they so often are, Robertson will tell us that these answers ought to be clear, that he knows the answers and that his answers are divinely inspired.

In the meantime, I believe our vocation is to find answers in this world. If God tells us anything, He tells us to think and to use our creative intelligence to form judgments and opinions for the good of all humanity. Whatever the outcome, we cannot allow Robertson's candidacy to force us to stop thinking, to stop dreaming and to stop expanding our minds. I'm afraid Robertson and people like him may force us to follow like timid ducklings down a path of their creation, and, in so doing, place our minds in jars — perhaps for all eternity.