

C-J Opinions

Writers question couple's ministry on interfaith marriage

To the Editor:

We were very concerned when we read the article in the October 2 issue of the Courier-Journal regarding the "family of faith" (C-J "Clerical couple to advocate advantages of interfaith unions").

When did the Catholic Church start advocating the advantages of interfaith marriages? In fact, not only advocate but also train partners in such a relationship to become ordained ministers — he in the Catholic Church and she in the Episcopal Church, because the Episcopal Diocese has no program of its own?

We were quite aghast as we continued to read even more disturbing and scandalous news. The children of the marriage are being

encouraged to disregard the Roman tradition. Their oldest son made three First Communions — one Catholic, one Episcopalian and one at school. The second also made two First Communions.

How can this couple be commissioned by our bishop to minister to ecumenical couples? It appears that they are teaching that communion in either church is OK. We know that common communion is actually the biggest obstacle to reconciliation.

Our deepest concern is what they have instructed their children in the meaning and teaching of the Eucharist. How can a deacon trained and ordained in our diocese be so indifferent to the official teaching of the Church regarding our most basic doctrine?

Surely we can't allow two people to establish their own understanding of unity!

Hopefully, all God-fearing persons embrace the spirit of ecumenism. But for Catholic parents, there is a delicate task of supporting the idea and still instructing the child the truth of the Roman tradition.

The freedom and encouragement given by our diocese to the McNulty family is alarming. We wonder how Bishop Clark can authorize this accommodation.

**Jim and Jane Predmore
Clover Street
Honeoye Falls**

Editor's Note: We seriously doubt that we can change the writers' minds with respect to the McNulty family's ministry. We do feel, however, that we have an obligation to clarify a few of this letter's statements, which are in error. First of all, Lynne McNulty was trained by the Catholic diocese to be an Episcopalian deacon because all Episcopalian permanent deacons are trained by the

Catholic diocese, not because she is married to a Catholic deacon.

Secondly, neither Brian nor Lynne was ordained specifically to minister to ecumenical couples. They were ordained to conduct the ordinary ministry of deacons in their respective denominations. Because they are married, however, they are involved in ministry to ecumenical couples, as evidenced by their participation in the joint Anglican/Roman Catholic conference entitled "Preparing and Caring for Ecumenical Marriages."

Finally, we should note, the fact that each remains within his/her respective denomination attests to their commitment to their individual faith traditions. That the children are being trained in both faith traditions and are receiving the sacraments in both churches means only that they will be prepared to make informed decisions on membership in the churches of their choice when they come of age.

Priest expresses gratitude for aid to missions

To the Editor:

Many thanks to friends of the missions for your kindness over the past year. This week I began a new phase in my mission activities. I received a new appointment. I am on my way to the University of Mexico City, in Mexico. There I will try to become versed in the Mexican language and Mexican culture. After one year of studies, they would like me to begin a new project in the Southwestern states, most likely in New Mexico.

The other members of our community have also been transferred. Father Paul Thunich, SVD, is already at the Divine Word Residence, Techny, Ill. 60082. Brother Joseph Hornek, SVD, is at the Divine Word Residence, Bordentown, N.J. 08505. My new

address is: Father Richard Thibeau, SVD, Calle Omega, 181, Col. Romero de Terreros, Coyoacan, 04310 Mexico, D.F.

If you are sending money for Masses, etc., please send them to Father Richard Thibeau, SVD, c/o J. R. Lindley, P.O. Box 1314, Killeen, Texas 76540.

Money in the mail doesn't always make it. My brother-in-law is in and out of Mexico every two weeks, so he will get the money to me. The members down in Mexico at the house where I stay live off their Mass stipends. So any Masses or donations will be deeply appreciated.

I will be remembering you in my prayers.
**Father Richard Thibeau
Coyoacan, Mexico**

Father Curran dissents from infallible teaching

To the Editor:

When are the followers of Charlie Curran going to acknowledge that the Vatican did not censure him because he was dissenting from non-infallible teachings of the Church? Charlie was censured because he dissented from infallible Church teachings!

Cardinal Ratzinger makes that perfectly clear when he quotes from Lumen Gentium of the Second Vatican Council that the teachings of the Church's ordinary magisterium can be infallible.

Even more critically, Cardinal Ratzinger points out that contrary to what Charlie thinks, the indissolubility of a sacramental and consummated marriage was infallibly

defined in the extraordinary magisterium of the Council of Trent and the evilness of abortion in the extraordinary magisterium of the Second Vatican Council.

There's no inquisition going on here. There has always been room in the Church for dissent, as long as it is legitimate. All Charlie is trying to do is obdurately salvage his pet theories while the Vatican is dealing with the hard, historical fact that what Charlie calls "non-infallible" are actually infallible from the ordinary and extraordinary magisterium of the Church.

**Father William J. Cosgrove
St. Dominic Church
Shortsville**

Reading constitution will ease aching hearts

To the Editor:

Hearts that are aching or have been troubled by the action that has been taken against Father Charles Curran may experience some alleviation of their pain if they read the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, which can be ordered from the Daughters of St. Paul who have a bookstore in Buffalo. The constitution was promulgated in 1979 and went into effect at the beginning of the academic year 1980-81. Particularly enlightening are articles 26, 27, 39, 70 and 71 of the *norms of Application*, which follow the constitution. All involved in this matter (the Curran case), therefore, have been aware of these laws and norms for at least six years, so there was, in actual fact, little reason for any great surprise.

The Holy Father, in his forward to the constitution, comments: "The Apostolic

See, in carrying out its mission, is clearly aware of its right and duty to erect and promote Ecclesiastical faculties dependent on itself, either with a separate existence or as parts of university faculties destined for the education of both ecclesiastical and lay students. This See is very desirous that the whole People of God, under the guidance of their shepherds, should cooperate to ensure that these centers of learning contribute effectively to the growth of faith and of Christian life."

This cooperation from the People of God here in the Diocese of Rochester will be greatly strengthened and significantly enhanced if they read this Apostolic Constitution.

**Sister M. Rosaire Bryant, c.p.s.
Precious Blood Convent
Shillington, Pa.**

Urges Catholics to adhere to teachings of Rome

To the Editor:

In regard to all the press and letters regarding the pope and Father Curran — especially to Mr. Meadows, an ex-seminarian who wrote to the Times Union on Sept. 19 — God did give us brains to think, but Christ also said, "My Kingdom is not of this world."

The pope and the hierarchy are vigilantly urging us to keep our souls free to be what God created — in His own image and likeness.

Abortion, quickie divorces, active homosexuality, etc., are some of the results of our inattention to these truths and ideas.

Christ lived in this world, but never succumbed to its temptations. We are asked to do

the same by the pope and the Roman Catholic Church. I do not belong to an American Catholic Church. Should they ask any less of us?

Father Curran has made several human errors — the most grievous being trying his Church leaders and their moral decisions based on the ultimate good in the arena of the media and world opinion.

There is a way of reconciliation for us all — humility, support for one another and penance.

**Mary E. Quinn
Willits Road
Ontario**

Victor Bartolotta Jr.

A Closer Look



Beds of stone

"Homelessness threatens to spread across our nation like an epidemic," said Caesar Perales, New York's commissioner of the Department of Social Services. Perales, who was in Rochester last week to dedicate the low-income housing project now completed at Mt. Carmel Parish, read the above quotation from a statement prepared by Governor Mario Cuomo. Perales commented on the problem of homelessness in New York City and New York state, and emphasized the terrible pain that homeless families have to face because they lack decent places to live.

The commissioner himself authored a 1984 report on homelessness, in which he stated that "homelessness is affecting people who are in most respects like other poor people except that they cannot find or afford housing." Today's homeless person, Perales says, "arrives in shelters not from the streets but from some dwelling ... where he can no longer afford to stay."

If you know anything about the homeless situation in New York City, you know that the sheer numbers of homeless people are much greater there than in Rochester. Yet, in proportion to the general population, homeless people are as common in

Rochester as they are in New York City, even though Rochester's homeless population numbers only 700 compared to New York's 36,000. Rochester is, therefore, one urban area among other urban areas whose job it is to help people living on the streets to find homes.

In New York City, the government has responded to the problem in ways that Rochester's city government hasn't. In New York City, the problem resides in trying to upgrade, expand and improve existing city-run shelters where conditions range from adequate to deplorable.

However, in Rochester, there are no city-run facilities at all to improve or upgrade. Homeless people in Rochester are sheltered mostly in church-run or church-affiliated facilities. To date, Rochester has no city-run facility because some city officials do not consider the problem of homelessness to be a serious problem or a problem to which government ought to address itself.

Some Rochester officials perceive occasional vacancies in existing shelters as a sign that additional shelters are not needed, according to Elizabeth Quinlan, homeless advocate at Corpus Christi Church. Still, there are plenty of street people who, for a number of reasons, refuse to make use of existing shelters.

As Quinlan says, "Unfortunately, what is not realized is the fact that these (shelter) providers often have prohibitive admission criteria, making it impossible for anyone in need to simply be accepted for help." She states that some shelters require people to be free from alcohol before they can be admitted. Others require attendance at religious services before allowing homeless people to eat or sleep. Consequently, many homeless people prefer the hard beds of the street — without restrictions — to softer ones to which regulations are attached.

Furthermore, other serious but lesser-known problems exist among homeless women, who account for 15 to 20 percent of the homeless population and who, because they live on the street, are often the victims of rape and other abuses. According to Quinlan, a critical shortage of beds exists for these women, who are often forced onto the streets by marital problems, eviction and so forth.

Questions prevail over who possesses the moral and legal responsibility to care for the homeless. Legally, the issue has already been resolved in the 1979 State Supreme Court case of Callahan vs. Carey, in which lawyer Robert Hayes successfully argued that the state has an obligation to provide "the bare necessities of life" for all its citizens. The problem now is getting that mandate implemented.

Our Catholic tradition is morally strong in calling us to help the poor in every way necessary to ensure their well-being. At the very least, that means helping homeless people find decent housing. According to Jesuit Father David Hollenbach, Catholic social teaching defines social justice as a

standard "which seeks to guarantee human dignity by specifying ... government intervention appropriate for the protection ... of (the) well-being of all individuals." In plain English, this means that government has a definite responsibility to provide for and protect all its citizens. Of course, that means that one of government's primary duties is to provide homes for homeless people.

Yet even if the City of Rochester were to take emergency measures to alleviate the immediate housing problem, there would still be much more to be done, according to Perales. Government must also create permanent housing. The Mt. Carmel project is one example of a permanent solution to the housing problem; but that venture was initiated not by the city, but by the Church and non-profit organizations.

Meanwhile, it is unjust to expect such shelters as St. Joseph's House of Hospitality and other church-sponsored providers to continue to shoulder by themselves the problems of homelessness.

Certainly church people and government officials need to continue dialogue on the issue of homelessness. Concrete solutions to the problems of homelessness in our area must be found, lest we all convict ourselves with having done nothing when we saw Jesus without shelter.

My hope is that our minds and our God-given creativity can be stirred in material ways for the benefit of Jesus' representatives who otherwise will be wet and hungry and cold and sick and depressed this winter, because the beds on which they sleep are made not of cotton or wool but of stone.