

# C-J Opinions

## U.S. Church obliged to pope, Cardinal Ratzinger for Fr. Curran censure

To the Editor:

It would appear that the strongest voices of support for Father Charles Curran come from the ranks of diocesan clergy and local academicians. Additional strong support for Father Curran's erroneous teachings is heard from the pastoral staff of St. Mary's in downtown Rochester and from the Friends of Father Curran. Chief among their

"issues" is the phrase "academic freedom." Others zero in on a perceived problem with "dialogue." Father William Lum lends his support by arranging for Father Curran to give the 1986 Cardinal Newman lecture on the campus of the University of Rochester.

Since the authentic teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in the area of faith and morals — i.e., moral theology — are

crucial to spiritual development of the entire universal Church, and perhaps more to the point, crucial to proper Catholic Christian formation of the young people of this diocese, diocesan parents and their children are entitled to know the truth.

The truth is that under no circumstances is "academic freedom" a valid or legitimate issue with respect to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's recent decision vis-a-vis Father Curran. Father Curran was told that he would no longer be permitted to teach error at a pontifical university, since he was no longer entitled to call himself a Catholic theologian. He may choose to hold erroneous opinions concerning the received teachings of the Church, but he no longer is permitted to teach these erroneous opinions at a Roman Catholic pontifical institution where seminarians are in formation for the priesthood. With respect to allegations about dialogue, seven years of dialogue seem more than sufficient.

For supporters of Father Curran and his dissenting errors to use his name analogically

with the temporary suppression of St. Thomas Aquinas' teachings by the Archbishop of Paris is unbelievable. Having been recently exposed to Father Curran's teachings, it is obvious to me that much damage has been done to the Roman Catholic Church in the United States in view of the fact that his errors have been spread around the country by unsuspecting and/or confused former students of his at Catholic University.

Furthermore, I strongly suspect that many of Father Curran's supporters have another agenda — general defiance of the Vatican and the Holy Father. Authentically great theologians who were for a time not fully condoned by the Vatican waited in faith and humility for their "kairos," for their day in the sun. It is clear that the Roman Catholic Church in the United States owes a deep debt of gratitude to our Holy Father and to Cardinal Ratzinger for their loving courage.

Deacon William F. Schmitz  
Cedargrove Drive  
Rochester

## Dailies' failure to cover campaign is a sham

To the Editor:

New Yorkers are witnessing an incredible sham being perpetrated by our statewide media in the non-coverage of the Mark Green/Alphonse D'Amato campaign for the U.S. Senate.

Why are our daily newspapers and area television stations ignoring Green's spirited challenge to the Republican incumbent? How can the New York Times justify days on end without a single report on the race? Will New Yorkers get an opportunity to see and hear more than D'Amato's slick television ads? Shall we have the opportunity to measure Green and D'Amato side by side?

Apparently, there is real fear of an open, ongoing debate. Powerful establishment bosses realize that a genuine public airing of the issues will result in a sure defeat of D'Amato. If voters have a fair chance of evaluating the candidates, they will see that

Green best represents the interests of the common people, and they will understand why the Wall Street Journal recently described D'Amato as "Wall Street's favorite senator."

The ruling-class bigots know this. Word has a way of filtering down from board rooms to country clubs to newsrooms. Green gets limited, very limited newsprint and airtime. Meanwhile, D'Amato's six years in office receive absolutely no serious scrutiny by New York's media, as he continues on his megabucks campaign.

Two-hundred-ten years after our revolution from kingly dictate, this state and this nation remain deluded by the myth that democracy exists through our electoral system. What a farce!

John E. Milich  
Ithaca

## Urges voters to support those who protect life

To the Editor:

The Monroe County Citizens for Family Planning has endorsed the following candidates on the basis of their support for legislation allowing the killing of unborn children. Those pro-abortion candidates and the offices for which they are running are: Mario Cuomo (governor), Mark Green (U.S. Senate), Frank Horton (29th Congressional District), Louise Slaughter (30th Congressional District), John Perry (54th state Senatorial District), Robert King and Henry Kujawa (130th state Assembly District), Audre "Pinny" Cooke (132nd state Assembly District), David Gantt (133rd state Assembly District), Janet Welch (135th state Assembly District) and Stephen Hawley (137th state Assembly District).

Let us who value the sanctity of human life rally behind those candidates who will use their representative offices to protect the lives of unborn children.

Jeanne D. Sweeney  
Nob Hill  
Rochester

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the interest of fairness, we should note that the writer's mention of legislation in some cases refers to state or federal budgets that include, among their myriad provisions, funding for Medicaid abortions. In other cases, however, it refers to bills that pertain solely to abortion. We suggest that readers who are concerned with this distinction look into the records or positions of the individual candidates.

## Male-only speaking has created world of war and poverty

To the Editor:

I'd like to reply to the letter of Mr. Starkweather (C-J Opinion, Oct. 9: "Women talk too much"). Don't we live in a country where men still do most of the talking? Simply look at our government. And what do we end up with? A country where 20 million people don't have enough to eat; 30 million without any health insurance; one in five children growing up in

poverty, and one in two black children in poverty; a trillion-dollar deficit; millions of dollars to support bloody dictators in El Salvador, Chile and South Korea; and millions of dollars to support killings and tortures by the contras in Nicaragua.

Isn't it time that women raise their voices?  
Lieve Seeger-Demeyere  
Lafayette Parkway  
Rochester

Victor Bartolotta Jr.

# A Closer Look



## A widow's life

"But I still can't figure it out," she said pensively. I couldn't resist the challenge. "Couldn't figure what out?" I prodded, "You mean you can't figure out life?"

"Yes, life," said the 80-year-old widow whose husband died 55 years ago leaving her with a 16-month-old child. She further explained that she had never remarried, though she had plenty of offers over the years.

"I just didn't want to burden anyone with the expense of having to support a child," she said. "But God has been good to me and so has my husband, who has helped me all through the years," she went on. "I think they help us even after they're gone." Still, she had serious questions for which she has no definite answers.

For a moment I was both dumbstruck and depressed. You mean to tell me that an 80-year-old widow — whose husband died when she was only 25 and who never remarried, and who claims that both God and her deceased husband have helped her all these years — still has unanswered questions about life? If someone like her doesn't have many definite answers, I wondered how the rest of us are supposed

to find any.

Calming my irritation, I reflected on some indefinite or esoteric aspects of life and that helped me to understand what the widow meant. I have a great deal of difficulty, for example, with some passages in scripture. I can't figure out how I am heaping coals of fire on the head of my enemy if I feed him. Then too, I have a great deal of trouble with the thousands of Moabites and Canaanites slain by the Israelites.

Especially, I experience a great deal of discomfort when I think about how narrow the gate is supposed to be that leads to eternal salvation.

Maybe through these things the Lord is telling us to be patient and to accept some things about life that simply cannot be answered. Unanswered questions don't have to upset us. I know this is true from observing the life of other people, especially, the life of the widow.

### The three F's

While reflecting the other day, I developed a new system of praying. I'm sure many of you have heard of the "Three P" method of prayer developed and taught by a number of Christian teachers. That method entails paying close attention to the

place where you pray, the physical posture of your body and the presence of God. In the same vein, I've developed the "Three F" method of giving thanks to God. It goes something like this: "Thank you God for my face, my fat and my feet. To some faithful readers, this may sound a little like my "God, Liver!" article of a few weeks ago, in which I described how to summarize requests to God just by using one word.

At first, the significance of the Three F method may not be obvious to some. One must understand that thanking God for one's face and fat is a way of thanking Him for the social dimensions of our lives. I can't think of two other things that so significantly effect on our life than our faces and our fat. For example, if one has a handsome face, he or she might think him/herself blessed. Of course, the reverse is also true. Similarly, our body fat content may be a source of thankfulness, anger or complaint in our relationship to God.

Likewise, thankfulness for our feet may be like thanking God for our health or lack thereof. One might argue that our ability to move about is largely determined by the condition of our feet. In other words, our feet sort of represent our physical conditions.

So, in the spirit of addressing God, we might consider the value of acronyms and lists as we implement the Three P's while praying, the one-word method of making our petitions known and, now, the Three F method in giving thanks.

I just hope God can keep all these straight.

## Enough contemptuous condemnations of Father Curran

To the Editor:

Enough letters on Curran! Over the past few months, letters in the Courier-Journal have treated the man Charles Curran and his theologies with enough contempt to last a lifetime. Where is the expression of Christ's

love in messages that condemn him and call for a further action against him?

In his work as a theologian, Father Curran is exploring human relationships with aberrations from the traditional norm, in the light of the mystery of Jesus. As more and more relationships suffer the pain and challenges of dealing with such aberrations, we need people within the Church who are willing to take the risk of doing such work.

How can we be sure he is all wrong — that the Lord is not working through him in some way, if not for today, for tomorrow? We must remember that the teachings of Roman Catholicism are not static. Over long periods of time, there has been change, and persons once condemned are often honored, unfortunately all too often posthumously.

This letter does not judge the rightness or wrongness of Father Curran's conclusions. It is a plea to consider how we conduct ourselves as Christians. Perhaps we might reflect on what Jesus would do.

Art Maurer  
Old Barn Circle  
Penfield

## Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writers' signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They must be brief, typed (double-spaced, please) and no longer than 1½ pages.

Letters should be mailed to: Opinion, Courier-Journal, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made, and the letters will reflect the writers' own styles.