

C-J Opinions

Writer applies logic theory to analysis of Curran case

To the Editor:

Because of the absence of any clear teaching coming from the American bishops concerning the doctrinal issues of the Vatican-Curran controversy, it is necessary to make some observations about fundamental Catholic belief, in the hope that it may ease the polarization and inflammatory rhetoric within the American Church.

There are three things, all of which are necessary for anyone to be guilty of grave or mortal sin and thereby incur eternal punishment, if that person should die unrepentant: 1) the deed must be a serious offense against God, or thought to be a serious offense; 2) the person must know that the deed is a serious of-

fense; 3) the person must give full and free consent of the will to the deed. If any of these three criteria are absent, the deed, word, or thought — although still objectively grave — does not constitute mortal sin for the individual. This is called limited culpability. The amount of guilt and punishment incurred by the individual is dependent upon the degree to which his or her deliberation of the intellect is affected and the freedom of will curtailed.

Another fundamental teaching of the Church is that the end result never justifies the means. An evil method taken to achieve an apparent good renders the whole action immoral. Some acts are in and of themselves immoral and/or "intrinsically evil."

Prior to any written law or convention of

man, a law of nature or "natural law" existed, as a result of God's design and creation, and is therefore God's law. As evidenced in nature, mankind was created by God as male and female biologically equipped and programmed to interact with one another in order to reproduce the species. The intended, natural function of sex is reproduction. To ensure the use of sex, a degree of pleasure and sexual drive or desire is associated with intercourse. To purposely frustrate the natural consequence of copulating by preventing conception is to divorce the associated pleasure from the natural and intended function, making the pleasure of the sexual union an end unto itself. It makes two entirely distinct processes out of what was designed by God as one.

In contrast, slavery and the taking of life, although wrong, can not be said to be intrinsically so, because it can be demonstrated that a degree of slavery exists by design in nature, and that the right to defend oneself from life-threatening attack — even to the point of inflicting death on the aggressor — is an intrinsic right of self preservation. Such a right logically extends to groups of individuals or society, in the case of defensive war — the just-war teaching which has additional requirements — and in the use of the death penalty for the crime of murder. The prohibition made by the commandment "thou shalt not kill" is clearly directed at prohibiting the taking of innocent human life as is evidenced in scripture,

for to do so is to usurp the prerogative which belongs to God alone.

To reiterate, psychological and/or emotional stress on an individual may to a degree render him or her incapable of being in mortal sin and deserving of the full punishment due an act that is always grave and seriously wrong. The Church does not presume to judge such cases, but rather leaves such judgment to God alone. The Church, however, can and does judge the basic rightness or wrongness of an act.

This is the opposition to Father Curran's teaching, which would make certain immoral acts morally acceptable in certain limited circumstances. Euthanasia and abortion are simply euphemisms for the taking of innocent human life. The homosexual union of two people is intrinsically evil because it is a perversion of the intended purpose of the reproductive organs, a fact which is not diminished by the observation that homosexuality may exist in other animal species; all of creation having been thrown into disarray by the sin of Adam. The perceived good of ending the apparent suffering of the irreversibly ill and the perceived good of expressing an emotional and psychological bond resulting from love of one for another can not be achieved by immoral means which render the end result immoral.

Louis G. Joy
Stowell Drive
Rochester

If Mormons have EWTN, shouldn't we?

To the Editor:

I would like to inform all faithful Catholic readers who subscribe to cable TV through Greater Rochester Cablevision that this month's billing includes a ballot that will enable you to vote for inclusion of excellent Catholic programming in the basic service GRC offers.

EWTN (ETERNAL WORD TELEVISION NETWORK) originates out of Alabama and is run by Mother Angelica and her sisters. Their programming runs from 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. every evening and includes movies, instruction, rosary, drama and other features. The very popular "Mother Angel-

ica Live" talk show airs nightly for one hour and features many interesting guests and the lovely Mother Angelica herself.

You should not pass up this great opportunity to have Christian programming from a very different perspective than we now have. We have had the popular CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network), Jim Bakker's PTL Club, and various other Christian programming, which has been very interesting and instructive. CBN is one of the networks I watch frequently and often enjoy. EWTN gives a wholly different perspective, while offering instruction to Catholics and non-Catholics alike as to the true events and teachings of the Catholic Faith. Please don't blow this great opportunity.

Just one more bit of information. On a trip to Reno last June, I stopped overnight at a motel in Salt Lake City. Now we all know that area is Mormon country. Well, EWTN was popular enough in that area to warrant nightly programming. I was delighted to watch almost six hours of good Catholic programs in Mormon country. Can Rochester offer less?

John G. Lentricchia
Bly Street
Rochester

Questions letter's publication, urges women to speak more

To the Editor:

I would like to make two brief points regarding Mr. Jack Starkweather's letter to the editor in yesterday's Courier-Journal (Opinion, October 9: "Women talk too much").

1) I am saddened that you as an editorial board would print such a letter that is not only offensive but is lacking the basic elements of love.

2) I do disagree with Mr. Starkweather. If only women in the Roman Catholic Church would talk more and speak more vehemently, the message of the Church's injustice and exclusion would be clearly proclaimed and, hopefully, heard.

Barbara A. Moore, RSM
Melrose Street
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're sorry if we offended anyone by publishing the letter. We hoped, however, that the responses of women throughout the diocese might get through to Mr. Starkweather, whereas our refusal to publish the letter might only make him feel more certain of his views. Are we being too optimistic?

Thanks for balanced article

To the Editor:

The Emily Morrison article on the creation debate (C-J October 16: "GeVa's 'Inherit the Wind' revives great creation debate") was an example of religious journalism at its finest. I feel that it was her research on both sides of the issue which made this article informative and educational.

Congratulations, Emily, on some fine work and may we have more of it in the future.

Tom Fogarty
Walnut Street
Auburn

Rochester fasters promote awareness of contras

To the Editor:

We, the undersigned, have just completed a Fast for Life to support the veterans' Fast for Life which has just ended on the steps of the Capitol Building. For three days, we have not taken food as a sign of solidarity with the suffering people of Nicaragua.

We undertook this action because our efforts to express our conviction that United States funding of the contras is morally wrong have so often fallen on deaf ears. We felt impelled to take this more dramatic action to underscore the religious depths of our convictions.

One among us has lived in Nicaragua for six months and personally witnessed the suffering inflicted on innocent people as a result of our government's policy. A friend of hers was killed by the very group funded with our tax dollars. All of us have known people who have worked in Nicaragua and have come back to report the fear of the people for the contras, even some critics of the Sandinista government.

In recent days, we have witnessed once again the duplicity of the American government in what appears to be a policy of "disinformation." The CIA has before violated the mandate of Congress in mining

harbors and encouraging assassinations, to name just two such violations. Now it appears the CIA or even the administration has become involved in direct military action in Nicaragua, despite the explicit mandate of the Congress.

It is time to stop the madness. It is time to bring an end to the U.S.-supported terrorism fomented by the contras. It is time to de-fund the contras, to begin bilateral talks with the Sandinista government and to fully support the Contadora process.

We pledge ourselves to continue our efforts to reverse this tragic American policy. We wish to meet with our representatives and senators to discuss this issue directly with them. While we are appreciative of the constructive roles of Sen. Moynihan and Reps. Horton and LaFalce in opposing contra aid, we urge them to become assertive in this debate. We urge Sen. D'Amato and Reps. Kemp and Eckert to reverse their stand. State-supported terrorism is wrong, no matter who is its sponsor.

Our sacrifice is small compared to that of the veterans and pales in comparison with that of the Nicaraguan people. We pray that this act will play some small role in ending the carnage.

Richard S. Gilbert
writing for himself
and the other
Rochester fasters:
Randy Baker,
Father James Callan,
Sr. Elizabeth Anne LeValley,
Kathleen McTigue,
Rabbi Judea Miller,
Isabel Morrison and,
Sister Kathleen Wilder

Resents crack about women

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to the letter written by John Starkweather of Rush (C-J Opinions, October 9: "Women talk too much"). As I read his comment in regard to why women should not become priests I related to his comment that Jesus was indeed a male and so were his 12 apostles, but the comment that women talk too much really made me livid. I totally resent that remark!

I am an individual, just as you are. Just because I happen to be a woman does not make me any less of a person. Many women have profound words of wisdom. Unfortunately, Mr. Starkweather, your mind is set and your ears are deaf to our words of wisdom. Therefore, you will be denying yourself the pleasure of our wisdom.

One other point, Eve was made from Adam's rib from his side, not from his head to be superior to him, nor from his feet to be beneath him, but from his side to be equal to him. May you have a peaceful day.

Linda J. Brunner
Buckley Place
Henrietta

Victor Bartolotta Jr.

A Closer Look

Preparing a place

Deacon Mike Krupiarz, his wife, Sharon, and their two children chatted with me after Mass on Sunday. Both of them thanked me for material in my column which attempts to combine spirituality with everyday experience.

"We're trying to do the same thing," Mike said.

"Oh yeah, how?" I asked.

"Well, we're looking for a retreat center, hopefully out in the country, which will focus on the spiritual needs of everyday people, lay people and religious alike. We want a place that will help us develop a spirituality for those of us who are trying to work for justice, serve the Lord, raise kids and pay bills all at the same time. We hope that this retreat center will be a place to bring all the people of God together — priests, welfare mothers, blue-collar workers and so forth."

Mike and Sharon went on to explain that they have been working with staff people and parishioners from Corpus Christi Church in their efforts to find a such a place. Since funds are limited, they are hoping to find contributors, even someone who would be willing to donate a building for this purpose.

The conversation shifted to faith, guardian angels and trying to figure out God's will for our lives.

Though our conversation ended, my reflection continued. "A building would really be the thing, the clearest sign of God's will," I thought.

I also realized that Jesus performs his work through human beings, so I wondered about the kind of person who would be willing to donate a building to these Corpus Christi parishioners where the work of ministering to the body of Christ might be done.

It also struck me who better could one rely on for a place than Jesus, who promised those who loved him — "I go to prepare a place for you."

For who you are

"Daddy, I just finished cleaning up all my room!" exclaimed my four and one half year old.

"Great, honey," I responded. "Your room looks so neat."

"Don't you love me more now?" Lynn asked.

I stopped for a moment. "No honey, I don't love you more for cleaning your



room. I just love you for who you are. I love you because you're my baby."

What a freeing thing that was for me to say! I was able to speak the truth and at the same time to teach my charge a little bit of Christian truth.

What a freeing theology! We do not love our children for what they can do, but simply for who they are — our children, the fruit of our human and God-given love.

Of course, this same understanding is true for all of us. God loves us not for what we have done, not because we have performed correctly, not because we have tried to follow His will, but simply because we are His creation, the work of His hand.

Perhaps this is symbolized most tenderly in the parable of the prodigal son. The father's love, clearly manifest when the profligate son returned, was made even more evident when the son left. What greater love exists than to allow a child the freedom to fail? In the story, the father was surely aware that not only would his son fail, but that the son might also lose his life in the process.

Nonetheless, the unconditional love of the father dictated that he take only one action: let the son go to do his thing.

The father's love for the son replicates the kind of love that God has for us — love that allows failure even though the parent realizes that pain and suffering may result. That is the kind of love I pray I will always have for my daughter.

It is also a love that states unambiguously, "My child, I love you not for what you can do, but for who you are."