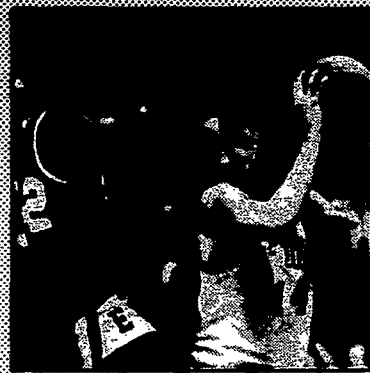




Journey of faith

Recently and soon-to-be commissioned missionaries joining the diocesan mission team in Tabasco, Mexico, look forward to forming a spiritual community. See page 16.



Sleepless Knights

The play of McQuaid's varsity basketball team in recent wins against East and Franklin may cause Section 5 Class AAA coaches to lose sleep. See page 6.

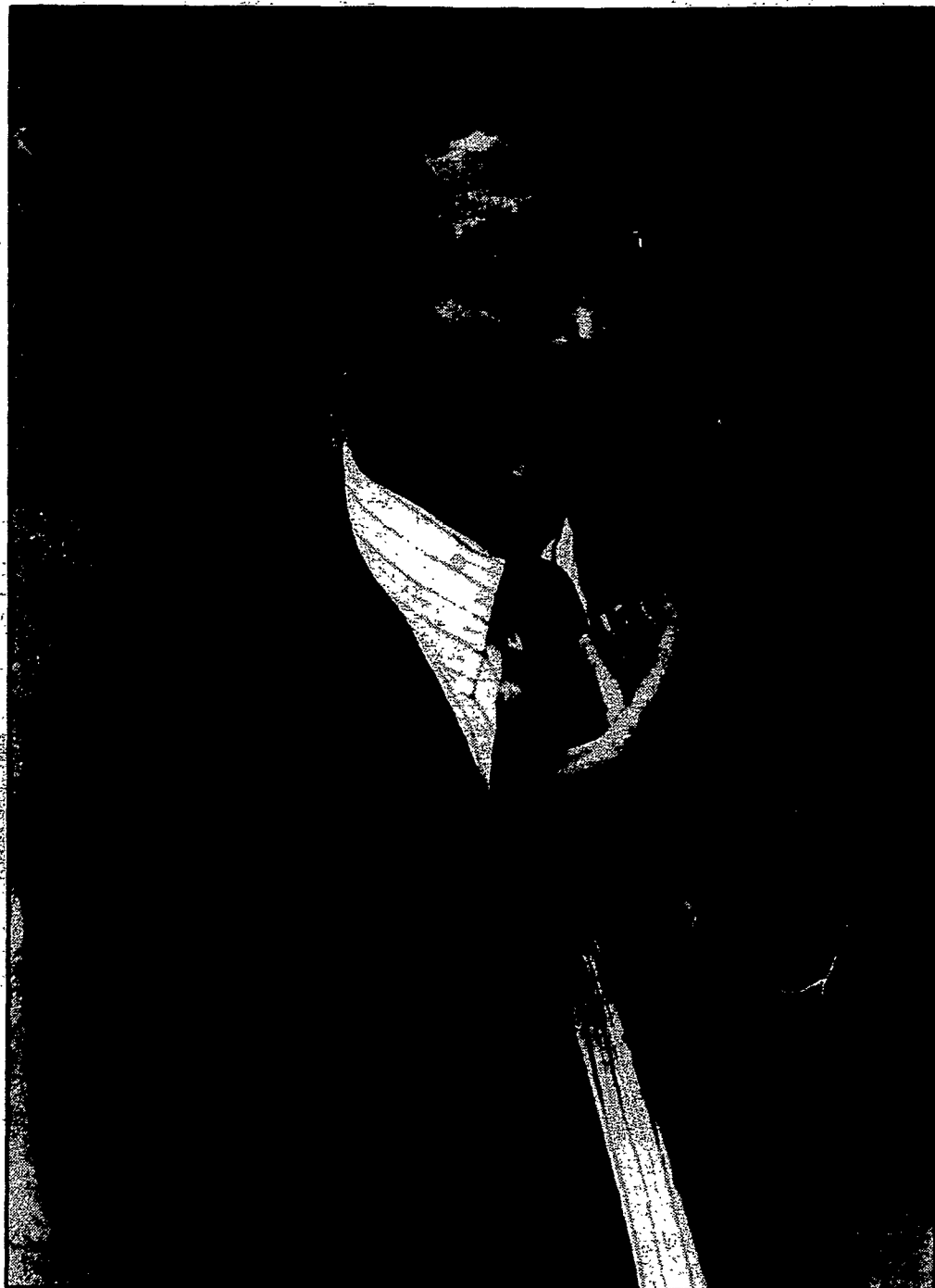
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Although Father Charles E. Curran declines most speaking engagements, he agreed to talk at St. Mary's Downtown Community Forum because of the support he had received from the parish staff during his conflicts with the Vatican.

Curran talk avoids mention of fight with Vatican, CUA

By Karen M. Franz

Anyone who attended last week's Downtown Community Forum luncheon hoping to taste the spice of controversy may well have found the entree nourishing but far blander than anticipated.

Instead of discussing his ongoing battle with Catholic University of America or his conflicts with the Vatican, the speaker, Father Charles E. Curran, served his audience of nearly 300 exactly what the menu promised — a college-level, political-ethics lecture on the role religious denominations should take in the determination of American public policy. Father Curran is teaching a course on these issues this semester at Ithaca's Cornell University, where he is a visiting professor of religious studies.

Entitled "Religion and Politics in the USA: Moral Arguments and Public Policy," the talk was sponsored by St. Mary's Church, Rochester. It provided listeners with an ethical framework by which to judge religious groups' involvement in the 1988 election.

The lecture's one spark of controversy came toward its conclusion, when Father Curran applied this framework to the specific questions of a human-life amendment to the U.S. Constitution and of church groups' efforts to effect such an amendment.

"I do not think that the U.S. bishops in any way are violating the separation of church and state by working for such an amendment," he began, "because one of the rightful involvements of the state is to protect human rights. If any individual or any group believes that a human right is involved, I think that in our society they have every right in the world to work for legislation to protect that right."

According to Father Curran, the bishops are not only politically justified but also morally compelled to involve themselves in human-rights issues. Quoting from the documents of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, he said, "action on behalf of justice and the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel and the mission of the church

for the redemption of humankind."

"In other words," he continued, "you can have the best preaching in the world, the best liturgy in the world, but if you lack the social mission you are lacking in a constitutive aspect of what it means to be church."

The theologian further asserted that "whatever affects human beings, human communities and their environments by its very nature is a moral question, a human question and for the believer, a Christian question."

Yet he acknowledged that, especially in dealing with complex issues, churches must recognize that specific policy questions "involve a tremendous amount of data from economics, from political science. They involve a definite amount of prudential judgments that must be made.

"The churches or anybody else who's going to speak out is going to have to do their homework," Father Curran continued. "We have to know the data involved. We have to be familiar with all the aspects of the case." He said this stipulation avoids a two-fold extreme: "The one extreme says the church has no business talking about these issues; the other extreme says the church is able to know quickly, readily and easily exactly what God is doing in this issue."

Moreover, he cautioned that determinations of legitimacy frequently are biased by the ideological views of the beholder. "When the church comes out against 'our' position, the danger is saying, 'That's a violation of church and state,'" he remarked. "But when the church comes out in favor of 'my' position, then that's all right."

And he observed that the nation's "political rhetoric is negatively affected" by people who would accuse the U.S. bishops of violating the separation of church and state by taking political stands. "You can say they're wrong — by all means — if you disagree with them, but I don't think they should be accused of violating the separation of church and state," he said.

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Bishop announces reconfiguration of Monroe County schools

By Lee Strong

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced several changes in the configuration of Catholic schools in Monroe County. These changes will become effective in September, 1988.

In the first change, seventh- and eighth-grade students currently attending Annunciation School on Norton Street, will be transferred to Blessed Sacrament Junior High School on Oxford Street. Annunciation School will continue to offer pre-kindergarten through sixth-grade classes.

The second change will allow individual seventh- and eighth-grade students from St. James Parish to choose either Blessed Sacrament Junior High or St. Ambrose School. In September, 1989, however, St. James Parish will have to choose which of the two schools all of its junior-high students will attend. According to the plan, St. James will continue to offer preschool through sixth grades.

The third change involves a realignment of the three Catholic schools in Brighton: St. Thomas More, Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady Queen of Peace. St. Thomas More will house kindergarten through third grades for all three parishes. St. Thomas More's fourth through sixth grades will be transferred to Our Lady of Lourdes. A preschool program for the three parishes will be consolidated within the

existing program at Our Lady Queen of Peace, and Seton Junior High will remain at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Bishop Clark said the changes stemmed from the ongoing process established three years ago to plan the future of Monroe County Catholic schools. According to Brother Brian Walsh, superintendent of diocesan schools, these changes also have been made in light of the work being done by the Implementation Committee for Catholic School Planning for the City of Rochester and Monroe County, and the Leahy Committee, a sub-committee of the Five-Year Financial Planning Process Task Force.

The changes were based on recommendations made by the parishes and the parish school boards, the superintendent noted. These recommendations were submitted to the diocese by December 1, 1987, and the changes were approved after dialogue and consultation among diocesan officials and the parishes.

Brother Walsh acknowledged that changes involving schools outside Monroe County — along with further changes that may be made for Monroe County schools — are being considered at this time, but that the final decisions have not yet been made. Additional changes — if any — will be announced by March 1. The most radical of the announced changes

was the realignment of the three Brighton schools, Brother Walsh remarked. The plan chosen by Bishop Clark was one of two submitted by a long-range planning committee consisting of representatives of the three parishes. This committee studied such factors as facilities, enrollment projections and finances in making its recommendations. While developing these recommendations, the committee regularly sought input from parishioners, the parish councils and the schools, noted Father Anthony Valente, pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish.

"The planning committee put in a lot of work over the last year and did a good job," Father Valente said. "They developed models which would build in good, quality education in our schools."

Although the Queen of Peace pastor acknowledged that some form of consolidation of the three schools was necessary, he said he had mixed emotions about the announced realignment. "I'm open to going into this consolidation, but I also realize we're losing some of the presence the school provided in the parish," he said. On the other hand, he said he was pleased the preschool program will remain in the school.

"One of the priorities of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish has been school ministry," the

pastor explained. "Even a lot of the physical plant was designed around having a school." The school ministry has been the parish's most visible ministry, he noted, adding, "If we didn't have any school presence, it would almost seem like we had no ministry going on at all."

Parishioners at St. James Parish also had a
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