

One of three books on papacy positive

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

The book *In God's Name*, by David Yallop, insinuates that Pope John Paul I was murdered by one of six suspects, including cardinals and noted clerics.

It is a dishonest whodunit to establish Yallop's theory. The suspicion of the murder theory became so widespread that Archbishop John Foley, head of communications for the Vatican, invited John Cornwall to conduct a thorough investigation into the death of the pope. Cornwall was given carte blanche to speak with anyone and or enter into any place he chose.

Cornwall produced *A Thief in the Night*, a kind of mean-spirited book replete with snide adjectives. Its virtue is that it shows

Yallop dishonest in his reporting, concluding that Pope John Paul I died from medical neglect, which Cornwall felt was almost criminal. Incidentally, the pope himself refused to accept medical attention when needed.

A third book, *Keepers of the Keys* by Wilton Wynn, is a gripping analysis of the character, work and continuity of three popes: John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II. Wynn was the Vatican correspondent for *Time* magazine in 1962. Yallop and Cornwall are lapsed Catholics. Wynn, after years of observing the Vatican, has become a Catholic.

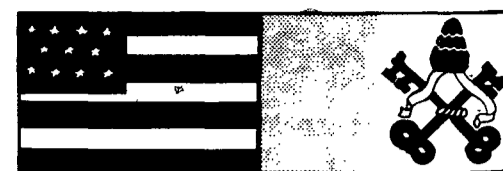
An interesting excerpt regarding Rochester's own Father Charles Curran. In a chapter entitled, "John Paul: Closing the Windows to the Winds of Dissent," Wynn

refers to a supper at Castle Gandolfo at the time of the Curran fracas.

Only Pope John Paul II, two clerics, and Wynn were present. He writes: "Despite his easy informality, I found the pope a far more intense person than he seems to be in public ... He wasted no time moving to the Curran case. To this pope, the issue was clear, simple, uncomplicated.

"He said, 'We could not permit a Catholic theologian in a Catholic University to teach that which is contrary to what the church teaches. There already was too much confusion. We have to present our teaching clearly,' the pope said.

"I reminded him of Curran's arguments that he was dealing with moral issues on which no pope ever made an infallible ruling, questions of birth control and



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

homosexuality and extra-marital sex. Doesn't a moral theologian have the right to dissent from these non-infallible teachings?

"The pope paused, obviously to make the right choice of words. He answered, 'The church has not made solemn declarations of infallibility regarding moral issues, but infallible declarations on any subject have been extremely rare and exceptional in the history of the church. If you believe only those declarations you have very little to believe.'

"Moral questions are covered by the 'ordinary' magisterium, and it is our duty to insist on their being obeyed. After all, no solemn declaration of infallibility ever was made regarding the Ten Commandments, or the commandment to love your neighbor. Does this mean you have the right to dissent on these teachings?"

"When I mentioned that there was a strong reaction in the states to the handling of the Curran case, the pope responded with tranquility: 'I believe the American people are divided on this issue.'

"But he made it clear that whether or not he had popular support on the issue was not the point: 'It is a mistake to apply American democratic procedures to the faith and to the truth. They must not confuse the *sensus fidei* with 'consensus.' Truth is not determined by voting.'"

"John Paul then sat back in his chair and tapped himself on the chest with both hands. He said, 'This is not my teaching we are talking about. This is the teaching of the church, and it is my responsibility to insist that it be obeyed. I cannot change the teaching. I have no right to change it'" (p. 252).

Easter season Gospel designed to erase doubts

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

In the early church, the seven weeks of Eastertide were celebrated as one continuous Sunday of joy in the resurrection. Thus, the Sundays after Easter are called the "Sundays of Easter." Counting Easter Day, there are seven Sundays of Easter.

During this season, the ancient practice of reading the Acts of the Apostles has been restored. Acts replaces the Old Testament passages for the first reading.

The second readings, which are taken from the first letter of St. Peter, deal with baptism and the Christian's vocation.

The third readings are predominantly from St. John's Gospel. This Sunday and the following one give accounts of the appearances of Jesus.

The remaining Sundays center on the Good Shepherd, the farewell discourse and the priestly prayer of Jesus after the Last Supper — all of which befit this season — treating as they do, the intimacy of Jesus with His own.

This Sunday's Gospel focuses on the institution of the sacrament of reconciliation and the doubting of Thomas.

Let us consider briefly the faith of Thomas, which strikes the keynote of the Easter season. Thomas was called the "doubter." The essence of doubt is to demand proof over and above that which is



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

normal. Thomas should have believed the testimony of 10 men.

He was, however, an "honest" doubter. Thus, he was willing to go to the spot where the 10 had gotten the evidence he regarded as insufficient. And further, he was willing to face the consequences of being proven wrong.

When anyone has such good will, he is certain to receive light. So well disposed was Thomas, the mere offer of evidence on the part of our Lord was enough. He cried out, "My Lord and my God."

Thomas' words were no exclamation of surprise, such as "Good God!" Jews never used God's name profanely. His "my Lord and my God" is a self-reproach, an expression of wonderment: How was it he had never seen all this before, especially after witnessing all the marvels and the miracles of His life?

He wondered, "Why had it taken till

now?" Faith is like that: an interior illumination, all of a sudden! The discovery of the Lord as God overwhelmed Thomas.

But even more touching, the Lord Jesus had called Thomas by name. He loved him so much He was willing to meet Thomas on his own terms. And so Thomas' faith was more than a mere profession, it was an expression of deepest delight as with two hands, he grasped the Lord Jesus and said "my Lord and my God." Faith is a personal commitment.

Thomas' confession climaxes John's Gospel. John wrote precisely that all might believe in Jesus. If one so skeptical as Thomas was convinced of Jesus' resurrection and His divinity, who can have an excuse not to believe?

The whole point of John's Gospel is that there is no need to see Jesus with bodily eyes in order to believe. An empty tomb was enough for Peter and John. Just hearing Jesus was sufficient for Thomas. The testimony of the teaching church should be enough for us.

If we walk in faith, we too shall come to know the Lord and experience the blessedness He promised to those who "have not seen and have believed."



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How can I help someone who is grieving?

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