

Blunders put spotlight on internal conflicts

Frequently one hears the complaint that media constantly focus on controversy in the church. This month is no exception, as attention has been drawn to conflict in the cases of two honors bestowed — and then abruptly withdrawn.

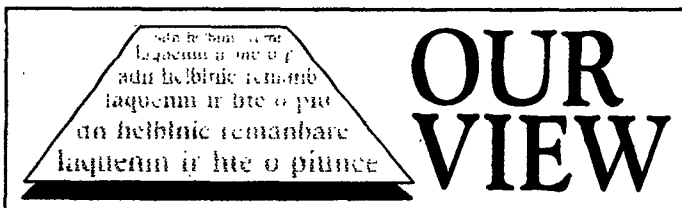
Switzerland's University of Fribourg had already announced its plans to give an honorary degree to Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland when the degree was unexpectedly vetoed by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education.

Archbishop Pio Laghi, newly appointed prefect of the congregation, explained in a Nov. 22 letter to Archbishop Weakland that the embarrassingly public withdrawal of the degree was precipitated by time constraints. Archbishop Laghi said that his congregation had struggled in the time available to "satisfy with appropriate dialogue as many of the (involved) parties as we could."

He added: "but for the pressure of time we would have dialogued with you too."

In the other case, the faculty of the University of Auburn, Alabama, is threatening a vote of censure or no confidence against university President James E. Martin for denying tenure to Father Charles E. Curran, who had been invited last spring to accept the university's new Goodwin Philpott Eminent Scholar of Religion chair.

According to a report by *The New York Times*, the endowed chair — one of several created by the Alabama Legislature in an attempt to attract leading scholars to the state university system — was intended



to be a tenured position.

Since the story broke, speculation has centered on Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb of Mobile, Ala., the archdiocese in which the university is located.

Observers have accused Archbishop Lipscomb of influencing Martin, either directly or through the advocacy of the university's lone Catholic trustee.

The archbishop vehemently has denied involvement in Martin's decision, and told Catholic News Service that such allegations serve to reinforce anti-Catholic sentiment in predominantly Protestant Alabama. Martin, meanwhile, has told his faculty only that he had ruled out tenure for Father Curran prior to offering him the post on a one-year basis.

The real reasons officials withdrew the honors tendered to Archbishop Weakland and Father Curran seem less at issue than the shoddy manner in which the two cases were handled.

Archbishop Laghi presents a reasonable case for denying the honorary degree to Archbishop Weakland (see story, page 5). And church interference in state affairs is only one of myriad possibilities that could be at the root of Martin's decision.

But the decision makers in both cases made critical



errors: they failed to fully discuss their reasons with everyone involved — especially in the case of Archbishop Weakland — and to do so before any announcements were made. These errors not only caused needless embarrassment to the two individuals, but also caused the church's dirty linens to be publicly aired once again.

No wonder the news is so often negative.

— The Editors

Retired pastor is anything but idle

To the editors:

I would like to add a few comments to your "Our View" column of Nov. 8 ("Battle won for homeless, but war continues").

Our Pastor Emeritus, Father Francis Vogt at St. Anne's Church, Palmyra, and St. Francis are the ones the Francis Hospitality House is named for.

Father Vogt is far from being retired. He's a Chaplain at Canandaigua Veterans Hospital. He's instrumental obtaining lodging and care for Amerasians to Palmyra. At vacation time, usually it is spent with former Amerasians who've left Palmyra and migrated to warmer states.

Until a couple of years ago, he was very active in Food Pantry for St. Anne's Parish in Palmyra.

Whenever Father Lou Vasile need to be absent, Father Vogt steps in to sub for him.

Father Vogt's homilies really bring home the message of the day's Gospel.

His love for children is evident at his home where there is usually a constant stream of children. Ask Mrs. Kelly, Father's housekeeper.

Father Vogt raises beautiful flowers, he's a very good cook. His generosity and love know no bounds. Technically he's retired. In reality he's a very busy person.

Rena B. Camblin
Meadow Drive Palmyra



Suggests dissenters seek church more to their liking

To the editors:

I am fed up with the people who are supposed to be of our faith, such as McBrien, Curran, nuns, and other feminists, trying to change our faith to suit themselves. They are lamenting our "Patriarchal Church" of discriminations.

I really believe that our majority of Catholics are with the teachings of our faith under Pope John Paul II. These other people want married priests, women priests, altar girls, birth control, abortion, homosexuality. My suggestion to these people is you don't have to look far to find other Churches with these rules. So instead of trying to disrupt our Roman Catholic Church, they should join one of them. But I

don't think that would satisfy them, because I believe they would like to make sure they go down in history along with Luther, King Henry VIII, and Calvin. If nuns were doing the things their orders were started for, such as teaching in schools, nursing the sick, taking care of orphans, etc., they might even go down in history with St. Theresa of Avila, Mother Cabrini, Mother Seton, and Mother Theresa of Calcutta. Why don't you try working for God, instead of your own personal gratification?

Dorothy Williams
Maplewood Avenue
Honeoye Falls

Reader attributes pursuit of ads to lack of articles

To the editors:

I would like to ask you a question. I note your large ad looking for more ads. This week's *Courier* shocked me and others — two pages full of ads and thirty small ads a few at a time on pages. Is that the future makeup of (the) *Courier*? I look forward each week for it to come although it is mostly all Rochester news. Father Cuddy of course comes first in articles — always so good. Friends have told me if this is to

be the future *Courier* they are dropping it and I will too. If you don't have the material to fill pages why can't you get permission to copy interesting articles from other Catholic magazines?

Teresa McLaughlin
West Water Street
Elmira

EDITORS' NOTE: By no means does our pursuit of additional advertising stem from a shortage of news. Quite the contrary, in fact!

Although many people apparently

believe the Catholic *Courier* receives funding from the Thanks Giving Appeal or other diocesan sources, it operates solely on the sale of subscriptions — primarily to diocesan parishes — and advertising. Subscription sales generate only about two-thirds of the funds needed to produce the paper at our current average of 20 pages per week. The rest must be raised by selling advertisements.

Thus, if the *Courier's* advertising department can sell more than the current amount of ads, we'll be able to offer more pages and more stories in the future.

Feminists' illogic undermines their objectives

To the editors:

The biggest reason for not allowing female priests is the behavior — words and deeds — feminists, women's libbers the last couple of decades.

Emotionalism, illogic and downright silliness have been exhibited. A few years ago, some women chained themselves to a railing on stairs going to a Mid-West legislative chamber. A young democrat jerk told them he had been going to vote for the ERA, but would not as long as they were chained to the railing.

Another group sat around another Mid-West legislative room podium and made a sign they said represented women. The

legislature promptly adjourned for the day. Is it any wonder the ERA drive came to a halt?

These women are essentially intelligent and educated — the same class that priests come from. Women religious and ex-women religious are in the forefront of this movement. Since their thinking will not change, it must be contained as best we can.

Take Molly Yard — please. Priestess, bishop, archbishop, cardinal — what would be her goal in the Church? Yard the Card? God forbid! Or La Mama? Mama Mia!

John F. Starkweather
Middle Road Rush

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