

Children see statue weep at Virginia parish

WOODBIDGE, Va. (CNS) — Children claimed to have seen a statue at a second Virginia church weep during a March 17 visit by a priest linked to the apparent weeping of statues at a neighboring parish.

Catholic officials in Woodbridge said hundreds of children from Aquinas School saw the water that "spontaneously" appeared on a statue of Mary at Our Lady of Angels Church when Father James C. Bruse said Mass for the children there.

"There is absolutely no doubt that water spontaneously occurred on the statue, and there is no known chance of deception or trickery about it," said the pastor, Stigmatine Father Paul D. Burns, in a written statement given to reporters who called.

Dominican Sister Mary Evelyn, Aquinas School principal, sent a note home with the school's students March 17, notifying parents that several

adults who were present also had seen the apparently weeping statue.

"As with most children, imaginations are alive and well here at Aquinas. Please listen with love and concern," she wrote. "May we all grow in faith and love and become more aware of Christ's presence in our daily lives as he manifests himself to us in so many ways."

Father Bruse, associate pastor at neighboring St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Lake Ridge, has been linked in recent months to the apparent weeping of a number of statues of Mary and Jesus that he has touched.

News of the unexplained phenomena hit newspapers and television in early March after hundreds of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioners said they saw water flow from the eyes of the large statue of Mary in the Lake Ridge church while Father Bruse was celebrating Sunday Mass March 1.

The Arlington Diocese, which includes the three Northern Virginia parishes near Washington, has neither confirmed nor denied the possibility of a supernatural cause behind the alleged incidents of statue weeping.

In its only statement on the matter, the diocese stressed that the church does not make judgments on physical phenomena themselves and that, in this case, there is no alleged message or revelation involved that might require a judgment by the church.

The statement from Father Burns said that Father Bruse regularly rotates with other priests of the three parishes in celebrating weekday Masses at Our Lady of Angels Church for the children of Aquinas School, which is next to the church.

According to the statement, while Father Bruse was saying Mass March 17, "many adults observed water flow-

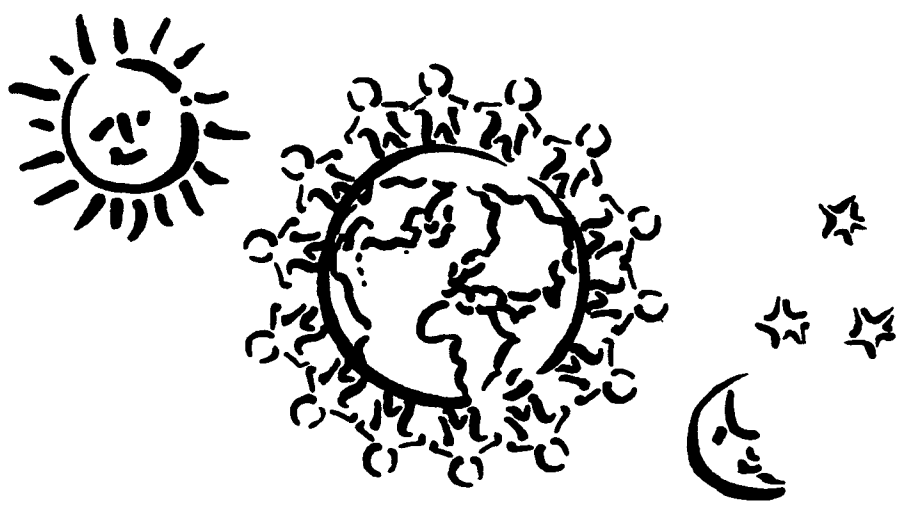
ing from the face of the statue of the Blessed Virgin, which is situated in the narthex" or church vestibule.

"The water, suggestive of tears, was also observed by hundreds of children as they filed past the statue after pausing to pray at it after Mass," the statement continued. "The moisture was also confirmed by the pastor and another priest of the parish."

The statement said church authorities were "continuing to investigate" the latest incident and "have advised against any public speculation at this time about its possible significance."

Father Bruse gave a number of interviews in the first days after news of the weeping statues broke, but after a press conference at St. Elizabeth's March 12 he stopped accepting requests for interviews.

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Le Moyne College official rejects request for condoms on campus

SYRACUSE (CNS) — A Le Moyne College official has rejected a proposal from the student senate that condoms be made available on campus.

In rejecting the proposal, Michael Yost, vice president for student life, called for the formation of a task force to promote responsible sexual attitudes and behaviors in the college community.

Although critics said Jesuit-run Le Moyne should never have allowed the condom debate to take place in the first place, Yost said in a letter to the student senate that the Jesuit tradition has always encouraged free speech and inquiry, and that the exchange of ideas will not jeopardize the institution's integrity.

Yost outlined five reasons for rejecting the request:

- Student research indicated widespread disapproval from parents, alumni and others in the college community. "Many feel, and I agree, that accepting (the senate) proposal is contrary to the basic mission of the college," Yost said.

- Evidence was unclear that there was widespread student support for the proposal.

- Accepting the proposal would send the wrong message. "It would overtly imply the condoning of 'casual sex,'" Yost said. "Plainly and simply ... the attitude that casual sex among college students is a given is unacceptable."

- Condoms do not guarantee safe sex. At best, they promote less risky sex.

Fisher reveals 2-percent tuition increase for undergrads

PITTSFORD — St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Ave., recently announced its smallest tuition increase for undergraduates since 1966.

Approved March 11 by the college's Board of Trustees, the new budget calls for full-time undergraduate tuition of \$9,350 for the 1992-93 academic year — an increase of \$360 from this year's \$8,990 figure.

In addition to room and board, however, student fees will decrease slightly, making the student's total cost \$14,550. That's an overall increase of \$286, or 2 percent, from the 1991-92 total of \$14,264.

According to William Pickett, college president, Fisher's new budget does not call for any administration, staff or faculty layoffs.

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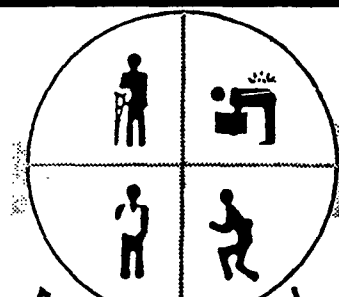
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