



Loyal Dissent: Memoir of a Catholic Theologian (Moral Traditions)

Charles Curran

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Loyal Dissent is the candid and inspiring story of a Catholic priest and theologian who, despite being stripped of his right to teach as a Catholic theologian by the Vatican, remains committed to the Catholic Church. Over a nearly fifty-year career, Charles E. Curran has distinguished himself as the most well-known and the most controversial Catholic moral theologian in the United States. On occasion, he has disagreed with official church teachings on subjects such as contraception, homosexuality, divorce, abortion, moral norms, and the role played by the hierarchical teaching office in moral matters. Throughout, however, Curran has remained a committed Catholic, a priest working for the reform of a pilgrim church. His positions, he insists, are always in accord with the best understanding of Catholic theology and always dedicated to the good of the church.

In 1986, years of clashes with church authorities finally culminated in a decision by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by then-Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, that Curran was neither suitable nor eligible to be a professor of Catholic theology. As a result of that Vatican condemnation, he was fired from his teaching position at Catholic University of America and, since then, no Catholic university has been willing to hire him. Yet Curran continues to defend the possibility of legitimate dissent from those teachings of the Catholic faith?not core or central to it?that are outside the realm of infallibility. In word and deed, he has worked in support of more academic freedom in Catholic higher education and for a structural change in the church that would increase the role of the Catholic community?from local churches and parishes to all the baptized people of God.

In this poignant and passionate memoir, Curran recounts his remarkable story from his early years as a compliant, pre-Vatican II Catholic through decades of teaching and writing and a transformation that has brought him today to be recognized as a leader of progressive Catholicism throughout the world.

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