

## Editorial &amp; Opinion

## Letters

## Prevent death before trying to cure the flu

To the editor:

There are levels of urgency when meeting and dealing with life-threatening situations. If my child, who has had a serious case of the flu, runs in front of a speeding car, I immediately run after him and rescue him from the moving car.

The issues that Colleen O'Halloran spoke of in her letter "Writer encourages activists to unite" (C-J 12-10-87) are all life-threatening, there is no doubt. However, the issue of abortion takes precedence, since the killing is immediate and happening now. If we rescue the 4,000 babies who are killed daily in their mothers' wombs, the solutions to the other life-threatening problems will follow.

Those of us who put the issue of abortion above (others) in immediacy and importance do so not because we don't think nuclear weapons are bad, but because we need to rescue the child from the path of the moving car before we can treat his influenza. We need to atone for the deaths of over 20 million babies already killed and to stop the killing of millions more in this land of the free.

Let us remember the story of the Good Samaritan. Let us not walk by the least of our brothers — the unborn children — on the way to protesting nuclear weapons. Let us stop and restore their inalienable right to life first. All else will follow. God bless.

Joann C. May  
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## Awaits news on constitutions

To the editor:

John Dash's November 28 Democrat and Chronicle column related that on December 8, 1987, the religious congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph were to receive the formal approval of their constitution by the Vatican Congregation for Religious. The revising of its constitution, begun in 1980, has concluded with Rome's approval after seven long years.

The congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph has, indeed, changed over the years since Vatican II, but it would be of interest to know which side conceded regarding the points which held off approval for so long. Did Rome concede and approve of the totally secular dress of most of the sisters and their secular lifestyle which makes them indistinguishable from the rest of us? Or, will the Sisters of St. Joseph appear once again as religious in a distinctive habit, as our Holy Father requested when he said, "It is more important to witness to their consecration as religious in this materialist world (by wearing distinctive dress) than by the work that they do."

Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa, and the Revised Code of Canon Law has stressed the importance of this aspect of religious life. Hopefully, we shall learn that Rome has convinced the order of the intractibility of the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, so that we shall again happily be able to recognize and identify any Sister of St. Joseph.

Mary Tickner  
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EDITOR'S NOTE: The Sisters of St. Joseph have, indeed, received Vatican approval of their constitution. In the near future, we will carry an article updating readers on the matter.

## C-J Letters Policy

The Courier-Journal wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome all signed, original letters about current issues affecting Church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the Church. We will

choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: Courier-Journal, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY, 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.



## Surprised by dearth of pro-McBrien letters

To the editor:

I am a regular reader of the Courier-Journal and it seems that not a week passes without at least one letter appearing on the editorial page proclaiming Father McBrien a "scandal" to the Catholic Church and a heretic. Where, I wonder, are the letters of support? Certainly there are other readers who find his thoughtful and intellectual approach to the mysteries of metaphysics and the wonders of theology as stimulating as I do.

Most of those who object to Father McBrien's column and urge its replacement, feel not only disagreement with his ideas but seem actually threatened by their existence. Needless to say, a faith so easily toppled cannot be built on very firm ground. Are we so lacking in strength and commitment?

One of the letters in the November 5th edition requested a "spiritual and non-controversial" alternative to "Essays in Theology." The letter went on to explain that Father McBrien was in direct opposition to Jesus. "Jesus wants us to have peace, and Father

McBrien's articles most of the time do not leave us feeling peaceful." Although I hold no degrees in scriptural study, I do read the Bible and strive to make sense of the oftentimes conflicting messages concerning peace. In Matthew 10:34 Jesus states, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world; no, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." In John 16:33 "I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Jesus was not, as could be construed, contradicting himself. Instead, he was acknowledging the two different faces of faith: in steadfast adherence, we can expect conflict and controversy — a permanent state of unrest in the framework of society; as souls, capturing the essence of our inherent spiritual God-image, we possess the peace that is exclusive of any worldly appearance.

Our teacher knew the challenge that a solid faith would present to us and the delicate nature of the balance struck between the spiritual and temporal worlds. One notices the persistent

dichotomy in the life of every great spiritual leader: the peaceful center surrounded by the maelstrom of struggle in societal affairs. Could it be that he joined physical humanity just for this purpose of lending validity to mystical truths?

It is easy enough for us to criticize and condemn one another — so easy one suspects Satan at work. In the end, the minor variances in creeds ought not to matter. Faith, by definition and understanding, is a question of trust: the individual's trust in an individually revealed expression of God. Peace is ours as a by-product of faith and stems not from any particular worldly activity. If it is to exist at all, and even flourish, it must do so above and beyond the grasp of earthly concerns. "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace" — Romans 5:1.

Martha A. Kelch  
Westway  
Rochester

## Only the plan of Fatima 'summit' will bring true peace

To the editor:

Recently, Mikhail Gorbachev and President Reagan met to talk "peace." This has been hailed as the beginning of a new era of peace between the Soviet Union and the United States.

But there is only one peace plan that will give the world true and lasting peace — God's peace plan given through Our Lady of Fatima, calling for the rosary, the scapular and the consecration of Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart by the pope and all the bishops.

This consecration is not optional; the command to perform this holy act was given by Our Lady to Sister Lucy in the presence of the Holy Trinity on June 13, 1929. Our Lady appeared, and to her left was Jesus, who was nailed to the cross and crowned with thorns. From his right side came the Blessed Sacrament, body and precious blood. Above Jesus was the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove, and

above the Spirit was God the Father in the form of an older man. Our Lady said, "God . . . asks the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart."

Many Catholic clergy, laity and even some bishops have chosen to ignore Our Lady of Fatima. Jesus said to Lucy that such persons would "repent too late" of this choice. Others claim that we are not obliged to obey Our Lady because it is not in the Bible or part of the Church's sacred teachings. But we are obliged to obey, because the Holy Mother Church has declared the Fatima apparitions and messages as being authentic, as coming from God. If it does, indeed, come from God, then we are all bound to obey!

Others deny the Fatima messages with the claim that God would not allow such disturbing prophecies to come to pass. That's what the Jews of the Old Testament believed about the messages of the prophets. When His Cho-

sen People ignored His prophets, God turned His back on His people, allowing them to be chastised and enslaved in the Babylonian exile. It took the Babylonian captivity to make them realize that their sins had led God to withdraw His protection from them. Likewise, unless we repent and obey now, God will allow Russia to enslave and chastise us in reparation for our sins.

We do not deserve peace, but God, by His grace, wishes us to have it. Through Our Lady of Fatima's maternal love, we have a final chance to obtain peace. Let us pray for true peace, the peace only Our Lady can give us through the rosary and the scapular. And let us pray that we may be worthy of the divine life given us through Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary.

Ted Crosby  
Griffith Road  
Phelps

## St. Joseph's Villa thanks donors for efforts

To the editor:

Many children and families associated with St. Joseph's Villa enjoyed the holidays because of the generosity of individuals and groups in our community.

Christmas morning in our cottages and group homes was so exciting, as the youngsters exuberantly opened their gifts. And, many families with whom we work enjoyed a more bountiful holiday than they expected because of gifts and good baskets delivered to their homes.

To the anonymous givers, the individuals

and families, the groups of co-workers at various companies, the members of church and community organizations — a great big THANK YOU from us at St. Joseph's Villa. Your generous and thoughtful gifts made Christmas a special and joyous season.

May you each feel the glow of having shared your plenty with someone less fortunate. Blessings as the new year begins!

Marianne M. Virgilio  
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St. Joseph's Villa  
Rochester