

Hispanics need 'family' in parishes

To the editor:

The June 22 issue of the *Catholic Courier* contained much interesting reading. I would like to comment on two items.

That tens of thousands of Hispanic Catholics are leaving the Church each year was mentioned in the article on the meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and was the theme of Father McBrien's column. I find this phenomenon puzzling and distressing and would welcome the comments and suggestions of Hispanic people. I am puzzled, because Catholics who join Protestant fundamentalist congregations are leaving behind a rich sacramental tradition which includes many beautiful rites and devotions. Above all, they are leaving behind the mass. Is this what they really want? Or are they in fact searching for a Christian community where the love of Jesus is evident in the love and caring of his people? A non-Hispanic friend once asked me in anguish how there could be a true celebration of the Eucharist in a parish where there was no sense of family or community. Alas, this is true of so many of our parishes.

Thus all of us are challenged to love and care for one another. As has been said many times, we cannot leave the obligations of ministry solely to our clergy and religious. I am particularly distressed by William T. Hammill's (*Courier*, June 22: "Questions statements from women religious") letter where he says of lay women in ministry, "I believe that most of them have no 'ulterior motives' in performing their duties; they do not regard themselves as 'professionals' but are there through their faith and love of the Church. Most of them ... would be well contented to withdraw if qualified replacements could be found." I share Mr. Hammill's concern about the small number of people entering



religious life today, and I certainly hope lay ministers have faith in the Lord and love for the Church. But lay ministers are not second-rate substitutes who ought to step aside when we get more of the "right" sort of people. They too are called by God to serve God's people, and it is both legitimate and enriching for some to be performing this service within the Church structure. Lay people do not merely go to church. I would remind Mr. Hammill once again that in solidarity with clergy and religious, laypeople are the Church.

Sheryl B. Zabel
Pastoral Assistant
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'Joshua's' point is seeing Christ

To the editor:

Isn't a main point of *Joshua* more importantly whether we "sophisticated theologians" of today would even recognize Christ if he came today? Can we see past our traditions and separations to what Jesus, the Christ was really driving at? Will we embrace his father's will of oneness in spite of persecution to:

Do what we see the Father doing (through us)

Say what we hear Him wanting to say through us

And wait for those times to do just that which he has purposed

For our specific lives?

Dear Lord, speak through my mouth,

Let me hear with your ears

Love with your heart

Reach with your arms

And go where you lead these, your feet.

I give them all to you.

Gene M. Braselton
Ridge Road Webster

Couple's ceremony offered eloquent homily

To the editor:

Recently I experienced the most eloquent homily ever — and not a word was spoken. I thought it was worth sharing with your readers.

During our Sunday liturgy a few weeks ago a couple who were not familiar to me celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary by renewing their vows and exchanging rings. They were surrounded by several pews of family and friends. I sensed that some members of the congregation were less than enthusiastic and probably resented the delay on such a beautiful Sunday morning. I must admit to a slight indifference on my part.

Following the brief ceremony the couple, who up to this point had their backs to the congregation, turned to form the offertory procession. The words of the hymn

Kids didn't learn much in public school

To the editor:

In response to Jerry Callan's appeal (*Courier*, June 15: "Writer says develop religious education programs") to close all Catholic schools and put more effort into the public schools, I must disagree.

I had my children in a public school for 4 years. Some of these years in No. 30 school and part in Winslow school in Henrietta. I was very unhappy with the education they were receiving. At the end of 4th grade my daughter had not brought home one paper demonstrating she was learning penmanship, writing skills, or language arts.

All of her papers consisted of fill in the blank, multiple choice, circle the correct answers etc. The boy in 3rd grade was doing the same. They were receiving good report card grades but I do not know what they were based on.

My next two children who started off in the Catholic system in Kindergarten were learning to write sentences in the first grade. They were doing long hand book reports, essays, short stories etc. along with the short answer evaluation.

A student in the public school is a year or more behind a Catholic school student at the end of 8th grade. Those completing high school are in most cases not prepared for anything, if they even manage to graduate from the public school system.

I am afraid to have my children in the public school system. They might not even be safe.

I wish I knew how to produce a decent public school. My second grader at Winslow was even struck by his teacher due to her inability to deal with students. I was getting calls from other parents telling me of this, who had heard it from their children.

I have never had any negative feedback from the Catholic school system. The parents are quite involved in the school and are aware of all policy and curriculum.

My children will continue to go to Catholic school if I need to work 3 jobs and ride a bicycle to work.

Georgianna Daly
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Rosary is as powerful a tool as Dr. Lawrence's scalpel

To the editor:

While I admire Dr. Lawrence for her chosen profession and being the mother of nine children, I strongly object to her comment in the last paragraph of the Trio article (*Courier*, June 15: "Trio reveals range of women's gifts to church"): "But if we're still in the corner fingering our beads..." Obviously she refers to the Ro-

sary. While a scalpel might be her important tool, the Rosary is another powerful tool. Space does not permit me to elaborate.

I'm sure she'll choose her words more carefully in the future.

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