

Courier walks a wobbly line into the 1990s

"Newspaper has walked fine lines" proclaimed the headline of a recent newspaper article about the *Catholic Courier's* 100th anniversary.

That's good news for a few reasons.

We who work for the *Catholic Courier* need to be reminded once in awhile that God has not singled out this newspaper or its current staff to face singular difficulties. Our predecessors also dealt with persistent publicists, injured egos, irate school principals, frustrated grammarians, cautious bureaucrats and other reluctant sources.

Recalling the war stories of Father Henry Atwell and other former editors, we realize that the struggle to be more than a "house organ" is as old as the newspaper itself, and that the struggle will end only if we allow ourselves to become — as have so many diocesan newspapers — the mouthpiece for a single point of view.

A look at the paper's history also shows that the *Courier* has seldom enjoyed more support in its struggle for independence than it has received from Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

We admit to wobbling on the fine line between

what many readers seem to want — features about their own parishes, schools and organizations, quotes from the pope — and information we believe you ought to have — including the views and ideas of people with whom you might not agree.

Sometimes we err, misjudge a story, fail to publicize an event. Foibles aside, we undertake to offer more than an unwavering diet of happy news. Instead our goal is to inform and challenge, to inspire and even entertain you now and then.

That task is complicated by the system of subscriptions on which our newspaper relies. In theory, parishes agree to pay for a certain number of subscriptions, which they, in turn, sell to their parishioners. In practice, parishes too often foot the entire bill for a newspaper that people don't want because it is too controversial, because it is "just a mouthpiece for the diocese" (presumably not controversial enough), or because Sunday Catholics just can't be bothered reading about their faith outside the pews.

The entryway to our office is lined with award

plaques. Yet without the parish-subscription system, which we deplore, the *Catholic Courier* probably wouldn't be celebrating a century of publication. Our readers are extraordinarily loyal, but the days are long gone when people bought a Catholic newspaper — or any newspaper, for that matter — out of a sense of moral obligation. Fewer people read at all nowadays, and those who do are bombarded with more choices than they can absorb.

Some dioceses have given up on newspapers altogether, and are buying television stations — a move that serves only a small segment of a diocese's population, and has driven at least one diocese into bankruptcy.

Being idealists, we'd like to believe that if we published the best newspaper we could and promoted it as widely as we could, enough people would willingly buy and read the *Catholic Courier* to keep us in business.

Maybe in the next one hundred years ...

— The Editors

Conference coverage was lacking

To the editor:

I am writing with disappointment and sadness. An important conference for women took place on November 4, 1989, at Nazareth College called "Don't Throw in the Towel," sponsored by the Rochester Women's Ordination Conference and the Religious Studies department of Nazareth College.

This conference attracted approximately 140 people from as far away as Buffalo and Syracuse. Women and men, lay and religious, involved in Church ministry, formally or informally, who came together for a day filled with love and sisterhood.

This was not an angry, bitter group, nor an emotional, unrealistic group, but a group that came together to offer support, strength and encouragement to each other to continue to plan for greater roles in ministry for women.

It was a beautifully planned, positive and uplifting day. There were prayers and readings that showed us our heritage in roles of ministry that date back to such biblical women as Miriam, sister of Moses and to Mary and Elizabeth. Workshops provided sound theology and pastoral insight. Those of us that attended came away with a new sense of connectedness, a renewed vision of what Church can be for us.

Not only was there absolutely no coverage or publicity prior to this event in the *Catholic Courier*, there has been limited and belated coverage of it since then. Furthermore, this coverage did not begin to adequately focus on the reality of this day. By not providing publicity, other women and men in our diocese were denied both the opportunity of participating in this event and/or of reading a full report of what transpired.

I feel that overlooking this is a failure on the part of the staff of this newspaper. Was it intentional or deliberate because of the content — or just carelessness? It doesn't really matter; the effect is the same. When

Prayer converting Russia

To the editor:

Most everyone seems to be wondering what is going on in Russia. The answer is that at the request of the Blessed Virgin Mary, practicing Catholics and many others have prayed not thousands, but millions of "Rosaries" for the conversion of Russia. Their prayers are being answered.

Edward A. Schano
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issues that are controversial and important to so many are ignored in the press, we do not have a free and open newspaper. Reporting on events that occur should be basic with this newspaper. I had hoped that the goals of this diocese and this paper would be to promote ways of reaching a fullness of life for all our people.

Sharon Humbert Clark
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Unity can preserve fragile school system

To the editor:

We are creatures of survival, capable of "great" things. We fight for the rights of the precious unborn — we strive to prevent the extinction of threatened species; nurturing the fragile eggs of birds like the Condor, in hope to preserve just one of them. We accomplish these acts of preservation by uniting and forming a structured way of approaching the cause and then act on it.

Our Catholic school system in Rochester is at the brink of "extinction" — our discerning and caring Bishop, along with the competent diocesan office people, have taken our school system "under wing" in hope of preserving it. They are taking us as one "egg," yet we are divided, cracked and scrambled (if you will).

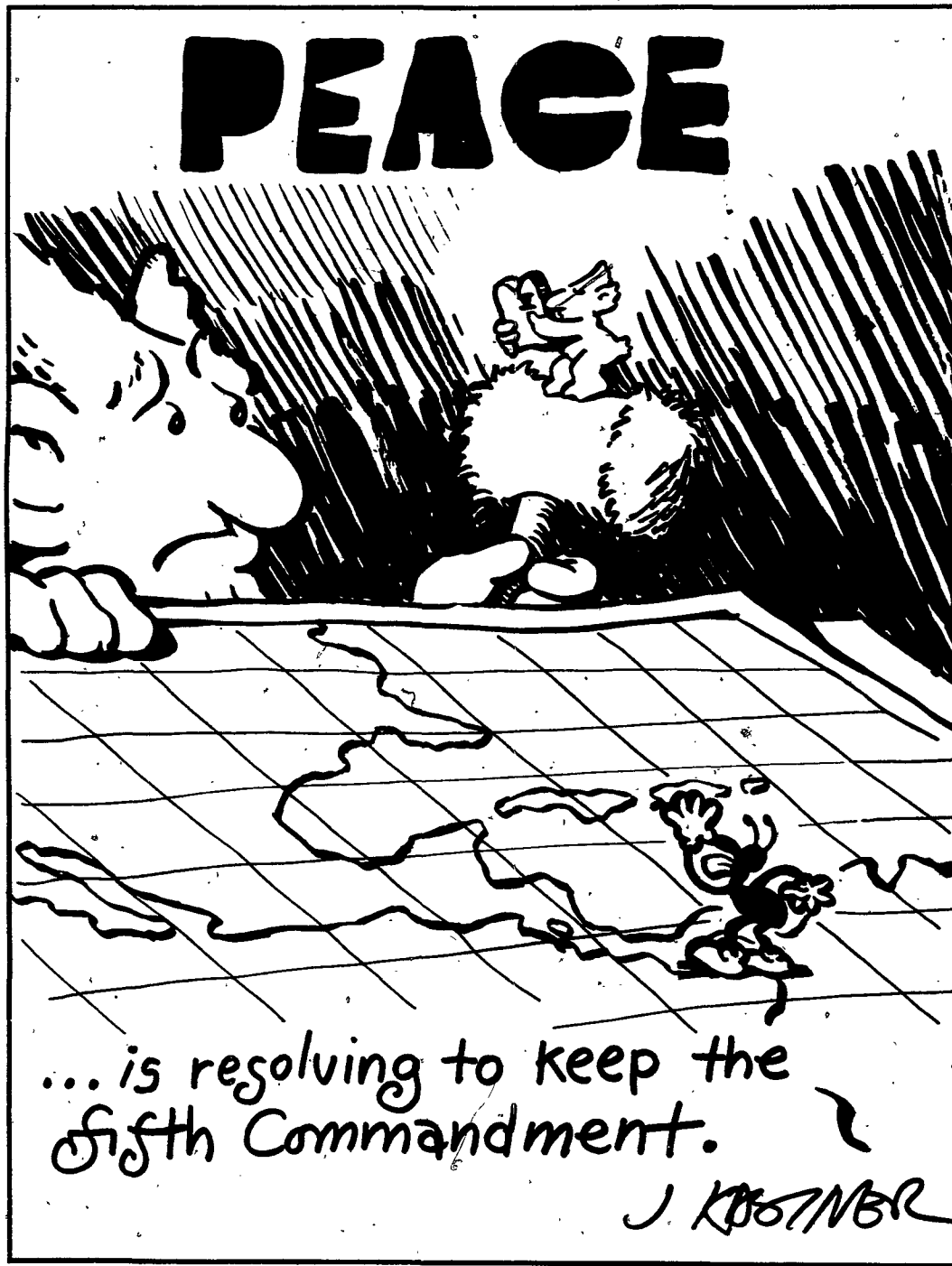
We must unite as one school system, as we are united in one holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church then bravely and yes, reluctantly for some, accept the reality that these changes need to come if our schools are to survive.

We will be fragile, uneasy, displaced and not sure of the changed environments but we will flourish in unity if we prayerfully open ourselves to this "new" way.

We are survivors, and must set an example for our children in accepting imminent change, just as our parents, grandparents and all of those before us throughout the ages. With the love of God and of each other we can unite and be better than ever before with a renewed spirit that will keep our schools shining like a bright light, outstanding in every good thing. Then while working together, peace will abound and our Catholic school system will emerge and flourish from the fragile "egg" that was taken "under wing."

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