

# 'Just say no' for those who can't

By Father Benedict Ehmann  
Guest contributor

Surrogate warriors — that's what we are, you and I, in the war on drugs.

The battlefield is everywhere. It's on the supply side in Colombia, Peru, Panama. It's on the demand side here in the Diocese of Rochester, and in cities and towns everywhere.

Where we live is the war zone. The enemy killer is everywhere; our streets, our neighborhoods, our run-down houses are occupied outposts for the exchange of cocaine, crack, heroin, marijuana.

This drug war engages not just the police, the Secret Service, the courts and the judges. It engages all of us to mobilize every effort we can in the struggle, in ways that are within our reach, such as being undercover vigilantes in our areas.

But beyond all these tactics are prayer and sacrifice — making ourselves surrogates, proxies for the addicts who seem powerless to break the fearful addiction that enslaves them to drugs.

If they can't say no to their frightful appetites, we can say no in their place. We can say no to ourselves by abstinence from appetites of our own — for cigarettes, alcohol, entertainment, gourmet foods. I'm not suggesting total abstinence from these, though the more the better. But how about 10-percent abstinence — a little bit each day, which we can offer the Lord for the drug addicts? If they can't say no, we can for



Victims of a drug economy

them.

Our solidarity with Christ in grace joins us to one another. In Christ, we are brothers and sisters to all other people — addicts, too. Our prayers and self-denials radiate energy all through the Body of Christ. The "nos" I put on myself penitentially generate a force that will strengthen others in their need to say no when they should.

We can help in the drug war as surrogates whose voluntary abstinence brings blessings to addicts that advance their cures to the point at which they, too, will be able to say no. Little by little, and we pray soon, the demand front of the drug war will dry up, and the supply front will collapse without a market.

How this will all work out will perhaps not be for us to see. We must simply leave it in the hands of God. But we must persevere in prayer and abstinence, and so answer the call to be proxy warriors on this sinister battleground.

In our solidarity with Christ, that's the least we can and should do. By our solidarity with Christ, it becomes the greatest we can do.

## Priest shortage could prompt appreciation for Eucharist

To the editor:

We are disturbed and perplexed about the ever decreasing number of priests and rightly so. Why is God permitting this to happen?

Have we been all that we could be in our awareness of and our appreciation of the Holy Eucharist in our midst? If we really believe that the Lord is truly present on our altars and actually comes to us with His Body and Blood, how should we behave? Is our preparation for and thanksgiving after receiving Communion perhaps so

perfunctory that it is merely a ritualistic celebration with no spiritual realization of this awesome Reality? Is God telling us that the shortage of priests is meant to make us aware of our omissions and commissions in regard to the Eucharist? Without priests there is no Eucharist!

As we wring our hands and beat our breasts let us consider some things we can do and not just out of a sense of obligation but rather in a spirit of love and gratitude. We can grow closer to the Lord by receiving the sacrament of penance at least once a

month and making the improvement of our attitude and actions toward the Eucharist a continuing and growing commitment. We can more seriously prepare for our Eucharist with a meaningful fast from food and drink. We can practice a conscious and humble reverence in the presence of the Eucharist.

We can make it a habit to never pass a Catholic church without bowing our head, tipping our hat, or stopping in for a few moments of reverence. We can joyfully look forward to our Eucharistic celebration

as the high point of our week or of each day if we are so blessed. We can ask the Blessed Mother and all the angels and saints to adorn our souls before Communion with all their prayers and merits as so many jewels to greet our Lord, our God, and our King and to help us after receiving to adore, worship, praise, thank, and glorify Him.

We can tell our Eucharistic Lord that we are dead to sin, that we love Him, and that with His help we want to be good servants in meeting the needs of others. We can encourage our pastor to hold a special service honoring the Eucharist once a month and perhaps once a year make it a truly memorable event. We can celebrate the feasts of Holy Thursday and Corpus Christi as befits really special holidays.

Let not another day ever pass without sincerely and gratefully thanking our Lord for His forgiveness and for His great gift of the Eucharist. ...

Jerry J. Paladino  
Rock Stream, NY

## Bishop Clark's actions bear blame for TGA protest

To the editor:

This is in response to the article, "People in pews ultimately pay price of TGA boycotts."

Editors of the "Catholic Courier," you missed the point. You failed to take a good look at why the people are protesting the Thanks Giving Appeal. ...

Apparently it hasn't occurred to any of you on the Bishop's staff at the Courier that the people are tired of the Bishop's continued and blatant disobedience to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and its Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II, and that is the reason why many people are withholding funds from the Thanks Giving Appeal.

Bishop Clark advocates the ordination of women even though it is clearly stated in the Post Synodal Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, "Women cannot receive orders." Bishop Clark has ignored that the Holy Father has said to get rid of the altar girls; he promotes liberation theology that has been condemned by the Roman Catholic Church; he allows the

dignity Mass to be celebrated at St. Mary's when the Holy Father has opposed it; he has polluted our Catholic School System by mandating the teaching of sex education in the Catholic Schools and as of recent with the implementation of the Quadrant Plan, he abrogates Canon Law 796 which states, there "must be the closest cooperation between parents and the teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated." So far the Bishop is ignoring the objections to the plan and is forcing parishes to secede from the diocese. ...

You are placing blame for financial loss on the wrong party. You are placing the blame on the people who are Roman Catholic and simply want the Bishop to promote Roman Catholicism as tendered by The Vicar of Christ and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. ...

It seems as though the Bishop has a few choices. He can continue to harass the people by taxing the parishes, (which we pay anyway), he can raise the school tuitions so no Catholic can afford to send their children to parochial schools, he can con-

tended drivers' school either. I can see Father C. typing that column with tongue in cheek. As a classmate of (his), I will nominate him as the worst driver in our class (only three of us left) and even more — the second worst clergy driver in the world.

We may be in for other 1990 surprise *Catholic Courier* columns such as one in which Father Richard McBrien heartily commends Cardinal Ratzinger. But then we just may have to wait until 2000 for that.

Father Raymond G. Heisel  
Mother of Sorrows Church

tinue his real estate business by closing and selling schools; he can reevaluate what is necessary and what is not in the budget or he can come back into the fold of the true Church of Christ — The Roman Catholic Church and conduct the diocese according to the teachings of the Church of Rome.

Joanne Rowan  
Spencerport Road Rochester

## Wedding 'bible' fudges on contraception

To the editor:

As a reader who has often admired Fr. Paul Cuddy's column (one of the best offerings in the paper), I was nonplused to read his column (Courier, 12/14/89) with its favorable notice of Fr. Joseph Champlin's "wedding Bible," "Together for Life." It has, admittedly, sold millions of copies and has been widely used in parishes as one of the most popular marriage preparation books.

Unfortunately, Together for Life published by Ave Maria Press does not teach clearly the Catholic doctrine on contraception, and allows couples, or even the priests questioned by them, to use their own judgement in assessing the morality of contraception instead of abiding by the decision of the Magisterium as expressed in *Humanae Vitae*.

The 25th printing of Fr. Champlin's booklet I have before me was made in August, 1981. Though ostensibly "revised," and containing a welcome reference to Natural Family Planning, Fr. Champlin continues to blame God for "conflicting commands" on couples and to justify "unselfish" contraception as a valid choice for those not caring to practice abstinence.

In short, one will look in vain in Fr. Champlin's booklet for the clear teaching of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II on

the sinfulness of contraception. Ever since "Together for Life" first appeared in 1970, it has played a sorry role in promoting Situation Ethics, and fudging teachings of the Magisterium as regards a properly formed conscience in the matter of contraception.

Dorothy Macaluso  
chairwoman, St. Pius X Chapter  
Catholics United for the Faith

### Letters Policy

The *Catholic Courier* 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: *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.

## Columnist needs guardian angel at the wheel

To the editor:

Only those of us who have ever had the temerity to ride as a passenger with Father Cuddy at the wheel enjoyed the humor of his "On The Right Side" column (1/11/90) in which he listed the New York State Motor Vehicle violations and their fines.

Father Cuddy has few repeat passengers. I am among his many "one time only" passengers. I am sure that even his hitchhikers do not raise their thumbs when they spot him coming along a second time.

After Father C. puts his car into gear he turns over the wheel and accelerator to his guardian angel who apparently never at-

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