

Old warrior's legacy lives on

I studied church history for three years under the late Dr. Frederick J. Zwerlein at St. Bernard's Seminary. The professor, author of the monumental work *Life and Letters of Bishop (Bernard J.) McQuaid*, began class each September with the question proposed by Job in the Old Testament: "Hath God any need of your lie?"

Dr. Zwerlein, whose work allegedly had been denied the Imprimatur by the diocese, won the coveted seal of permission on appeal to the Holy See. In defense of his theory of history, Dr. Zwerlein each autumn quoted Pope Leo XIII: "If the Gospels were written in the way some Catholic books were written, we would never have heard of the kiss of Judas or the denial of Peter."

He likewise repeated the words of Cicero (quoted by the Holy Father): "The first law of history is not to dare to say what is false; next, not to fear to say what is true; nor to let arise any suspicion of partiality or animosity in writing."

Reflecting on February as Catholic Press Month, however, a recent article in the *National Catholic Reporter* characterized most diocesan newspapers as efforts in "fast-food journalism" that "still serve as bulletin boards." The article attributed the blandness of such newspapers to a fearful avoidance of all matters even vaguely controversial. If the *Catholic Courier* had been included in this study, I am sure the conclusions would have been vastly different.

The *Catholic Courier*, the chronicler of contemporary church life in the Diocese of Rochester, has patterned its editorial stance in keeping with the tone so strongly championed by the first professor of church history at St. Bernard's Seminary. This undoubtedly explains the loyal support of the *Courier* by senior priests who might otherwise be expected to favor a more restrained presentation of history in the making.

The tone set by the paper's editorial board, chaired by Bishop Matthew H. Clark, is decidedly positive in

directing that the professional staff attempt to present as objectively as possible those subjects that pertain to the contemporary Catholic. This at times has meant publishing some rather unpleasant, distressing news. As a bishop and general manager of the *Courier*, I have found some of these articles to be depressing and possibly hindering to the mission of the church.

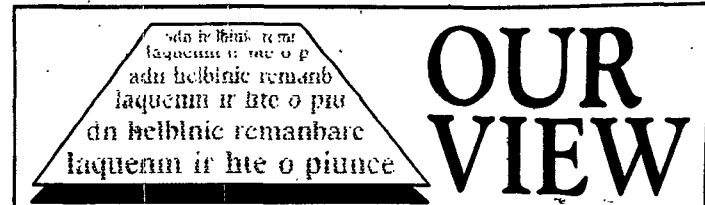
On reflection, however, I am persuaded that sweeping such distasteful events under the rug is not honest and undermines the credibility of the *Courier* or any other paper that might follow such procedures. Some might even interpret silence in the face of an apparent evil as connoting the church's approval.

In another section of his work, Dr. Zwerlein cited Pope Leo XIII: "The history of the Church contains a body of dogmatic facts that are imposed by faith and may not be called into question. Because the Church is composed of a divine and human element, the latter must be set forth by teachers and studied by students with great honesty."

Commenting on the Holy Father's words, Dr. Zwerlein wrote: "When the history of the Church is treated with due appreciation of the divine and human elements as constituent parts, there is no need of even skipping unpleasant facts, as the imperfections of the human element in the Church, in people, priest, bishop, yea even pope, will only make the divinity of the Church shine forth more unmistakably."

I would like to think that the present-day *Catholic Courier* is responding to the challenge of the old warrior for the truth, Dr. Zwerlein, who pioneered freedom of the press in the Diocese of Rochester. I hope he is applauding the efforts of his former pupil, who in his small way is attempting to keep the *Courier* loyal to the principles enunciated in Church History Class at St. Bernard's Seminary.

— Bishop Dennis W. Hickey
General Manager



Editorial review
in some dioceses

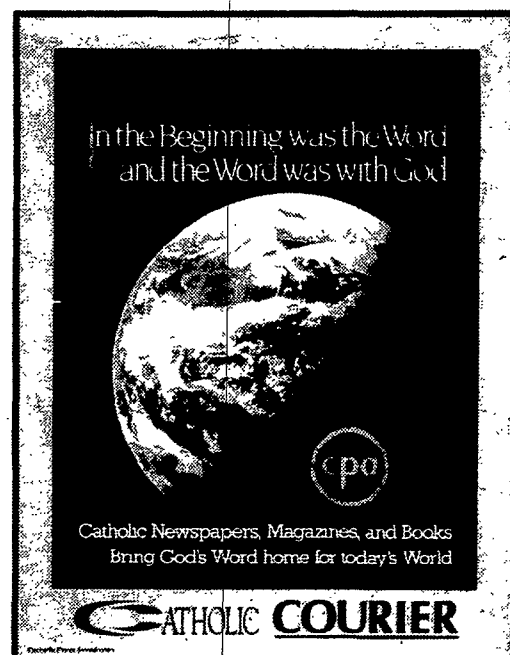
Catholic backs Christian group

To the editor:

I was very surprised to read Joanne Palmer's (Jan. 25) angry letter attacking Christians in Action and Project Life, mainly because Ms. Palmer appears to be seriously misinformed as to the motivations and aims of these two groups. Specifically, I suggest that she provide evidence for her statement that one of the groups (she doesn't say which) "proclaims that bombing clinics and endangering women's lives are 'justified'" unless she wants to open herself to charges of libel. I've been with Project Life for more than three years and with Christians in Action since its inception and have never heard anything even close to that.

Actually, I'm more surprised that the *Courier*, following their rules of fair play, would allow statements like that and her charge that these groups "harass minorities and non-Christians" to appear without substantiation. When and where was, say, a member of any minority group harassed by these groups? I certainly heard nothing about it. In fact, Christians in Action is just starting up and not much information has even been released about it; where is Palmer getting her information? Based on her statements, I'm afraid it is mostly her imagination.

As a Catholic, I support Christians in



Action and Project Life in part because their position statements are in agreement with the teachings of the Catholic Church. There is a Catholic priest on the board of directors of Christians in Action. And it was actually Cardinal John O'Connor who compared the rescue activities espoused by Project Life to King's civil rights movement in the 1960s. As a woman, I'm ashamed of Palmer's slanderous and hate-filled diatribe. The "faith and conscience" she claims to have are nowhere evident in her letter.

Karen A. Webb
Miller Drive
Chili

Infighting will only hasten downfall of schools

To the editor:

It has been 10 years since Our Lady of Mercy Elementary School on Denise Road in Greece closed its doors. It was a very painful experience for the children, parents, teachers.

I taught at Mercy for 16 years and had three children graduate from that school.

Too many more Catholic schools have closed since then. When will we wake up?

We need to get behind our Bishop and work as a TEAM to make stronger Christ-

centered schools in the whole Diocese. Every time there is a big hassle about it, a few more children slip out the back door and go elsewhere.

If we do not work together, the next 10 years may see the end of Catholic education in the Diocese of Rochester. That would be very sad indeed!

Mary Morphy
Cloverdale Road
Rochester

Alcohol can disable babies

To the editor:

Thank you for Father Ehmann's Guest Editorial "Just say no" for those who can't. Not only does this approach keep us from feeling powerless, but it also shows us how inextricably we are all joined in Christ.

With this in mind, let me urge all concerned to read *The Broken Cord* by Michael Dorris, a book about fetal alcohol syndrome. After adopting a child Mr. Dorris slowly discovers the devastating disabilities caused by the birth mother's excessive consumption of alcohol.

The effects of alcohol on the fetus are both terrible and irreversible. Pregnant women must become aware of how drinking can damage their babies. Physicians must warn them. Educators, especially those involved in High School Drug/Alcohol Awareness Programs and Health Education, must inform their students.

When FAS children grow up they are usually unable to care for themselves. They are unable to understand that certain actions or behaviors have certain consequences. They are usually unable to imag-

ine anything. Drinking mothers are bringing into the world babies who will have no dreams to come true and who cannot be held accountable for their actions. Please read this book. Please work for legislation that would place warning labels on all bottles of alcohol that is it injurious to the health of the unborn. Thank you.

Diane Moran
W. Main Street
Palmyra

SSJs laud Bishop Hickey, salute continued ministry

To the editor:

Bishop Hickey's retirement as auxiliary bishop calls to memory the pleasant associations of the bishop with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester. His support and generosity over the years has been meaningful to us as we worked together in this Diocese. We are pleased to know he will remain as general manager of the *Catholic Courier*, and thus we can look forward to his continued presence among us.

The Sisters of St. Joseph
Rochester

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