

# Many orthodox views depend on outdated information

To the editors:

It was very interesting to see the subjects of tradition and orthodoxy approached from different vantage points on your editorial page of May 17.

Father William Kelly, Ph.D., in using the names of Catholic heavyweights such as Aquinas, Augustine, and Alphonsus Liguori, seems to imply that we should continue in their traditional understanding of what constitutes life. When he states that Gregory XII (1577-85) said it was not homicide to kill an embryo of less than 40 days since it was not human, Father Kelly failed to point out that his successor, Sixtus V, in his Bull Effraenatum, said that all

abortions for whatever reason were homicides and punishable by excommunication reserved to the Holy See.

If we take this discussion into the biological realm, we find that Paul Zaccchia, a physician in the papal court, suggested in 1621 that there was no basis for Aristotle's concept of delayed ensoulment upon which Gregory and Gratian based their opinions. Delayed ensoulment was based on the primitive and male view that the embryo started out as non-human and progressed from a vegetative state to a spiritual being. Further discussion is enlightening, as Aquinas also believed that fetal characteristics were determined by

the father alone, that a male embryo became human at 40 days while it took 80 days for a female, and that females resulted either from defective seed or a conception that took place when a damp wind was blowing.

With the technology of the 20th century, I suggest that we move into the 21st with the scientific understanding that 1) upon fertilization, an entirely new life is begun, complete with the same unique DNA pattern that the individual will have at 40 days after conception, as well as 40 years after birth, and 2) that is equally contributed to by the genes of the mother and the father.

Let us find direction from the Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*: "God is the Lord of life and has entrusted to people the noble mission of safeguarding life ... Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes."

I hope Father Kelly will keep us informed of our history. For in so doing, we find that many of the views we hold as orthodox were based on information that needs updating. Does he have something to share on the priesthood as male and celibate?

Mary Mahler  
Wellington Avenue  
Rochester

## Writing shows Bishop Clark as joyful, loving, peaceful

To the editors:

I am writing in response to the vitriolic letter from Joseph Murray, chairman of Concerned Roman Catholics of the Diocese of Rochester, in which he is highly critical of our beloved bishop.

I have never met Bishop Clark, but the love he feels for everyone, but especially for the members of his diocese, suffuses his writings. He has taught me much about how to regard and treat my fellow man. He is not judgmental, he sees the good in others, he is joyful, he is a man of peace and love. We would all do well to follow his example. I think God must look down upon him with great tenderness.

Marie E. Klein  
Geneva

## Anointing brought healing to mind of afflicted reader

To the editors:

Thank you for your article on the anointing of the sick ("Anointing ought to be community rite," CC: May 10).

As your article states this blessed oil is for the anointing of all who suffer in mind and body.

Having been hospitalized for depression three times in the last year, each time I was anointed for the sick.

After each anointing I always felt as if God had his arms around me, telling me I was His special child and that He was going to love and care for me — God never failed me!

Cheralyn Fedinatz  
Lakeville, N.Y.

## Affectionate nickname was either affront or put-down

To the editors:

Father William Kelly's letter concerning the traditional teaching of the Church about abortion (CC: May 17) calls to mind the Galileo incident. What concerns me was Father Kelly's failure to identify Father Mugavero as a priest. To those of us who live with him, he is "Tony." The use of this affectionate nickname by Father Kelly in a letter intended to be published was an affront at its best; at its worst it was an intended "put-down." Father Kelly owes Father Mugavero an apology.

Father Joseph Dailey  
St. Theodore's  
Rochester

Father Dailey is parochial vicar at St. Theodore's Church.



## Column made light of Medjugorje, Satan's impact

To the editors:

Father Richard McBrien's article on May 18 "World is not a battleground for Satan, Mary" left a bad taste in my mouth.

Father McBrien is on the outside looking in with Medjugorje. So he can not make an accurate judgment of it.

Second, he seems to take too lightly the great impact Satan has on our world and especially with the faithful of all religion! Has he been living under a rock for say the last 90 years? Our Lady at Medjugorje said that this century is under the influence of the Devil. Satan went before the throne of God and said he'd destroy the church in 100 years. God gave it to him. Satan is losing power and becoming more aggressive. Divorces, drugs, abortion and all evil are the effects.

McBrien states that "authentic Catholic piety is centered on the Eucharist, not on private devotion." As a three-time pilgrim to Medjugorje, the heart of Medjugorje

and Mary's message is the Mass and the Eucharist. Our Lady said "Let Holy Mass be the center of your life!" ...

Mary calls for prayer. First, the Mass and Eucharist, then the Rosary, and finally, personal prayer in that order are her call.

The Rosary is the greatest weapon against Satan. Mary begs us to pray three sets of it daily to learn to live the mysteries. She said, "Keep the Rosary in your hands so that Satan knows you are mine!"

If John Cornwell looked at Mary's

## Where should Father Mugavero draw the line when offering advice that's not requested?

To the editors:

In all fairness, the *Courier* should give a balanced perspective of Father Mugavero's conviction for harassing a young woman (guest editorial, CC: May 15). Father Mugavero believes he was the victim.

Father Mugavero had counseled this very young, fragile woman in jail. He believed that she was unsure of her decision and may have been pressured to have an abortion.

When she had made up her mind, she did not want to tell Father Mugavero probably because she believed he would not support her.

To avoid confrontation, she refused to see him his last two visits to jail by claiming she was asleep, a detail that Father Mugavero fails to mention.

Undaunted and with information obtained unethically certainly, he confronted her

messages he would find they are directly taken from the Bible. Mary asks us to read the Bible daily to implement her message into a decent Christian life.

We must return to Jesus and Mary for peace to come to the world. So we must connect back to God, pray, go to Confession at least once a month, and fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Why not try it Father? What have you got to lose? I guarantee that you will become closer to God and find inner peace.

Peter Cole  
Geneva

at the physician's office. She was surprised, felt invaded, and made a statement to the police. She confirmed this statement with her own words to Judge Morris.

She wanted very much to forget the entire incident and not testify especially against a priest who claimed he had her interests only in mind.

Judge Morris reviewed the evidence and determine Father Mugavero was guilty of harassment, which was supported by the appeal judge.

Father Mugavero has every right to counsel all who will listen. Where does he draw the line when his advice is not requested?

Eric Schaff  
Crosman Terrace  
Rochester

Dr. Schaff is active with a local coalition supporting abortion rights.

### Catholic Courier 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.