



## Values, not celibacy, damage priesthood

To the editors:

I carefully read your front page article in the Thursday, Sept. 13, issue entitled, "Celibacy counter society's values."

I am an ex-priest. I did not leave the priesthood because I had a conflict over celibacy. I am still a celibate of my own choosing. When I was released from my vows, I was fully aware of society's "values." In fact, it was society's values that drove me out of the priesthood.

I became a priest to help people grow spiritually. The Sacrament of Penance and priestly counseling of troubled souls attracted me to the priesthood in the first place. I experienced the joy of my vocation for about eight years. I loved the work of being a hospital chaplain. The power of grace in my priesthood continually demonstrated the happiness of my vocation.

But by 1970, my role as a priest was becoming a joke. Instead of hearing the confessions of penitent sinners, I was confronted with one after another of moral theologians in the confessional who didn't come to confession to relieve their feeling of sorrow for sin. They came to discuss with the confessor "birth control," the right to abortion, the good psychological effects of masturbation, etc. I asked my Jesuit provincial and local Superiors to relieve me of any more assignments to the confessional. With the NEW liturgy, everybody was getting rid of any guilt by

"general confessions" and holding hands during the Our Father at Mass, and by the sweet embraces and handshakings at the "Kiss of Peace" during the Mass. Obviously nobody has a guilty conscience anymore and everyone can flock to Holy Communion.

I came to the conclusion that obviously the Catholic Church has no further need of priests. Nice ladies can give out "Holy Communion" and Mr. and Mrs. Gumbacker can say the Mass. And the guitar player can make us all feel good like entertainers do on television.

I left the priesthood in 1977. I am happy that I did. I became a teacher in a public high school. I am delighted to work with young people who, although they are being bombarded by the same "societal values" that drove me out of the confessional, at least some have the unsophistication of showing their honest humanity without the decorations of the "modern sophisticated Catholic Church." I can communicate to them the precious values behind sex and marriage and at the same time show them the goodness of a fully dedicated celibate life.

What I am saying, and your front-page article proves it, is that the Catholic Church is no longer an effective means of carrying out the CURA ANIMARUM which Christ our Lord entrusted to it. Whether priests be married or not is NOT the issue. The mandate of Christ to His

priests in the words, "Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" is being totally obfuscated by your "societal values."

The state of celibacy is a very happy state. All who take vows of celibacy WITH GOOD, HEALTHY SPIRITUAL DIRECTION, can be very happy people. Many married people whom I meet envy me for my happiness as a celibate. I have 150 children every day whom I nurture in my classroom. I really love them. They make my life rich. The children who come from ugly homes need me to give them happiness. I teach them self-respect and responsibility. I do what Christ mandated me to do: BE A CATHOLIC PRIEST TO MY STUDENTS.

I don't give sermons anymore, I don't give out Holy Communion anymore, I don't say public Masses anymore, but I am still a Catholic priest and a celibate. My life is given to the care of souls.

Father Maurice J. Brill  
Jerome, Arizona

## Consistency not best means of protecting life

To the editors:

The recent headline article "Seamless garment poses vote question" (Courier, Oct. 4), also raised the question of whether or not such an approach is the best vehicle for protecting life.

### Take action through party

To the editors:

I read with great interest the article about the dearth of candidates who espouse a consistent life ethic. We can bemoan this situation, or we can do something about it.

As Vice-Chairman of the Right to Life Party, I'm in a position to help select candidates. We have openings on our State Committee in the 30th congressional district (Monroe County), 34th congressional district (Steuben, Yates, Chemung, Schuyler, Tompkins) and the 28th congressional district (Tioga and Tompkins). We will train you; all you need is a desire to help defend the unborn.

I urge anyone who believes in the sacredness of human life in all of its stages to contact me at 315/539-8860.

Don Peters  
Huff St.  
Waterloo

## Celibacy calls for prudence in relationships

To the editors:

The October 11 edition of the *Catholic Courier* was very informative in relation to contemporary developments on the celibacy issue.

For the past two years, I have been part of the priest discernment group for men over 30. Needless to say, the topic of celibacy often arises during our discussions about the challenges facing current and future priests. Sadly, we have lost several members of our discernment group because of this issue.

I have found that I have been able to live a celibate lifestyle in a comfortable way for the past four years by using simple common sense. For example, I have been able to establish female friendships without getting romantically involved.

For many, the word celibacy brings to mind something dark and unnatural. However, this lifestyle is not as bad as many perceive it to be. There is a misconception that celibacy means a total avoidance of women. This is certainly not the case. In the course of my conversations with several priests, they have been able to maintain female friendships with a minimal amount of problems. It is simply a matter of keeping in mind the responsibilities that go along with their vocations, thereby keeping their friendships in check.

Admittedly, it has been difficult for me to establish friendships with women since joining the priest discernment group. Unfortunately, some women feel they are committing a sin by getting involved in such a friendship.

Contrary to rumors that sometimes surface, I am convinced that the majority of priests in the Rochester diocese have adjusted to their celibate lifestyles in a healthy way. Jesus loved men and women equally as God's children. We must not let the vocation of priesthood put up a wall between the sexes. While priests and candidates for the priesthood must certainly use common sense when it comes to celibacy, it does not mean that women have to distance themselves from them.

Living a celibate lifestyle for the past four years has not lessened my humanity. I still enjoy female friendships and look forward to serving my future vocation in a responsible way.

Raymond A. Grosswirth  
Alexander Street  
Rochester

Certainly opposing abortion is a good start. However opposing capital punishment and nuclear armaments in my opinion endangers life.

Without the death penalty and our current policy of selective execution, the murderer has a good chance of future parole if apprehended. Such a policy hardly deters the crime of murder.

Another way the seamless garment approach fails is their rejection of nuclear armaments.

Had the U.S. followed this advice after World War II, the Soviet Union in most likelihood would today be the controlling world power.

Noting their genocidal policies of controlling their citizenry, it can be said with some certainty that our nuclear armaments prevented genocide.

Therefore until communism is defeated we must maintain our nuclear capabilities and develop a nuclear shield, the Strategic Defense Initiative, SDI.

We should also pressure the Soviets by withholding economic aid to abandon their military superiority as well as their form of government: communism.

Robert Bart  
Ithaca

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