

Calls to 'give peace a chance' will fail with Iraq

To the editors:

While TV newscasts run popular opinion polls on foreign policy and TV talk show hosts try to decide foreign policy by a raise of hands in the audience, American soldiers sit and wait in the Saudi Arabian desert. Actually, not waiting. Most of them work at least 12 hours a day, six days a week and are too exhausted at the end of the day except to sleep.

These American men and women have put their lives on the line for their country. Whether they've done it out of duty only, is beside the fact. They are there and obviously they will pay the ultimate price in the event of war.

Already, they are separated from the

families they love and will spend the Christmas season in the desert. Yet, we have congressmen and others chanting for more time for sanctions and the worn-out slogan: "give peace a chance." ...

... One of the worst sins is to betray a friend or friendship. Is that what we do with the Kuwaiti people now? Let's abandon Kuwait and pull out?

I've read plenty of letters about give sanctions a chance and how precious human life is, but none of these noble letter writers has mentioned the current atrocities being committed by the Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait. Just this past week, President Bush mentioned on TV that people were being given electrical shocks to their

private parts and glass was being driven into the skin of those held captive. Give peace a chance, right?

Saddam Hussein has used poison gas against his own people. He has executed many of his very own generals. Why? They simply disagreed with him, like others who were shot. Or worse yet, these generals became too popular. If we let Saddam go, to fight again, he'll have more potent nuclear weapons next time. He already has most of the elements to construct a simple nuclear bomb, now.

Do you think this same brutal murderer will show any discretion upon those whom he decides to use a nuclear weapon?

In the December 20 issue of the *Catholic Courier* I read a letter that said we should consider this an "Arab problem" ("Citizens must support U.S. military personnel"). That's the same kind of propaganda that Saddam has been spreading since he invaded Kuwait. Give peace a chance.

We bought millions of dollars of oil from Kuwait and that country was our ally. If we don't support our allies or friends, then what kind of country are we?

This is not an Arab problem. This is a problem of one power hungry man killing any innocent person, government or coun-

try that gets in his way.

At the start of World War II, we waited until Hitler had captured most of France and he had already bombed the heck out of London. Today, no one would argue about the necessity of stopping Adolf Hitler. Yet, we waited and waited before getting involved.

Today, we are already involved in the gulf crisis, yet we hear the chant of peace? Saddam is not a man of peace. While living in exile in Cairo, Egypt, he used to frequent a night club, where he frequently picked knife fights with patrons. When he and his Baath Party returned to power in Iraq, he left Egypt with a debt to this club that ran into the thousands of dollars.

Do you think we can make a deal with this guy. As we debate and debate and the congressmen talk about sanctions, Saddam this month (December) just sent 20,000 more troops into Kuwait. Give peace a chance.

Unfortunately, you're talking about peace to the wrong kind of guy — Saddam Hussein.

Bruce Warren
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EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

Priests and bishops should focus on teaching faithful

To the editors:

Father Richard McBrien's column in the Dec. 27 issue of the *Catholic Courier* was incorrectly titled. I'm sure that you meant to title it: "The new year could be wonderful if only everyone was exactly like me" or "The world according to Father Richard McBrien."

One would assume that by placing the word Father in front of his name, that Richard McBrien is a Catholic Priest. Isn't it the responsibility of all Priests and Bishops in the Catholic Church to "teach and lead" the faithful in the Catholic faith?

Not only is Father McBrien not carrying out his responsibility of teaching the Catholic faith, one could easily argue that he is not even teaching. What Father McBrien does in his column is present his views on very emotional issues within the Church today. Then he generally refers to the position of the Church on these issues in a negative and condescending way thereby implying that his view is correct and that the Church is incorrect and outdated. Not only is this approach totally reprehensible for a Catholic Priest, but it would be frowned upon in any teaching institution other than pre-school and grade school.

Is Father McBrien so unsure of himself that he won't face the teachings of the church on the issues he routinely brings up in his column? Is he concerned that if he presents the Church's teaching — and the reasoning for the teaching — in addition to his own opinion, that intelligent people might decide to make use of those facts and do some thinking on their own?

Wouldn't it be wonderful: if, in 1991, all Priests and Bishops were to assume their roles as "teachers of the faithful;" if, in 1991, all Priests and Bishops would be more concerned about our spiritual life than the administration of the hierarchical organization; if, in 1991, all Priests and Bishops would re-examine their roles as

servants of Our Lord; and finally, if, in 1991, that all Priests and Bishops would recognize their role as Apostles in the Church under the guidance of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ.

In the indisputable words of Jesus our Lord, the only Man who knows both the spiritual needs of men — past, present and future — and the will of God our Father: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of Hell can never overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19).

Michael A. Gallagher
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Hope springs eternal for admitting fallibility

To the editors:

The "Along the Way" and the "On the Right Side" columnists noted in their respective columns Dec. 27 that they were requested to use "hope" as the theme for the year-end issue. They both wrote hopeful columns.

With my hopes running high I turned to read Father McBrien's "Essays in Theology" column. He listed his hopes by leading off fourteen times with the words, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if, in 1991, ..." After listing the faults and errors committed by people all the way from the Vatican down — he would say "up" — I hoped against hope that he would conclude with, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if, in 1991, I would admit that I am not infallible?"

Perhaps next year? Hope springs eternal.
Father Raymond G. Heisel
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Holy Spirit knows no gender limits when issuing call to the priesthood

To the editors:

Over the past few years, I have seen the Women's Ordination Conference grow to a respectable size in the Rochester Diocese. In addition, it is encouraging to see Bishop Clark in the forefront of issues that concern women religious in the United States.

Needless to say, the reaction among Catholics in our diocese has been mixed in reference to the Women's Ordination Conference. For example, the views of opposition claim that the status quo should remain intact and that women have no place in sacramental functions. On the other hand, supporters feel it is about time that women who feel called to priesthood should be allowed to fulfill their calling. Thirdly, the voice of moderation has taken a middle-of-the road attitude, such as "wait and see."

I am one who feels that it is time to take a serious look at the issue of ordaining women. The Vatican, which is primarily concerned with the Universal Church, is not overly concerned with the shortage of priests in the United States because the supply of male priests is abundant elsewhere in the world. Nevertheless, the priest shortage in the U.S. is serious enough to warrant prayerful consideration of female ordination by Vatican cardinals.

As a faith community, we are called by our baptisms to be disciples of Christ in whatever capacity we feel inspired. I have witnessed the work of several sisters in our community who have a true gift of the

Holy Spirit. Their gifts have manifested through their abilities to lead others in prayer, well-developed homilies and also dedicated service to those in need of spiritual or physical healing. It is therefore understandable that these gifted women wish to bring their religious calling full cycle by being allowed to perform sacramental functions including consecrating the Eucharist.

The sad reality of priestless parishes is starting to show itself in our diocese in the way of Communion services led by lay people. While it is wonderful that lay people are coming forward to fill the void left by the dwindling number of priests, this situation doesn't have to exist. With the Eucharist at the center of our community worship, it is imperative that women who feel called to priesthood be allowed to respond and be accepted by the Catholic community.

It is not likely that the Vatican will approve ordination of women in the immediate future, but we still must keep the issue in focus as a means of drawing attention to the fact that sex should not be a factor in determining one's potential as a priest. If a priest is an example of Christ on earth, let all who are guided by the Holy Spirit toward this vocation be allowed to fulfill their calling, whether they be male or female.

Raymond A. Grosswirth
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Support for Catholic orthodoxy necessitates rejoicing over fates of priest and archbishop

To the editors:

Once again you have failed to take a stand for Catholic Orthodoxy. You should rejoice that "Father" Curran has been denied tenure. No one who believes that it is legitimate for unborn children to be killed, or for people of the same sex to "get married," that masturbation can be morally correct or that it is proper for people to attempt marriage after a divorce can call himself a Catholic. By posing as a theologian Curran constitutes an immediate and present danger to the salvation of those he teaches. You should also rejoice that Archbishop Weakland was

barred by the Holy See from receiving an honorary degree. Archbishop Laghi's supine apology is disgraceful. Weakland's insults to the pro-life community are an embarrassment to the Church. By siding with the radical feminists he made a mockery of his vocation to shepherd the flock and witness to the Truth.

But again, what can we expect from the "Catholic" newspaper of the diocese ruled by Bishop Matthew Clark? Shame on you! Shame on him!

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