

Love means more than just tolerating diversity

To the editors:

Florence Osekoski's concern (*Catholic Courier*, Feb. 7) that Christians seek to reach out to others and "ask God what He wants for His Church" is commendable. The Catholic Church would indeed stray from purpose if it did not seek to love all people and to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. People need to know that are spiritual beings, loved by their creator, and that their lives have divine purpose. No miracle I have seen equals the joyful eyes of one who has personally encountered Jesus Christ, experienced His forgiveness, and gone forth to live in His holy embrace.

What greater honor could any Catholic, or other Christian, have than sharing this love with others, and helping to fulfill the Great Commission to "make disciples of all the nations?" (Matt. 28:19)

In this situation, it becomes easy to think that to "love" means to tolerate and not to offend. Examination of Osekoski's arguments shows that in taking this view she loses the point of Christianity (and the Catholic Church), a tragic disservice to those who she wishes to help.

Love will take the emotionally tough step of sharing the Lord's commands with others who differ — because these commands

were given for our joy and wholeness (John 15:10-11), not to be "negative." These commands include having no other Gods before Him (First Commandment), to live righteously by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18) to bear fruit (John 15:16) and to turn to God from sin (Acts 3:19).

The sin command is crucial. We cannot escape the fact that scarlet sin, something Osekoski fails to mention, has rent us from right relationship with God (Genesis 3, Romans 3:23). Only by accepting Christ as Savior and Lord, and personally receiving the Gift of forgiveness and salvation He offers (Jn. 14:6, Rom. 5,6, Eph. 2:8-9),

can have a right relationship with God. Our desire for "good feeling" relationships with other doctrines must not cause us to abdicate the Great Commission. If one may have a right relationship with God without Christ (which the Bible emphatically denies) then the whole point of Christ's sacrificial death is lost. "For God loved the world so much that he gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The above commands, along with others, have for centuries led Catholic prelates under the Holy Spirit's guidance to some clear conclusions. One must receive Christ to be cleansed of sin to spend eternity in Heaven. Abortion and homosexuality, which Archbishop Rembert Weakland (whom Osekoski supports) risks compromise on, ARE sin. These concepts may be disturbing to the children of a pluralistic age. But trying to sweep these concepts under the rug of a "rainbow" cannot change them. And why would one want to condone sin, when having a personal relationship with the Lord of the Universe (who hates sin) is the most awesome gift we could desire?

Bishops such as Weakland are more likely motivated by desire to make the church acceptable to general society than to "explore the vastness of God" whose will on these matters is clear. They also may be under Satanic deception. Satan is another danger we modern Americans can easily forget — one who is all too real! Again, what a tragic disservice to those the Church seeks to reach!

I confess to needing Christ's forgiveness for my sins as much as anyone — and praise God that He forgives! "Ecumenical Unity" can only come in submission to Christ's commands, as individuals and as a Church, and inviting the Holy Spirit to guide us. Our compassion for others should lead us to accept them and then share with them the awesome Lord whose redemptive love has changed our lives. When we approach others with the person Jesus Christ, we offer a real reason to turn from other world views. And we will be able to share, together, "the incomparable riches of His grace" (Eph. 2:7).

Jim Kruggel Slater Creek Drive Greece

Article on Iraqi patriarch irks subscriber

To the editors:

I was very surprised by you printing the article written by John Thavis (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 24: "Iraqi prelate defends attacks against Israel"). I could not believe that I would ever read where a member of the Catholic Church would say he is a friend of Saddam Hussein. He's a man known to be a murderer and a terrorist. And then (Patriarch Raphael I Bidawid) goes on to say it's all right to shoot missiles into a city of a people who are not even at war with him. He also goes on to say it's all right to use chemical weapons in War; even the Nazis did not use gas in WWII.

This is a priest who is supposed to believe in what the Catholic Church stands and in what Christ taught.

He also goes on to say American soldiers raped nuns in Italy during WWII. That is the most outrageous lie I ever heard of

from a man who represents the Catholic Church. I severed in Africa, Italy, Corsica and France. I never heard of a single case of an American soldier ever touching a nun. For him to say that and you to print it I wonder what kind of paper you print.

I should think you would want facts to print something like that. With out facts to print something like that is a disgrace to every soldier who fought for America in WWII.

You said in 1957 he became a bishop of Amadiyah in Iraq Kurdistan region and yet he says he had no sympathy for these people who Saddam used poison gas on and killed the women and children.

This is a Catholic Bishop?

He said it is also right to use what ever you have to put down an internal revolt. Would he or you say the same for El Salvador or Nicaragua?

I also noticed your editorial you said 15,000 anti-war protesters were in Washington and were confronted by antagonistic pro-war veterans. In other words the anti-war people were all right with you but the war veterans were hostile.

That's the thanks veterans who fought for their country get from you.

Well due to your thinking and what you print in your paper don't deliver it to my house anymore. I don't read anything that runs down the Veterans of this country or prints lies about them.

Bernard Byrnes
Sunset Street
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Publication of a story on any individual's statements should not be interpreted as endorsement thereof by the Catholic Courier. The fact that a Catholic prelate endorsed the use of poison gas on civilians is major news — decidedly unpleasant news, but news nonetheless. And it's a newspaper's function to publish news, regardless of whether the staff agrees with its substance. We didn't agree, by the way.

As for the "antagonistic" veterans: yes, we did interpret what we saw on TV — veterans screaming at and kicking passers-by — as acts of hostility. That didn't mean the anti-war demonstrators were right and the veterans were wrong. It simply meant we shouldn't have a civil war to determine the rightness of war in the Persian Gulf.

School reorganization contains inadequate amount of local control

To the editors:

In response to Peter Spinelli's article, "Today's efforts foster hope for days to come," which appeared in the Jan. 31st issue of the *Catholic Courier*, I was pleased to see the similarities between his educational background and my own. My Catholic educational experience included 17 years of schooling, from Sts. Simon and Jude School in Brooklyn through St. John's Preparatory to St. John's University, where I received my Bachelor's Degree and commenced graduate study. My children also attended an excellent elementary school, namely St. Pius Tenth, from which they went on to Catholic High Schools.

I read Mr. Spinelli's article with more than passing interest, and for two reasons. First, he is, as I am, a product of a Vincenzian education. Secondly, his article was concerned with the reorganization of the Diocesan schools. As I read through his article, it was evident that his good Vincenzian values were shining through. However, I feel compelled to disagree with him on two points.

The first area of disagreement has to do with the authority of the Southwest Quadrant Board. Mr. Spinelli tries to make a major point by saying, "Under the system framework, there will be real control at a local level, by a quadrant board with real authority." This is in direct contradiction to information which has been communicated to me by Mr. Samuel W. Ognibene. According to Mr. Ognibene, who was the St. Pius Tenth alternate to the Southwest Quadrant Board, he was present at the August 1990 meeting of that body, and at that meeting, the Board members were informed by a Diocesan consultant that the Board would not be a policy-making body, but merely an advisory one. Now, I think that it is quite clear that any body of an advisory nature cannot possibly be one with real control or real authority.

Needless to say, this was borne out at a meeting of St. Pius Tenth parishioners on Sunday, February 3rd, at which were present the Parish Council President, our Pastor's newly-appointed representative to the Southwest Quadrant Board, as well as the Bishop's appointee to the Finance Board. Valid questions concerning the proposed junior high school were raised, and for the most part, the answers were, "We don't know." Quite frankly, I believe that they did not know because many of the answers had not been supplied to them by the powers that be.

Finally, I would like Mr. Spinelli, who concludes his article with, "Let's roll up our sleeves and get the work done," to know that we at St. Pius Tenth had the work finished years before anyone else even started to unbutton his sleeves, and that it was accomplished with sweat and labor, and not merely with financial contributions.

George A. Goodwin Jr.
Laredo Drive Rochester

Column uncritically airs misogynistic attitude

To the editors:

I am distressed with your choice to print Father Cuddy's column in the January 24, 1991, *Catholic Courier*. The column was part advertisement and part help in airing one side of a private problem. What is most distressing is that the letter has misogynist undertones that Father Cuddy doesn't mention or doesn't think are important. Father Cuddy's friend, and Father Cuddy by printing it without comment, seem to be believe that a woman is immoral and comes from a family with weak values

when she "lives in" with a man, but the man is not. Is this the belief of the *Catholic Courier's* editorial staff and management?


What is the editorial policy on columns? Are the columns to aid in teaching us more about our faith and how best to follow Christ's path? If so, nothing was gained by reading Father Cuddy's friend's letter about what lead up to his impending divorce — and annulment! There was a great deal of information in the letter that could have been addressed but was not.

Do you allow guest columnists? If you did, you could print a column that teaches us something about how to be better Catholics rather than an advertisement. If you want to encourage people to listen to Archbishop Sheen's tapes, print excerpts from his tapes not slanted confessions.

I enjoy reading your paper very much, it is a faith-enhancing experience. Sometimes, like January 24, the letters to the editors are better than the columnists page. If you were to allow new people to write columns occasionally, more people might benefit.

Thomas M. Lucid
Ellis Hollow Creek Road
Ithaca

EDITORS' NOTE: In response to the writer's question, the management and staff of the *Catholic Courier* are opposed to double standards. The opinions expressed on the "Columnists" pages are strictly those of the bylined authors.

	Bishop Matthew H. Clark, President
	Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, Gen. Mgr.
	Karen M. Franz, Editor/Asst. Gen. Mgr.
1150 Buffalo Road • Rochester, New York 14624 • 716/328-4340	
Editorial Department: Richard A. Kiley, Managing Editor Lee Strong, Staff Writer • Rob Cullivan, Staff Writer Barbara Ann Homick, Staff Writer	
Babette G. Augustin, Photographer • Rebecca S. Roth, Photo Intern	
Business Department: Mary E. Bittner, Office Manager • Bernie Puglisi, Advertising Manager Jeanne A. Morin, Circulation Mgr. • Kathy Welsh, Ad. Account Executive	
Production Department: Lorraine Hennessey, Graphics Mgr. • Michael Fleckenstein, Graphic Artist	