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Editorial 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.



THE ANNUNCIATION — Letter-writer Sharon Pearte asserts that Mary's 'yes' to the request delivered by the angel Gabriel was filled with strength, as well as grace.

Mary's submission wasn't passive

To the editors:

Your recent front page article "Women behold varied images in the face of Mary" (*Catholic Courier*, May 9) was not only inappropriate but most untimely, appearing the week before Mother's Day! As Catholic we ought to be proclaiming the glories of Mary's Divine Motherhood and Perpetual Virginity rather than contributing to the outrages heaped upon her by our secularistic society.

The article's feminist author uses the premise that "many wish to review devotional representations that appear to propose Mary as a paradigm of passivity and submission to male authority, a woman valued chiefly for her virginity and maternity, a woman confined to domestic and familial roles..." She has failed to see the richness and depth of Mary's role as Mother.

Mary's "submission" to her God never involved "passivity." When confronted with pregnancy as an unmarried girl in an unexplainable situation she gave her whole-hearted "yes" to the Will of God.

Mary relied on God in faith — an active virtue, the opposite of passivity. God chose Mary, a virgin, and enabled her to preserve that virginity; even through childbirth. As the Mother of the Savior of our world she taught all mothers the breadth of "domestic and familial roles" rather than their confinement. As a mother she brought Christ to sanctify the preborn John the Baptist; she accepted the humbleness of the cave at Bethlehem so her Son could come amongst the poor; she willingly became a refugee in a foreign country and bore the extreme sorrow of watching Him be executed as a public criminal. Later she remained with her Son's Apostles in prayer on Pentecost and mothered the infant Church until her death. God still employs her in Heaven in her role as Mother of her race; sending her to earth at Lourdes, LaSalette, Guadalupe, Fatima and countless other places to warn and counsel His erring children on earth.

Rather than "confining" women to "domestic and familial roles" reflection on the life and virtues of Mary will lead

women to understand the richness and fullness of those roles. As the Virgin Mother of God Mary was ever an example of interior and exterior purity; faithfulness to her God; amiability and love for all of God's creatures; wisdom and prudence in all of her actions; and counselor and teacher to all who called upon her then and to all who invoke her assistance today as the Mother of Heaven and Earth.

Sharon Pearte
Shaw Avenue
Elmira

EDITORS' NOTE: The quotations to which Ms. Pearte refers were not the words of staff writer Barbara Ann Homick, author of the article in question.

They were taken directly from the second draft of the U.S. bishops' pastoral *Response One in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women in the Church and Society*.

These passages summarized what numerous women told the bishops during listening sessions conducted nationwide at the start of the pastoral-writing process.

Sensuality most detrimental to the faith

To the editors:

Catholic theologians, which in fact do exist, teach us that there are three principle factors conducive to the loss of the Faith. These are pride, which is an emphasis of self in preference to God and His church, ignorance, which is the failure to educate oneself in the Faith, and sensuality which is impurity in all its seductive and multifarious forms. Of these three theologians, along with the unanimous opinion of the Church Fathers and Doctors, tell us that sensuality is the most dangerous to ones Faith. Indeed the Holy Ghost has exclaimed that "the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Hence we should be reminded of a few things since our society is steeped in these loathsome vices.

"Blessed are the clean of heart," says Our Blessed Lord, "for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). ... The opposite is,

of course, that the unclean and defiled will not see God and must go to Hell "where the worm dieth not." Hence the Catholic Church's moral teachings, from the prescription of chastity according to ones state in life to the prohibition of not only impure acts — fornication, adultery, contraception, infanticide and abortion — but impure thoughts, constitutes a firm warning to Her children that we must be made perfect as Our Heavenly Father is perfect.

In this life one belongs either to one of two kingdoms or cities. It is inescapable. "The Two cities, of God (the Catholic Church) and the Devil (the World) are to reach their appointed ends when the sentences of destiny and doom are passed by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead" (St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XXI Chapter 1). However just belonging to the Catholic Church is insufficient in itself to save ones soul. One must live the Catholic Faith and clean holy

lives. St. Augustine also writes "In like manner, the City of God itself, so long as it is a wayfarer on earth, harbors within its ranks a number of those who, though externally associated in the common bond of the sacraments, will not be associated in the eternal felicity of the saints." St. Alphonsus Liguori adds, "As pride has filled Hell with devils, impurity fills it with men."

Let all Catholics remember that because they are the "elect" they will be judged more severely than others. "When much is given a man, says our Blessed Lord, much will be expected of him." We who have the true faith are the most privileged of men. Let us, in these decadent and diabolical days, stand tall and live and die in the Faith. "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." A promise from the very mouth of God Himself. Let us begin.

Richard V. Hussar
Jordan Avenue, Rochester