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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.

Jesus didn't start a social agency

To the editors:

I wonder what's really going on at the Catholic Family Center when they fire one of the foremost Peace and Justice activists in the Rochester area and then 10 of the members of the Peace and Justice Advisory committee resign in protest of his firing. Why does the Catholic Family Center have an advisory committee if it doesn't listen to it?

What kind of pressure is the executive director under that she caves into this kind of community pressure and doesn't listen to her own advisory committee? It raises the question of who really governs the Catholic Family Center anyway, the Diocese of Rochester or the Community Chest?

Perhaps we can use this experience to understand why Jesus never organized a social agency to heal, raise from the dead, give to the poor, and teach His good news. He would have had to have a Board of Directors, and Advisory committees, and funding sources to find money to pay the salaries of the administrators, program directors, and front line staff.

In order to get funding from the good people of his day he would have had to eat some crow with the Pharisees and compromise his standards with the Chief Priest.

Of course as chief spokesperson for this



growing agency, he would not have much time to attend to the spiritual needs of the people because there would be money to raise, policies and procedures to be written, and board meetings to attend.

Perhaps Peace and Justice cannot be institutionalized. Prophetic voices cannot be bureaucratized. Shouting out that the emperor has no clothes on will always be considered embarrassing and poor form by the power elite who have their power to maintain and their positions to protect. Remember, it was our brother, Jesus, who told us that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into heaven.

I say let the Catholic Family Center keep their precious funding and water down

their Catholic positions on things so they fit right in with the rest of the secular Community Chest agencies. True followers of Jesus never put much credence in such monkey business anyway.

Being for life or being for death is a matter of the heart anyway. Tracy Chapman says in her song, "All That You Have Is Your Soul:"

My Momma told me

'Cause she say she learned the hard way

Say she want to spare the children

She say don't give or sell your soul away

'Cause all that you have is your soul

Too bad the folks at the Catholic Family Center don't listen to Tracy Chapman.

**David G. Markham
Brockport**

Bishop Clark listens to the faithful

To the editors:

Kudos to the Washington Theological Union for inviting Bishop Matthew Clark as its commencement speaker and to its board of trustees for awarding him the 1991 Distinguished Service Award in Ministry and Theology (see *Catholic Courier*, May 16: "Conflicts helped form ministry, bishop says").

Bishop Clark's delicate but firm handling of the "Father Curran affair" and his sensitive learning of the needs of women in the church, at a time when not all hierarchs share his sympathies, suggest that there is such a thing as a "loyal opposition" in the church, respectful, reverent, and reflective.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

He has shown, furthermore, that "consulting the faithful" does not mean merely appealing them or polling them or abdicating one's responsibilities, but authentically listening. If the church is also a "learning church," it must be a listening one.

The "ability to listen," for which the retiring Archbishop of Canterbury was recently praised, is not easily found among churchmen. Bishop Clark makes an earnest effort to listen.

He is a "creative and courageous" bishop, poised for a new millennium.

**E. Leo McMannus
Sail Pointe Circle
Venice, Fla.**

Responsible citizens will reproduce future citizens

To the editors:

Abortion and the abuse of contraception, rather than helping our country, are literally squeezing the economic and cultural life out of us. ... For the first time in our history there are more people over 65 than under 5 years of age. In the decade ahead, to have children may become your greatest patriotic act for God and country.

Statistics prove that the present culture of the West — Europe and the U.S. — is being challenged by the anti-life movement. Father Paul Marx, a noted population expert, has found that by the year 2035, the majority of people in France will not be French. The reproductive rate of the French is down to 1.2. On the other hand, for example, the Muslim population in France is growing at over 2.2. Since a country needs a rate of 2.2 to survive, the French culture is on the way out.

In the U.S. about 2 million babies are aborted annually. That is greater than all

the Americans lost in all our wars. The U.S. now has a reproductive rate of 1.9, leaving our future more and more to depend on the Department of Immigration for growth. ... If those of us in our 20s, 30s and 40s do nothing to fight the anti-life movement, our culture and economic future will someday not exist as we now know it. When this group retires either the social security benefits will be cut drastically for the elderly, or those children lucky enough to have been born will be taxed at exorbitant rates. Either alternative is undesirable. More than ever we need children who will someday be wage earners.

... Fifty-seven percent of all West German couples do not have a child; Germans are on the way out. In Switzerland, soldiers are needed so badly in the military that they must remain in active duty until age 53. In that country there are over a million foreigners working, one-sixth of the

population. In England, because of the lack of social welfare dollars for the elderly, one is not allowed in the hospitals if one is over 65. Mercy killing is growing. In many places in Europe, one-third of the workers are of non-Judeo-Christian descent! ...

In the near future, family planning must include the virtues of childbirth within marriage and the value of sexual abstinence for the young, unwed. The Virgin Mother should be exemplified as a role model of humility, purity and chastity. ... If women are taught what the pill does to their bodies, they would desire to learn how to use a natural birth-control method in its place. As well, the abortion pill, RU-486, must be banned; it is anti-life, and it encourages irresponsible sexual contact.

When we teach that the dignity of childbirth is one of the fruits of sexual contact, we show we have the will to love and to live. When we work to end abortion, we advocate for posterity. When we replace our own self-interest by what is economically good for our country and culture, we will take more seriously the long-term negative effects of the anti-life movement. The old biblical directive, "go forth and multiply," may still be relied on as what God wants His people to do.

Frank Netti

**Weedspott Sennett Road, Weedspott
EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.**

Ruling on Roe vs. Wade must be overturned

To the editors:

What disturbs me is the growing number of victims that abortion is claiming: the unborn, the women who obtain the abortions, the pro-life community, the doctors who perform them, and now Planned Parenthood. Abortion has proven that it inflicts pain on everyone involved.

I believe the only solution to ending

abortion is to work together to overturn (the Supreme Court decision in) *Roe vs. Wade*.

There is, however, one more abortion that needs to be performed. This being on the central victimizer:

The Roe vs. Wade Law.

**Dianna Ives
Simpson Road Rochester**