

President

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

Editor/Asst. Gen. Mgr.

Karen M. Franz

Editorial Department

Managing Editor

Richard A. Kiley

Staff Writers

Lee Strong

Finger Lakes

Rob Cullivan

Monroe County

Barbara Ann Homick

Southern Tier

Photographer

Babette G. Augustin

Photo Intern

Philip Archer

Business Department

Office Manager

Mary E. Bittner

Circulation Manager

Jeanne A. Morin

Advertising Manager

Bernie Puglisi

Advertising Account Exec.

Kathy Welsh

Receptionist

Amy Fortier

Production Department

Graphics Manager

Lorraine Hennessey

Graphic Artist

Michael Fleckenstein

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.

Early feminists opposed abortion

To the editors:

Our organization, Feminists for Life of Western N.Y., was shocked to know that lunch for the Women's Convention Days and speaker Geraldine Ferraro, was under the auspices of St. Patrick's Church in Seneca Falls, N.Y.

Ms. Ferraro's abortion rights' stand is oppressive to both women and their unborn children. We full support Ms. Ferraro's advocacy for prenatal care and women's rights. But the integrity of those admirable positions evaporates when they are coupled

with the destruction of those same children and the exploitation of those same women through abortion.

She and others who sponsored this historical event need to be mindful that the early suffragettes to whose memory is being honored in Seneca Falls, were opposed to abortion.

While we are not a catholic group, we have long admired the non-violent position re: your church on issues like the death penalty and abortion.

Our suspicion is that this may have taken

place without your consent or knowledge. In that case, you may want to consider some public apology.

**Marianne Schonning
Hillsboro Cove Circle Webster**

EDITORS' NOTE: The Convention Days luncheon took place at the Historical Society Museum and was sponsored by the Altar Guild Society of St. Patrick's Church. But according to Frances Barbieri, society president, Geraldine Ferraro did not attend the luncheon.

Ferraro must clarify view about issue

To the editors:

On July 20, Geraldine Ferraro was the featured speaker at the Convention Days held in Seneca Falls. This event commemorates the inaugural women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls in 1848.

Geraldine Ferraro, a Catholic, said she believes in a woman's right to choose abortion. During the question-and-answer session, Ferraro said that she would not personally have an abortion, although the decision should be left to the individual.

Maybe one should question why Ferraro would not personally have an abortion? I believe she is making the statement that she is pro-life.

Geraldine Ferraro, a Queens Democrat, plans to challenge incumbent (Senator) Alfonso D'Amato (R-N.Y.) in next year's election.

With this in mind, Geraldine Ferraro should clarify one way or the other where she stands on abortion since the abortion debate will be one of the key issues in the upcoming elections.

**Diana R. Ives
Simpson Road Rochester**



Geraldine Ferraro was the featured speaker July 20 at Convention Days in Seneca Falls.
Phillip Archer/Photo Intern

'Encounter' did not explain sex teaching

To the editors:

One can alienate people by talking about sin and the moral laws of the Church, but by not doing so hurts those who have tried, with all their heart, to follow Church teaching. I have felt that hurt. You can alienate those striving to be good Catholics for the sake of many who want to pick their own morality. I have felt that alienation. We are hypocrites if we call ourselves Catholic, yet choose to live as pagans do, outside of moral laws.

At the "Engagement Encounter" run by the Rochester Diocese on June 7-9, my future spouse and I were terribly hurt by the attitude of the married couples and spiritual director who had their own form of moral law. We are thankful to them for showing us how to be honest, open and loving in our upcoming marriage. We were moved with their deep understanding of unity in marriage. We learned about how they braved their disillusion. But we were also hurt by their mutual lack of understanding regarding the sinfulness of pre-marital sex, the value of sexual abstinence before marriage, and the teaching of the Church re-

garding artificial birth-control. Nothing was discussed about secondary virginity and how this will help one receive graces from the holy sacrament of marriage.

The topic of sex before marriage, which is fornication, and therefore a serious mortal sin, was treated as a something acceptable, common place. When the lead couple admitted to premarital sex, they did not say that there was any guilt or sin on their part. The priest, our spiritual director, made no comment on this sin. Purity before marriage is essential to the sanctity of the marriage, and this was not discussed. Confessing this sin was not discussed.

One can imagine how hurt we felt knowing how, with God's grace we have fought all the temptations to have sex and continue to fight this temptation. After my fiancé spoke to the priest regarding his silence on the matters of artificial-birth control and the rewards of sexual abstinence, she came to me and together we wept for our Church. We felt that God had been hurt as well. The lead couple had been instructing these classes for eight years, and although

we complimented them on their work, my future wife and I left with our hearts broken. The representatives of our Diocese had let us down.

Over all, the "encounter" taught us about psychological and social tools we needed to remain in union with each other. The encounter did not discuss the moral issues which the Church teaches are essential to a blessed marriage. We were not taught how to be in union with God. For this reason and others Catholic couples suffer from the same marital dysfunctions as the rest of the population. As well, Catholic women abort babies. And yet we are supposed to be different. As one conference leader said, "you are the light of Christ in the world." Because we are people called to be Catholics; we are called to speak the truth without fear of alienating others. Our forefathers would rather go to the lion's den than deny any teaching of the Church. We cannot poohpoo such moral courage.

If you are persecuted for stepping up and saying that something is against Church teaching, then remember the wonderful works of Our Lord, spoken at today's Mass, June 10th. "Blessed are those who are persecuted, for great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12). Pagan practices of fornication and artificial birth control must be denied by Catholics who intend to live God's will for them. I hope that future "Engagement Encounters" aim to make us better Catholics, and thus better marital partners.

**Frank L. Netti
Weedsport-Sennett Road
Weedsport**

Some cannot kneel during Mass

To the editors:

I am a member of Ss. Peter and Paul's Church, Elmira, N.Y.

Reading the letter "Kneeling at consecration should be norm" — kneeling should be beginning and after the "Holy, Holy, Holy" — until the "Amen."

But we as oldsters — some — are unable

to kneel and get up. As for myself, I suffer with Gout and Arthritis and I know at times I cannot move or get to church. At times I have to crawl to the bathroom.

So I hope Dorothy Macaluso will understand.

**Gloria Lynch
Baty Street, Elmira**