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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.

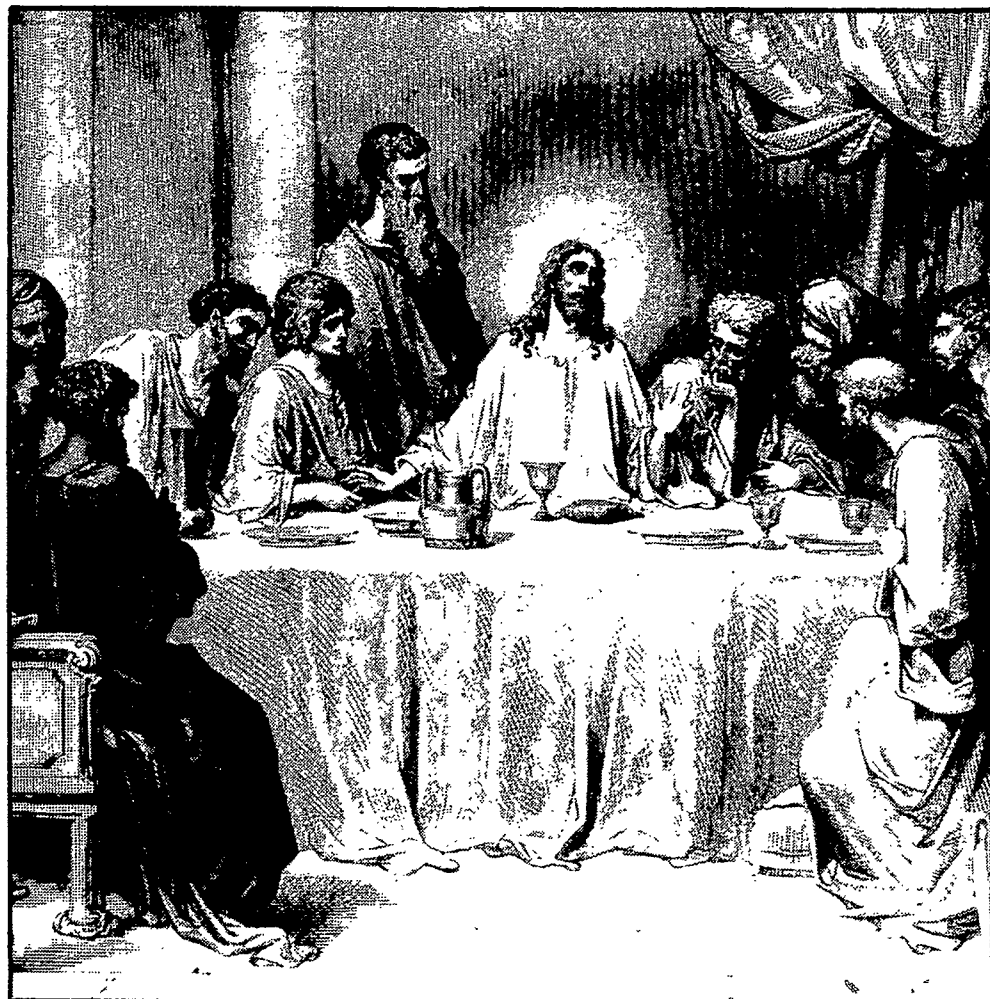
We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.

**Jesus sent  
'brothers'  
into world**

To the editors:

I thank Father Shamon for his column about Jesus not ordaining women, for which he was accused of "putting words into Jesus' mouth" and playing fast and loose with Scripture. But nowhere did he say the words are Scripture or that the incident occurred. It was quite apparent that he was using literary license to verbalize an intriguing thought: that the Father had in a sense included men in a birth process of sorts spiritually when bringing Christ among us through priesthood. Father is well within his priestly rights to share his thoughts, however anyone weighs them, without having the word "abuse" heaped on him. Conveying his thoughts he left Scripture and "the Faith once delivered" intact. Not so the touted "historic critical method" that obliterates the Apostle's record to remove their words from the mouth of the Christ who left the Twelve to speak and be in His stead; the men who had a close and sometimes closed relationship with Him. Who could better understand and interpret Christ's mindset? The world is "stuck" with the Apostles as the only link to the historic Christ. "Criticalism" is uncertain revisionist supposition.

To say that Jesus of Nazareth did not ordain men is nonsense. When Moses rose to the mountain tempest God descended on him in anointing. So also when Jesus rose from the Jordan a tempest was heard in heaven as God descended like a Dove saying "I have begotten you — i.e. anointed you King — this day." Similarly on the mountain the risen King anointed the Apostles with His breath and pronounced the



This image of The Last Supper by Gustave Dore is regarded as one of the great masterpieces of religious art.

trinitarian, "As the Father sent me, so I now send you: Receive the Holy Spirit." Not just a mere empty gesture said the Second Council of Constantinople but the Spirit being truly imparted.

In no genuine way can revisionists say the Mary Magdalen and the women at the tomb were apostles sent to bring the Good News. The record conveys a manifestly contrary scene. Because Christ's "brothers," the Apostles, were men indeed in authority they therefore had every good reason to hide, while the women had noth-

ing to fear from the Roman and Jewish authorities. Jesus sent the women to "my brothers," not out into the world.

Father McBrien may well bewail Peter's successor independently choosing men of his own mindset to the purple. The simple fact that no one dares openly move without him is tacit recognition that the responsibility of Christ's keys indeed lay squarely on him.

Gene Charles  
Geneva Turnpike  
Canadaigua

**Private revelation weak support for case**

To the editors:

Father Shamon's column on ordaining women priests (July 11) and two related letters in the subsequent issue attest to an ongoing concern about this matter. It is not merely the extremes of a militant feminism, but also responsible and loyal members of the Body of Christ who seek more enlightenment on this issue.

In succeeding eras of history differing contemporary problems came to the fore and addressed differing demands to the Revelation contained in the deposit of faith. In our self-conscious age a greater knowledge of the universe demands greater understanding of humanity. Our challenge, as in previous ages, is to struggle with the ongoing mystery of the Incarnation and the unique mediatorship of Christ in order to enlighten our vision of our universe and of our humanity. The possibility of one half of humanity sharing the priestly ministry of Christ is implicit in this present struggle to bring our faith to vital consciousness. A call to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of women's role in the Church is not inappropriate.

Father Shamon very correctly avoided any suggestion that there is anything intrinsic to maleness as such that makes it exclu-

sively appropriate for the priesthood. The de facto choice of a successor to Judas by lot from two males does not in itself establish the principle that it would have been impossible to choose a woman. On the contrary, Father Shamon accurately locates the crux of the problem, namely whether or not there is a positive divine decree excluding women from the ordained priesthood.

Certainly, Father Shamon had no intention to be flippant or patronizing, but his explanation did seem to be a bit tongue-in-cheek. He not only proposes a positive divine decree, but even seems to imply a certain divine affirmative action whereby underprivileged males are compensated for past discrimination in the original privilege

accorded a woman in the Incarnation. Although Father Shamon might be personally convinced of his explanation through his uncanny ability to quote God the Father directly, nevertheless private revelation is not an adequate support of a theological position.

The problem then, is to determine if and where in public revelation contained in the deposit of faith there is a divine decree excluding women from the ordained ministry of the Church. Many competent and loyal theologians and scriptural scholars do not find that immediately evident.

John W. McGee  
Sharpcrest  
Houston

**Father Shamon column trivialized  
Christ's sacrifice for all humanity**

To the editors:

In a column that appeared several weeks ago which attempted to explain why the Church does not ordain women, Father Albert Shamon speculated on what God the Father said at the time of Christ's death on the cross.

While I believe that we are all entitled to conjecture on what God might have to say about anything, I take strong exception to Father Shamon's suggestion that Christ's sacrifice on the cross — an event so significant to our human relationship to God and the "crucial" redemptive act for all humanity — can be interpreted as an action to somehow honor the male gender, presumably correcting some natural injustice in only women giving birth. His interpretation trivializes the sacrifice on the cross and suggests that men benefit from this sa-

crifice more than women. What might appear to be simply a peculiar interpretation of Christ's death is really a disturbing and offensive challenge to the universal human significance of our redemption.

Furthermore, I understand that Jesus called many women and men disciples but didn't himself ordain anyone. The formulation of priesthood over the centuries was part of the Church's constant and changing response to the needs of society. I have great hope that the Church will continue to respond, change and grow in her mission to carry out the love and redemption that Christ showed for us all in his death on the cross.

Gregory Zuroski  
Willow Pond Way  
Penfield

**Clarification**

In an 11th-hour effort to fit the columns for July 11 into the available space, we inadvertently deleted the source of quotations attributed to God in Father Albert Shamon's column. According to Father Shamon, the source was private revelation to a Sister Briege McKenna.