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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.

Action needed now to battle drugs

To the editors:

The drug problem has reached horrible dimensions and is like a colossal octopus with tentacles spreading over all facets of our life. The scary aspect of the ones they reach is frightening — doctors who operate on our bodies; pilots who fly our planes; trainmen who run our trains; teachers who instruct our children; ad nauseam. Is there any profession or occupation left unscathed that we can absolutely rely on to be drug free, responsible, and trustworthy?

When children are tempted beyond endurance to so easily obtain money for their poverty stricken families; when we are constantly seeking greater and more varied thrills in this hedonistic society; when we make ourselves the be-all and center of the universe, essentially making ourselves our own god; when the money from selling drugs is more attractive than the lives we are destroying — then we have reached a nadir in our civilization.

With all the effort of law enforcers; with all the billions being spent; with all the



media attention stressing the evils of drug consumption — to little avail. We are only 5 percent of the world's population but we consume most of the euphoric producing drugs — cocaine, crack, heroin, mari-

juana, etc. It has reached our little children.

Is there anything we can do? Yes. We can resist the growing momentum to legitimize drugs which is caving in to the drug forces, and will only result in a problem now getting worse to one that will be out of control. We can organize community watches in our neighborhoods and try to keep them free of drugs. We can teach our young people to love and respect themselves. We can open drug centers to help people who want to kick the habit, do so. We can pray for help to counter this demonic plague that has captured our country.

I know this — if we don't win the battle over drugs we will all lose in more crime, more violence, more mayhem.

May God help us to conquer this growing, pervasive drug cancer in our midst.

Jerry J. Paladino
Route 14
Rock Stream, N.Y.

Naturalism corrupts Catholic institutions

To the editors:

There is no species of insult directed to Almighty God more obvious today than that of the doctrine of Naturalism. In its rude and rudimentary form, it attempts to slap the face of God in a not too dissimilar fashion as when He was slapped by the Jewish leaders on the eve of His Crucifixion. Naturalism is simply anti-God in every respect.

"The end at which the devil aims," writes St. Thomas Aquinas "is the revolt of the rational creature from God. ... This revolt from God is conceived as an end inasmuch, as it is desired under the pretext of liberty" (*Summa theologiae* III, Question 8, Article 7). Thus, unless we are blind, it is most obvious that virtually every form of public communication is aimed at promoting a life without God and one for this world only. This phenomenon is not restricted to this society alone, but is a world-wide fact.

Naturalism is the foundation Satan uses to spread similar "isms." Modernism, Liberalism, Rationalism, Marxism, Evolu-

tionism, etc. all flow from the same fetid fountain of Naturalism. All of its institutions are at variance with the supernatural Mystical Body of Christ, the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the sole road to Heaven. And not a few Catholic institutions have fallen victim to this pernicious evil. The quest of a good life here on earth, with an over-emphasis on the social gospel to the exclusion of the spiritual preparation for Heaven, is, again, all too obvious to ignore. These former Catholic institutions — meaning of course the individuals that make them up — have, as St. Paul says been blinded by "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

In an attempt to counteract the advancement of Naturalism, Pope Pius IX instituted the Feast of Christ the King with his encyclical *Quas Primas* (1925). For "the restoration of the Empire of Our Lord" he reminded us that Christ is indeed the King of Kings on earth, without which no one can be saved. And that "both in private and in public life, Christ is King." Pertaining to rulers of society, he warned "to give

public honour and obedience to Christ. It (this Feast) will call to their minds the thought of the last judgment, wherein Christ, who has been cast out of public life, despised, neglected and ignored, will most severely avenge these insults."

Hence, the duties of Catholics everywhere is to proclaim the Catholic Faith in its entirety and complete purity. An important doctrine of the Faith is that the Catholic religion alone is true and as Pope Leo XIII warned "to put the other religions on the same level with it is to treat it with the gravest injustice and offer it the worst form of insult" (*Humanum Genus*). The task ahead is seemingly insurmountable, but it is not. The yoke is sweet and the burden is light. The reward is unimaginable. "Be thou faithful until death: and I will give thee the crown of life," promises our Divine Lord (Revelations 2:10). Let us begin.

Richard V. Hussar
Jordan Avenue
Rochester

Diocesan church fails to carry out teaching mission

To the editors:

I would like to commend you for the publication of the excellent letter written by Frank L. Netti (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 8: "Encounter" did not explain sex teaching") regarding the lack of Church teaching on sexual issues at the "Engagement Encounter" on June 7-9. It brings to the attention of those Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester just what is not happening in such programs.

One doesn't have to look very far ... to come to the conclusion that this is just one single instance out of the many which identifies the "non-teaching" role that our Church leaders in the Diocese of Rochester have specifically elected to take.

Each and every Catholic is entitled,

under Church law, to be taught the faith and morals which have been handed down to us through Christ and His successors in the Catholic Church. Those who knowingly and purposefully do not provide these teachings to the faithful will ultimately have to answer to a higher authority. But what do we do in the meantime when we are not exposed to these teachings?

If you are truly a believing Catholic you have the right and possibly even the responsibility to personally write to Bishop Clark and bring this issue, and other issues you may be aware of, to his attention. Furthermore, you should request that he immediately remedy the situation as it applies specifically to the "Engagement Encounter" by either replacing the directors

of the program with someone who will indeed teach Catholic Doctrine and/or provide additional training to the directors so that they are not only aware of Church teaching but actually do teach it.

Vatican II called for more active involvement of the Laity in their own religious education and the education of their children. As indicated by Frank Netti's letter, we are not going to be provided with Church teaching in the Diocese of Rochester unless we step forward and demand from our Church leaders what is rightfully ours, i.e., True Church Teaching.

Michael A. Gallagher
West Church Street
Fairport

Engaged Encounter's record and wide support speak for themselves

To the editors:

Engaged Encounter of Rochester has been in existence since 1975. Although not a diocesan program, many diocesan couples have benefitted from this alternative form of marriage preparation. By the end of this year alone, 240 engaged couples are expected to have made an Engaged Encounter weekend.

Although the Encounter is Catholic in origin and orientation, couples of all faiths are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Our goal is to give each couple the tools necessary to build a successful marriage that is right for them.

Personally, we have been involved in Engaged Encounter since 1975 and in Pre-Cana since 1972. We have personally presented on over 40 Engaged Encounter weekends and probably 30 Pre-Canas. We are absolutely convinced that the weekend is the best marriage preparation we are able to offer.

Any topic on the weekend that needs clarification can be brought up at the Rap session on Saturday evening of the weekend, when engaged couples can speak to one another and the team couples about their own concerns.

Evaluation sheets are handed to the eng-

aged couples at the close of the weekend. We feel that evaluation of the Engaged Encounter weekend is the prerogative of engaged couples who have completed the weekend, rather than those who choose to leave on Saturday night while the weekend is still in progress.

The fact that many diocesan priests present Engaged Encounter weekends and many others continue to recommend the weekend to engaged couples speaks for itself.

Jerry and Terry Patti
Daley Boulevard
Rochester