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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.

Diocese must clearly state stance

To the editors:

Does the tactic of Operation Rescue, the blocking of women entering physicians offices, fulfill the Diocese's new "Guidelines for Non-Violent Civil Disobedience?" (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 15: "Both sides frustrated in talks over civil disobedience").

After two years, the Diocese remains silent. Why? If the Diocese was asked whether peaceful demonstrations fulfill their "Guidelines," I'm sure they would answer "yes." If asked whether destroying equipment fulfilled their "Guidelines," hopefully, they also would offer an answer.

If, as (diocesan Associate Director of Justice and Peace Lourdes) Perez-Alburene says, "Each individual's decision ... should be done with an informed conscience," why not let them hear from the Diocese? The Diocese's Guidelines are useless unless they can be applied.

I am surprised and very disappointed that the Diocese refuses to offer guidance to their constituents who struggle with the above question.

Eric Schaff, M.D.
Crossman Terrace
Rochester



Christopher Millette

Responding to several "rescue missions" at Rochester-area doctors offices, a group of pro-choice activists led by Dr. Eric Schaff (right) picketed St. Theodore's Church in January of 1990. The parish's parochial vicar, Father Anthony Mugavero (left), had participated in several of the rescues. Schaff's action prompted the diocese to call for talks between the two factions.

AIDS memorial would help foster serenity

To the editors:

In my April 25 *Catholic Courier* letter, which was written in support of an AIDS Remembrance Garden, I quoted the conclusion of an article written by Bill Callahan: "This proposed living memorial is one that would last throughout our lifetimes and the lifetimes of those who will follow, so none will ever forget the devastation AIDS caused so many in the 1980's and 90's. And, hopefully, as the birds circle above the AIDS Park, and bees and butterflies light from branch to blossom, the spirits of those no longer with us will be there for us to sense and feel."

The Greater Rochester AIDS Interfaith Network (GRAIN) is working to establish such a "living memorial." On June 29 I attended an outdoor evening service conducted by GRAIN's coordinator, the Rev. Paul Walker, that was held on a Highland Park site planned for the AIDS Re-



membrane Garden. All who attended the service are hopeful that Rochester will soon have our Nation's first AIDS Remembrance Garden.

A lady whose brother died of AIDS said

that, just as the service started, a rare breed of dog walked by. The dog looked just like the dog that belonged to her brother. "Now I know that my brother is with us today," she said. The appearance of the dog and the group's sense of spirituality that blossomed from the lady's expressed feelings are particularly memorable.

Was the dog's appearance coincidental? Maybe. But I also believe that our higher power communicates with us through such "coincidences."

The message I received from the dog's appearance is that a spiritual force or spiritual forces are at work to help people to find serenity in the face of a modern day plague which directly or indirectly affects all of us.

Joel Freedman
North Main Street
Canandaigua

True freedom is lost when free speech is 'boxed in'

To the editors:

On August 24, I traveled to Seneca Falls to picket (Geraldine) Ferraro's pro-abortion stand for abortion on command. The People's Park was scheduled to be the location of a speech by Ferraro at 12:30.

I arrived at People's Park around 11:50, to meet friends at noon. I stood quietly, holding my two placards inward toward each other, so that my message would not be seen before 12:30. I also carried a small American flag, the kind used to honor veterans now deceased in cemeteries on Memorial Day. I was not picketing yet.

Within a very few minutes, police officers approached me. I was told that if I

wanted to picket that I had to do so in a designated "free speech area." I asked to be shown where that was, and was taken to the very back part of the general assembly area. I was also instructed that, in order to enter the "free speech area," I must fill out a permit.

I began to fill out the permit application, and I decided that I would not enter the "free speech area." I decided to take my chances, and picket across the street, which I determined to be a little more visible to the speakers, and the other participants at the speech. I also decided that if I was not allowed to picket across the street, that I would have to picket against my will

in the cordoned-off "free speech area."

I think that I should have been able to sit or stand among the people, with my sign which read "Some babies die by chance — No baby should die by Choice." Are designated "free speech areas" legal? Please help me to understand why I felt so silenced as a woman in Seneca Falls, the home of the "women's movement." I guess I'm not the "right kind" of woman to be welcome, regardless of my differing opinions, in Seneca Falls. If free speech can be boxed in, or cordoned off to a designated area, then hasn't true freedom been lost?

Martha Hurlbut Phoenix, N.Y.

People should take advantage of chances to learn about their faith

To the editors:

Congratulations! Your series of articles on the Sacraments was excellent. Why not put them in pamphlet form to hand out in each parish? There would be some expense involved but it should prove welcome and worthwhile.

It was my good fortune to attend an adult education class on the sacraments last year. There was more in-depth coverage, of course. I was surprised at the many liturgical changes that have taken place since Vatican II.

I urge your readers to take advantage of



the adult education opportunities in their parishes. It doesn't involve a great deal of time — usually only one hour a week for six to eight weeks. No exams and a chance to meet others who also have a deep love for the church.

Our Pope, John Paul II, constantly exhorts us to evangelize. As God's disci-

ples we are called to profess our faith and to pass it along to the next generation. We can't do it unless we have a knowledge of that faith through education.

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Thanks for the word of encouragement! In early August, we sent a mailing to all parishes to determine if there was sufficient interest to justify the cost of reprinting the series in pamphlet form. The jury's still out on that question, but we'll see what we can do.