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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.



In this 1957 photo, Sister M. Rosalita, SSJ, wore her order's traditional habit.

**Columnist dismisses feelings**

**To the editors:**  
I am grateful to Father Cuddy for taking Father Cosgrove's place at St. Mary's in Waterloo for two weeks. During his stay here, my mother died. He anointed her and concelebrated her funeral. This would have pleased her greatly for she was a dedicated reader of the *Courier* and of his columns.

Now as I read his latest article. I have further reason to be grateful. I am thankful that my mother is dead because she knew and loved many SSJs during her eighty-three years, and she knew that a habit does not make a true SSJ. This article would have hurt her.

It was two Popes — John XXIII and Paul VI — and an Ecumenical Council of the Church which called on religious to research their founder's charism and to make appropriate changes so as to recapture their original spirit. The SSJs discovered that our first sisters simply wore the clothing of the day. They were to quietly and unobtrusively go about doing any work of charity that a woman is capable of doing. So that is what we do. Including four SSJs here in Waterloo.

The SSJs of Rochester are living under a constitution which is approved by the Sacred Congregation of Religious in Rome. Apparently, Father Cuddy thinks we are less than true religious. Does he also think that we possess less than ordinary human feelings? Or doesn't he care?

Anne Marvin, SSJ  
Center Street  
Waterloo

**Priest must accept that habits do change**

**To the editors:**  
Will anyone come to the defense of the "ladies of the cloth," or perhaps I should say the lack thereof? I'm referring to Father Paul Cuddy's call to the sisters to go back to wearing the habit.

I broached the subject in a letter to a nun with whom I correspond. She said she wore the modified habit and veil from 1968 until 1970 and then felt more comfortable in conventional clothing. She wrote, "If some wish to continue to wear a religious habit, that's fine — I support them. I am perfectly content as I am — that doesn't mean to say that I did not love the habit we wore. History tells us that originally habits were an outgrowth of the culture. As mode of dress for women changed — think of

your grandmother's clothes! — habits remained the same. It was Vatican II that prescribed the updating."

When I was young I was half afraid of the nuns. They seemed so remote, so unapproachable, so different — like a statue upon a pedestal — and I found it difficult to relate to them on a personal level. Would you believe! Some of us kids didn't even think nuns ever had to go to the bathroom!! Or, that there were real bodies under these habits!

It's not the clothes but the person inside the clothes and if the habit stands in the way of inter-personal relationships, better it should go. It's amusing to me; I am a greeter of my parish. Quite a number of people have addressed me as "Sister." I

hope they think I have the attributes of a nun. Isn't that what counts? Awhile back I stopped to speak to a street person. As I started to move on, he said "thank you, sister." I told him, "I'm not a nun." Then I turned back and said: "No, that's not true; I'm your sister!"

I dearly love those sisters who have chosen to stay with the modified habit but there is a real need for others, too. Father Cuddy acknowledged that he does not dismiss the sisters who don't wear the habit. I'm glad of that. You don't want to be a fuddy-duddy, do you, Father Cuddy!

Grace Carnes  
Eagle Ridge Road  
Rochester

**Action, not recitation, prove quality of instruction**

**To the editors:**  
This letter is in response to Father Paul Cuddy's column (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 15: "Home follow-up vital to religious education").

Father Cuddy, I am saddened that as a widely read columnist you spread such limited vision. How can you measure the educational effectiveness of CCD classes by the number of prayers ten children can recite? Isn't understanding the meaning of

prayers important? Isn't how we apply the Scripture to our daily life important?

I believe that 35 minutes of classes for 22 weeks can teach our children much; I know that even one 15 minute homily can change my entire outlook when it is a thoughtful relevant application of the Scripture readings to my life. There would be no hope to change my outlook if I merely memorized the readings of the week.

You concluded that it is the adults in the

child's family who must reinforce teaching; of course I agree. However, what you didn't recommend, which would follow from your argument, is emphasizing continuing adult religious education which would help support parents support their children. Fortunately, other articles in the *Catholic Courier* did that in this issue.

Laura McCormick  
Cedar Street  
Scottsville

**Columnist shouldn't boast about 'Christianity' of American society**

**To the editors:**  
Once again the infallible Richard McBrien has taken up the cudgels on behalf of all who see the Church as a step back into the dark ages — this time using a column written by the Polish American writer Czeslaw Milosz which appeared in the July 8 issue of "The New Republic." The comments on the aforesaid column appeared in July 25 issue of the *Catholic Courier* under the title "Poet fears

church's (sic) power in Poland." Rev. McBrien quotes Milosz as stating that, compared with Western Europe the United States is "significantly less de-Christianized than the latter."

How can Milosz and Rev. McBrien make this sweeping assertion when facts bear out that in our day the U.S. has an unparalleled record in crime, inversely proportional, it seems to this writer, to the fact that the name of God is abused as never be-

fore — or has been eliminated from most areas where people need to be reminded of our eternal destiny.

Rather than removing the mote from the eyes of our Polish brethren, it might be worth while to dig out the beam from those of the intellectual hypocrites in America.

Joyce Szwagiel  
Drummond Street  
Auburn