

1150 Buffalo Road  
Rochester, NY 14624  
716/328-4340

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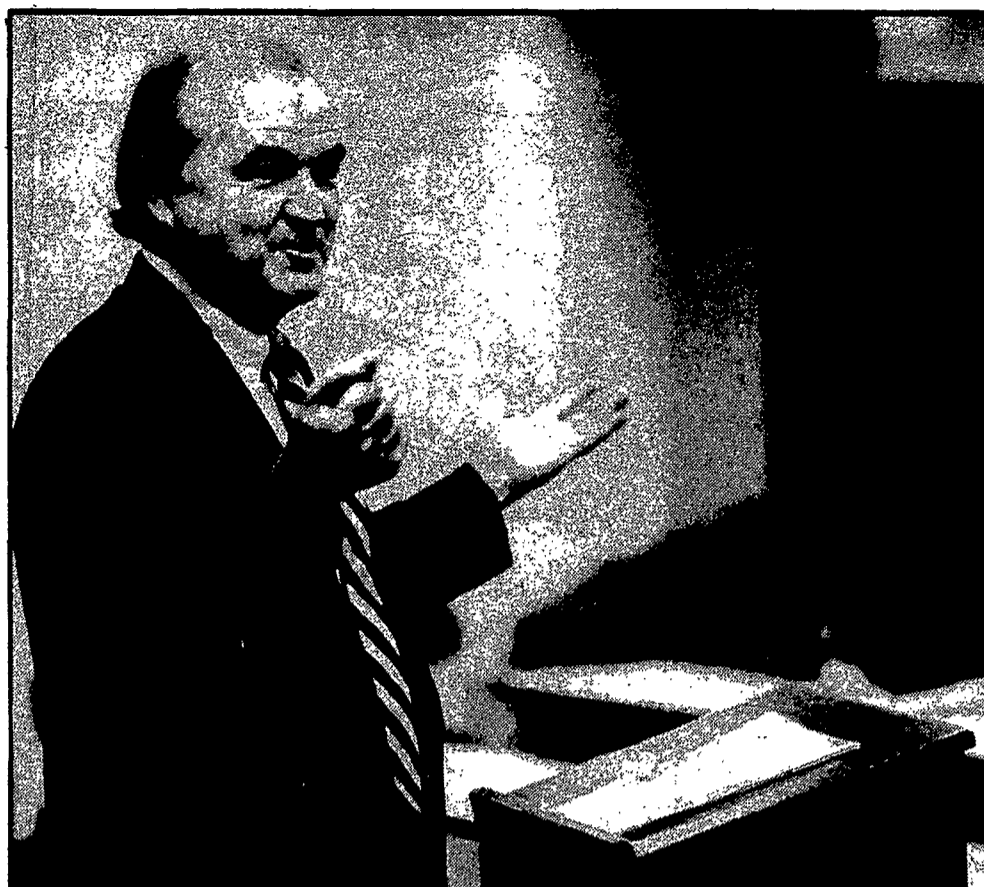
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## Letters Policy

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.



Notre Dame Magazine  
Readers respond to Father Richard P. McBrien's column on authoritarianism.

## Independent finds difficulty casting ballot

To the editors:

I enjoyed Father McBrien's article "real majority," Oct. 17th. Throughout my life I found, in politics, many Conservatives who seemed to be racist. And if they were Protestants, they were anti-Catholic, and against Blacks, Jews, Foreign Born and of course against Unions.

This was also well shown by the influx of Southern Democrats into the Republican Fold. Those who didn't change usually voted with the Conservative Groups. And I believe there are many Conservatives in favor of abortion as shown in the news lately. And I know there are many Liberals who are against it, but they are less vocal about it.

Being against abortion, makes it difficult for me, an Independent voter, to cast his ballot.

Thomas H. Dady  
Brett Road, Rochester

## Framers didn't want Godless society

To the editors:

Regarding McBrien's column, or should I say Andrew Greeley's column, as that was the sum and substance of McBrien's column of October 17, 1991 — Andrew Greeley has been taken off of most Catholic papers, but McBrien is going to continue to spread his radical ideas.

God, not any church, has told men to go out and teach all that I have told you. Anyone who believes in God — Jew, Christian or others, would have to say that God would never have advocated teens being given birth control, premarital sex or abortion. You can't blame any church on earth for not advocating these things, for the church, any church that believes there is a God, is only following the precepts set

down by God.

Don't forget God said "you are either with me or against me" and I am sure there is no question where our society stands. Remember, when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, it was because of the same sins that we have in our times, in our country.

Our government uses the cliché of "separation of church and state," what they mean is separation of our country from God. When our forefathers made that part of the constitution (separation of state and church) what they meant was the state could not dictate any one religion that should be followed as in other countries, but each person could follow the religion of his choice. I am sure they didn't mean that God was to have no part in our society, for if they

did "God have mercy on us."

One other thing — I would think Bishop Clark would use his column to enlighten the people of the diocese on the teachings of God. It's all very pleasant to read of his trips with his friends and of his nieces writing a column — but couldn't he once in awhile, do as God told his Apostles "Go therefore make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I give you. And know I am with you always, yes, to the end of time." In these times I think we need this kind of teaching.

Dorothy Williams  
Maplewood Avenue  
Honeoye Falls

## 'Selective listening' is receivers' problem

To the editors:

A proper response to Father McBrien's *Catholic Courier* column of Oct. 17 ("Church not listening to real majority") is to quote Monsignor Cormac Burke (Authority and Freedom in the Church) — "A majority vote does not establish the truth by itself. Truth has an objective existence which does not depend on the amount of support it has. Christ founded the church as a hierarchically constituted society, not as a democracy."

As a result of today's moral relativism, truth has been reduced to what the individual thinks is true — it's an adjunct of the prevalent individual liberalism.

Father McBrien maintains that

"many bishops continue to take seriously the complaints and demands of this tiny minority" (conservatives). Does Father McBrien expect us to take this statement seriously?

Also, he contends "it is not true authority that Catholics reject. They reject only authoritarianism." Yet, it is the hatred of all authority — indicated by dissident theologians — that has contributed to the loss of the sense of sin and loss of faith. Contemporary society considers authority nothing but the imposition of one will on another. It becomes an infringement on their "rights" — this generation's buzz word. Cultural moral values have succumbed to the autonomy of the individual.

As for Father Greeley's conclusion that "when the leadership (church) starts speaking, the sound systems (laity) go off," Father Francis Canavan has a more accurate diagnosis — "they (laity) love the church when it gives them a warm feeling of community, but when it makes them feel uncomfortable, they stop listening. If they can't ignore the message entirely, they blame it on the broadcasting station (church). It does not occur to them that there might be something wrong with their receiving sets" (conscience).

It's not a case of "deaf ears," Father McBrien, "Selective Listening" is a more appropriate term.

A.J. Annunziata  
116 Holiday Drive, Horseheads

## In democracy, commandments would be 'propositions'

To the editors:

In his article: "Christ not listening to 'real majority,'" (Oct. 17) syndicated columnist Father Richard P. McBrien stated that conservatives both in mainstream America and mainstream Catholic America are in the minority.

If that is the case then why has mainstream America elected conservative Ronald Reagan twice to the Presidency and chosen his successor George Bush over liberal Michael Dukakis?

As for conservatives not being in mainstream Catholic America I have yet to see evidence that would support that claim.

No doubt Father McBrien wishes that were so and probably would prefer a clergy that was elected instead of appointed.

However the Catholic Church is not a democracy where the Ten Commandments would be called the Ten Propositions.

While our American heritage reminds us of our rights it should also remind us of our responsibilities.

As Catholics we must not subject our faith to secular laws like abortion.

Catholics like Ted Kennedy and Mario Cuomo are at odds with their faith for not publicly opposing abor-

tion.

They are certainly not mainstream Catholics voicing a return of the Tridentine and Latin mass.

When I think of mainstream Catholics, I think of two Catholics now deceased: Father G. Stuart Hogan and Gertrude Newberry.

While they were here they spoke out frequently on behalf of their Catholic faith. May they rest in peace.

Robert Bart  
Ithaca

EDITORS' NOTE: The headline on the column in question was "Church not listening to 'real majority.'"