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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.

Study on 'priests' lacks substance

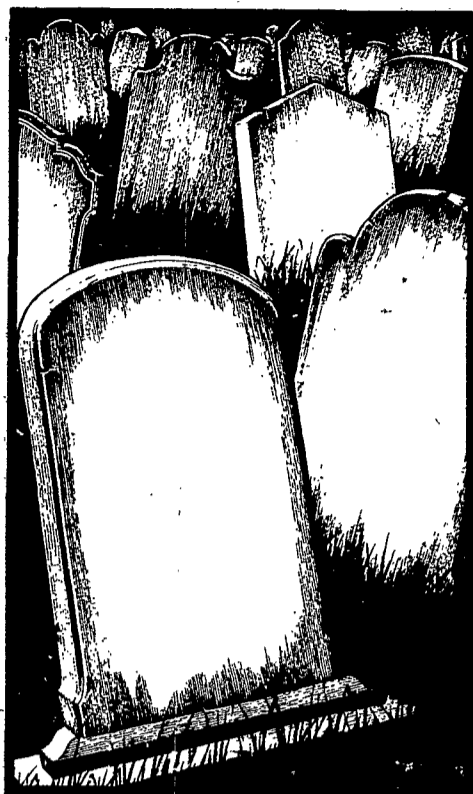
To the editors:

The recent *Courier* headlines heralding that a "Study reveals church allowed women priests" perhaps raised mistaken hopes, and fear, that a bombshell negating Church teaching could be expected. After looking for the meat in researcher Giorgio Otranto's panoply of proofs, however, those of us who are summoned to "remain open" are compelled in turn to ask "where's the beef?"

He reported that he found gravestones bearing the feminine forms for "priest" and "bishop" — presbytera and episcopa. And that the Catholic Church claims these words were used as honorary titles to the wives of priests and bishops. Actually the honorary titles extended even to wives of deacons and subdeacons — diakonissa, and subdiakonissa.

On one solitary stone, he says he finds "Leta the priest" where the husband survived her. We are not told what Latin gender they gave for "priest." Was her husband not a priest? Was this Leta the baker's wife or was she Leta the "presbytera?" Can we be sure what Leta's religion was? Was this an anomaly in stonemasonry familiar even on pioneer graves here. Or can things just too easily be assumed from mute gravestones?

In the early Church no one served the altar, let alone the Eucharist, without being initiated into an office connected with it. This enshrined the dignity of the vilified, abused, and crucified One Who honors our altars by coming. Both lay men and lay women were expressly banned by numerous councils from serving the altar in any capacity unordained.



Those who think to argue simply from the negative that the ban against laypeople serving at the altar shows that women must have been sacramentally ordained validly and "officiated" are jousting with windmills. The most that can be said from the negative is that the ban shows that what had been "allowed" was inordinable women were therein an invalid sign in offense to the Mystery on the altar.

The issue was not even, as some would make it, priesthood, but the meaning in peripheral ministries to the altar. In 1972 an Apostolic Letter narrowed Orders by ceasing to sacramen-

talize peripheral ministry and returning them to lay people. The Sacrifice and priesthood remain unique and essential, and countless councils continue summoning men only to the ordained state.

Mr. Otranto describes a letter by Pope Saint Gelasius, a theologian, as "... condemning the practice of women officiating at the altar. The Latin word the pope used to describe what the women were doing is the word used for the actions of a priest." Indeed yes; "ministrare" — to serve.

Yet that letter further used another word, "sacris" that denotes that those women at the altar were acting as if ordained in some minor ministry only but which still required sacramental ordination and therefore the inordinable women were, says Gelasius, "none competunt," not adequate. Were they given to "officiate" as if equatable with priests over the Eucharist it would have summoned a more severe response from this theologian pope.

If early overreaching "loose canons" had any presentable evidence that their ideas were the Holy Spirit present from Christ's deposit to His apostles and their immediate successors they would have cited it, been able to prevail as valid and silence the councils banning them.

The Vatican could not seriously take the views of Mr. Otranto as evidence. Nor would a national bishops conference follow them out the wide open door taken by the Father — the Archbishop Stallings.

Gene Charles
Geneva Turnpike
Canandaigua

Independent voter leaves no doubt for '92

To the editors:

In answer to Mr. Thomas H. Dady's letter in the Nov. 7 *Catholic Courier*, I, as also an Independent, find no such difficulty as he in deciding how to cast my ballot.

He stated that he found many of the Conservatives seemed to be racist, anti-Catholic — if they were Protestant — against Blacks, Jews, Foreign Born and Unions. I do not consider myself as being any of these things; in fact I have always been a union member, my grandmother was born in Ireland, and I have as many Jewish and Black friends as I have any other. In short, I'm just anti-abortion — pro-life —

with none of the other things attached.

And when I look at the records of the Democratic leaders, and ones who aspire to the presidency today, there is not one who is not pro-choice; and that includes Kennedy, Cuomo, Kerrey, Harkin, Clinton, Wilder, Tsongas & Jerry Brown, plus Senate leader Mitchell and House leader Foley.

On the other hand, our president has vetoed any foreign aid which includes abortion or counseling on it, and any aid in this country which includes abortion or counseling on it in any bill he has been sent to sign.

Furthermore, he cannot be taking this stand solely for political purposes

— if I'm to believe the liberal press which claims 75 percent of the people believe in abortion on demand. Of course, I'm not believing this percentage to be true by any means — it all depends upon how the questions is asked.

Now, I have been thinking that it may be a long time before we ever get another president who has the courage to be as pro-life as this one, so I'm leaving it to the readers to guess as to whom I'm likely to stick with in the next election!

Richard F. Stinerock
Humboldt Street
Rochester

Missionary sisters in Brazil offer thanks for support

To the editors:

As Christmas nears we remember with gratitude the generous support we received once again this year from you — our friends in the Diocese of Rochester who, through the diocesan mission collection, support our presence and work in a variety of places where we serve here in Brazil.

Without your financial support we would be unable to continue; without

your friendship and prayers we also would feel much less able to continue to minister amidst our people here.

May the year 1992, which commemorates 500 years of the Church's presence in the Americas, be the occasion for our conversion and growth and for ever more genuine collaboration between the church of North and South America.

We are grateful for our exchange of

resources and experiences which enriches and liberates the people and the Church of both Americas. You continue to be in our prayers, especially during this season in which we celebrate the Incarnation of God in our midst.

The Sisters of St. Joseph
of Rochester in Brazil
Goiania, Goias, Brazil
South America

Discussing 'choice' is semantic maneuver to avoid horror of abortion

To the editors:

Pro-abortionists try to avoid the age-old stigma of abortion by using "pro-choice." Choice is what you make when you choose between Beerios and Bleaties for breakfast, or between the striped or the spotted socks.

Pro-choice doesn't seem adequate to indicate the horrendous decision when a woman has her own child — the fruit

of her womb — ripped piecemeal from her body. How a mother can do this to her own flesh and blood is an abhorrent mystery.

One woman has revealed that post-abortion she thought she heard her baby calling to her, and cried out, "My baby, my baby." How terrible it must be to have these imaginings in the night. Black was the deed.

To the abortionist, abortion is a living; 40 pieces of silver to betray humanity, to rend the living into bloody fragments. Abortion is murder; those who support it are accessories to murder.

John F. Starkweather
Middle Road
Rush