

CATHOLIC COURIER

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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.

Opinion

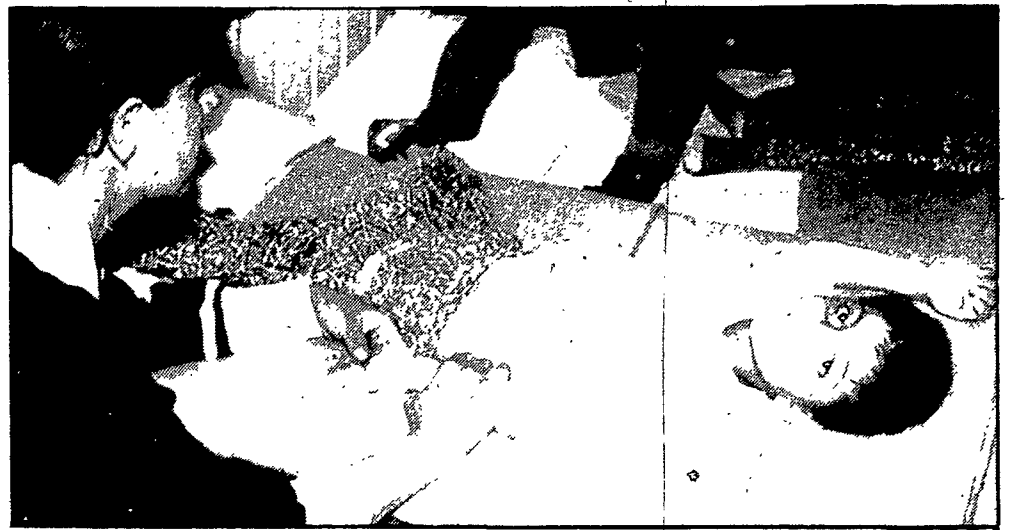
Compassion calls for end to sanctions

To the editors:

We Catholics, Christians, as individuals and collectively as parishes have a great opportunity to practice compassion and forgiveness. By writing President Bush and asking him to lift the sanctions on Iraq for food and medicines we can relieve the suffering and dying of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. These Iraqi infants are the babies of our brothers and sisters and Jesus.

Please consider this act of forgiveness and compassion. It also can be viewed as an act of repentance, a prayer for a change of heart. I know Mother Teresa would support you, us in this effort.

Deacon Eugene C. Fuerst
Simpson Road
Rochester



AP/Wide World Photos
An Iraqi woman comforts her malnourished child at a hospital in Baghdad in December, 1990. The aftermath of the war and international sanctions have made life difficult in Iraq.

Many people blamable for school closings

To the editors:

The phenomenon of numerous Catholic school closings which has accompanied the introduction of the quadrant system — presumably to save the school system — however grievous, cannot be blamed entirely on the shepherd of our diocese. Although he is the principal shepherd of the diocese, every priest has a leadership role in his own parish. That many Catholics are choosing to have very small families, and often to educate these children outside of Catholic schools, cannot be isolated from the dearth of teaching on these issues in their pari-

shes. Nor is it insignificant that the majority of pastors in Rochester consider parish schools unduly burdensome.

If Catholic school education becomes a near vestigial appendage to the Rochester diocese, that situation will not have come about without the consent — silent or not — of many. Although public education and homeschooling each have their advantages — cost, greater choices and closer control — the Church nonetheless claims Catholic education to be a social good benefiting all Catholics which control belongs pre-eminently to her: a claim which is "absolutely superior therefore

to any other title in the natural order" ("On The Christian Education of Youth," Pope Pius XI). This is a good for which all Catholics are asked to sacrifice for the good of the many. Because Catholic Education is a social and religious good, our children's common participation in it is not simply an option, but a manifestation and prefiguration of the completion which education intends, and the Mystical Body represents.

Helen Ann Wagner
Lark Street
Rochester

'Joshua' challenges authority of institutional church

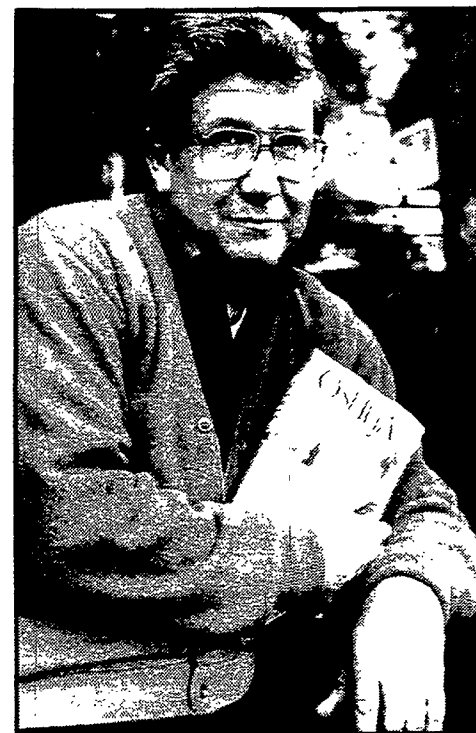
To the editors:

Based upon the many letters and comments I have seen and heard about Father Girzone's book, *Joshua*, I decided that I should read it to see what all the commotion was about.

My impressions are that Father Girzone, like many others who have personal problems with the Catholic Church, is "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." He implies — or do I infer? — that the structured Catholic Church is not necessary and is in fact a hindrance to our salvation. The emphasis is on the good deeds and the actions in the life of a fictional character with many of the same qualities of Jesus Christ. Unless Father Girzone was himself inspired by the Holy Spirit, he most likely got his inspiration to write his book from the Bible.

As we all know, or should know, the Bible is a collection of historical writings by many different authors. The current books of the Bible are accepted by most Christians as the Word of God although non-Catholics have taken some issue with several of the books. There were many more writings which claimed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit but the "structured" Catholic Church, through the teaching authority given by our Lord and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was able to give us this collection of inspired books which now make up the Bible and the basis for our faith.

OPTION I — Let us assume that the structured Catholic Church has had and will continue to have the infallible authority to teach faith and morals and is therefore a necessity in our lives. If this is true, then Father Girzone's book is actually undermining that authority by implying that the structured Church is a hindrance to our salvation.



AP/Wide World Photos
Joseph Girzone, a retired Catholic priest, displays *Joshua and the Children*, the second of his best-selling parable novels about Christ in today's world.

OPTION II — The structured Catholic Church does not have the authority to teach and never did. This leads to the conclusion that the current Bible, which we have all based our faith on — and which Father Girzone based his book on — was put together by a bunch of individuals who were simply putting together what appealed to them at the time and that it is not infallible at all. If this is the case, then Father Girzone's book is truly fictional and furthermore we can all reject Jesus Christ as our true Savior and, as Father Girzone condones, convert to any other

religion since all religions would then be the same.

OPTION III — The structured Catholic Church once had the authority to teach faith and morals and therefore gave us a valid Bible but we have now come of age and the Church has deteriorated to an empty shell which we do not need any more. If this is the case, then Christ's promise in Matthew 16:18-19 was a lie, ie., "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it..."

Don't get me wrong. I truly believe that we all need to have a personal relationship with God and that we all need to lead our lives the same way that our Lord did. But since the Church has the authority from Christ to teach us infallibly on matters of faith and morals, our relationship with God must necessarily correspond with Church teachings or else we are allowing ourselves to be deceived by the Great Deceiver.

Michael A. Gallagher
West Church Street
Fairport

Quadrant plan lacks objective information

To the editors:

We do not support the proposal to close the schools of St. Thomas, St. Cecilia and St. Stanislaus Churches. The plan as presented by the Northeast Quadrant Board lacks objective data and cannot be justified from a financial or demographic point of view.

Marge and John Sullivan
Oakmount Drive
Rochester