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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.

## Synod offers chance to shape future

To the editors:

In reading Mr. William T. Hammill's letter to the editor in the Thursday, March 12, 1992 edition of the *Catholic Courier* ("Synod seems set to be mere 'flailing effort'"), I was surprised at the messages he interpreted from the "Synod 1993" parish bulletin enclosure.

It is dangerous that Mr. Hammill has read between the lines of the parish bulletin enclosure. Few of the messages he got are based on any of the Synod literature I have reviewed. It appears Mr. Hammill had a preconceived notion which he molded into his perceptions and attitudes about how the Synod is viewed.

For the first time since Vatican II, this diocese is facing a Synod. It is possible that there will be great and wonderful changes in our church as a result of this process. However it was never the intention of the Synod to solve all of the problems on this planet. The focal topics were selected through last year's survey of the Catholic community. The Synod is designed to bring together the collective wisdom of the Catholic community in each parish/community on those topics. At no time in our local church's history has there ever been such an open invitation for participation and collaboration in addressing a number of crucial topics concerning our church. Hundreds of volunteers have been busy in preparing the way for the parish level discussions. In a three year calendar filled with activity, it is difficult for me to see how Mr. Hammill would ask for



"wider solutions," when this schedule is already asking many overworked staff and volunteers to basically drop everything else to participate. Unfortunately, not everything else can be delayed indefinitely without having a detrimental effect. It is unfortunate that Mr. Hammill has inferred a negative tone on the Synod. I feel very hopeful, in fact excited, about the Synod.

ALL are invited to shape the future

of the church. Suggestions for solutions will be developed at the parish level in a democratic manner. Each of you has the opportunity to be an exciting part of our church's history. May you be filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and may you mutually share your experiences with others.

**Mike Drexler**  
Caroline Street  
Rochester

## Criticisms only create more anger and hurt

To the editors:

We read Father Tormey's letter to the editor regarding Catholic Schools with great concern. His unjustified negative comments and name calling is inappropriate and serves only to alienate those who remain faithful to Catholic Schools.

We parents of the Northeast Quadrant have painfully accepted the school closings in the Northeast Quadrant and are working to stabilize the Northeast schools through significant fundraising efforts and positive communications and publicity.

His letter indulges in calling parents names and depicts us as fanatics whose energies should be used to support public schools. Our tax dollars

support public schools while our tuition, fundraising and many other efforts support Catholic Schools which our children attend.

He also states he hopes a Catholic School System can be maintained "especially for the children who most need it." How do you define those in need? By socioeconomic or ethnic background, which is discriminatory or by religious belief and/or moral and spiritual need which allows choice for all?

We have never indulged in the "bishop-bashing" he mentioned in his letter. We believe in working with the Bishop to move forward toward strengthening our schools and the Church.

Letters like Father Tormey's only fuel public arguments that serve no useful purpose and only create more hurt and anger. In response to Father Tormey's letter we obtained 30 signatures of Northeast Quadrant parent School Advisory Committee members, on a letter to Bishop Clark asking him to once again renew the Diocese's commitment to Catholic School education.

We also have sent a personal letter to Father Tormey asking him to readress this issue through a discussion with us. It is our hope that through positive, cooperative efforts, we can begin to heal our Catholic Community.

**Anthony and Diane Leavy**  
Jackson Street, Rochester

## DISCOVER



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

## Parent questions priest's remarks

To the editors:

A response to Father Daniel P. Tormey, Pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Church:

Dear Father,

After reading your (letter to the editor, *Catholic Courier*, Feb. 20: "Do not 'bash' Bishop Clark") I have been left with a few questions.

1. Since when is asking for honest and open dialogue with our bishop "bishop bashing?"

2. Since when have Catholics lost the right to question the policy and policy makers of our diocese?

I believe that if you would take a good look at the parents — Catholic and non-Catholic — involved in the struggle of our school system you would not find many fanatics or as you labeled them "parochial-school-fundamentalists." You would not find many unwilling to change or modify the present system. What you would find are parents who are very concerned about the academic and moral de-

velopment of their children. You would find parents who are willing to sacrifice and work twice as hard to provide their children with the best education available in their area.

Your letter leads me to believe that as a Catholic I should have two choices for educating my children — government operated schools and private schools excluding Catholic elementary schools.

3. When did I lose my freedom of choice?

4. Why am I criticized in my endeavor to work long and hard to find a way to keep as many of the schools open as possible?

5. When did I lose my right to provide my children with a Catholic school education K-8 if I desire it?

**Sandra Burton**

**Shady Glen Circle, Webster**  
EDITORS' NOTE: Ms. Burton identified herself as "a parent of students attending Aquinas Institute and St. Rita's Elementary School."