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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.



ACQUITTAL — Los Angeles police officer Ted Briseno (left) reacts to the April 29 announcement of his acquittal in the Rodney King assault case. *AP/Wide World Photos*

Everyone must see own violence

To the editors:

It's impossible to follow the events surrounding the beating of Rodney King and remain silent, but it's also difficult to speak. We'd feel better raising voices of condemnation of L.A. police brutality and indefensible jury verdicts and senseless killings and violence if our own histories were a little purer:

- if we didn't engage at times in stereotyping males of color and sit idly by when Willie Horton's picture be-

came a racist rallying point;

- if we hadn't so casually dismissed countless charges of systems' discrimination against minorities because we gave the benefit of the doubt to those who testified wearing uniforms;

- if we had not reacted violently in our hearts those times when simple, peaceful words and acts of reconciliation would have brought healing to others.

All we can say with conviction is that, from our positions and lives of

unmerited privilege, we desire to join with those who seek equality and fullness of life in our society, and we unite with persons of all faiths in asking God to help direct us on the right path.

**The Leadership Team
Sisters of Mercy of Rochester**

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter was signed by Mercy Sisters Ann Miller; Kathleen Milliken; Joyce McGinn; Gaye Moorhead; and Judith Heberle.

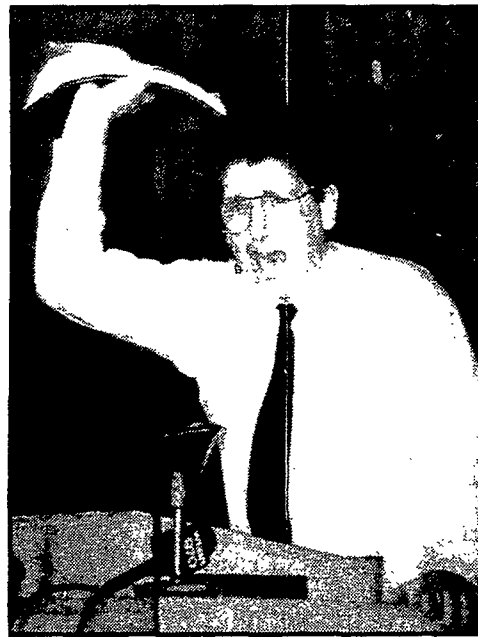
Rescue tactics do not encourage dialogue

To the editors:

Catholics opposed to abortion are beginning to take a critical look at the uncivil tactics of Operation Rescue and its copycat organizations.

The following news item appeared in *The Tablet*, the "international Catholic weekly," published in London April 11, 1992:

Cardinal removes priest after abortion protest: Cardinal Giacomo Biffi, Archbishop of Bologna, has criticised a Scottish priest, Fr James Morrow, for his part in a demonstration against abortion. The cardinal said he could not support the activities of "foreign fanatics" who blocked a corridor in an Italian clinic where abortions are performed. Ten members of an organisation called Rescue Outreach — six from the United States, two from England and two from Scotland — entered restricted areas of the Maternità day clinic in Bologna on 17 March and sat down in a corridor outside an operating room where, Italian newspapers reported, a woman was already anaesthetised in preparation for an abortion. The demonstration,



IN THE PULPIT — *AP/Wide World Photos* **Randall Terry, founder of Operation Rescue, holds the Bible high as he preaches April 26 at the Evangel Assembly of God Church in the Buffalo suburb of Amherst. The service took place during the second week of the group's Spring of Life campaign.**

according to the cardinal's office, was of a kind that could not be supported "because it does not achieve its purpose"; the Italian Church had always affirmed its convictions in a democratic and respectful way. Fr James Morrow, of Braemar, Grampian Region, Scotland, one of the protestors said: "He just sold us down the river." Fr Morrow, formerly a priest of Aberdeen diocese was released from his diocesan duties by Bishop Mario Conti of Aberdeen last year after the bishop said that while he sympathised with Fr Morrow's Zeal and he himself condemned abortion, he nevertheless questioned the effectiveness of such tactics.

What is needed now is a continuing moral and political dialogue about the right to life and the responsibility to safeguard the dignity of every person born and unborn, male and female, rich and poor. But that dialogue must be carried on, as Bishop Conti says, in a democratic and respectful way.

**P. David Finks
Veazey Terrace, NW
Washington, D.C.**

Conflicting messages about condemnation confuse

To the editors:

Seems to me, reading the *Courier* could be a bit confusing. I have reference to page 2 and page 13 of the May 21 issue.

Bishop Clark on page 2 says, "Our God is rich in mercy and so very slow to condemn. To the degree that we are quick to judge, criticize or condemn, we imprison our sisters and brothers and do great damage to ourselves." On page 13, Father Shamon sends a

different message. He writes that there are three categories of people who are prohibited from entering the holy city. I seemed to have particular difficulty with the second category: "those who commit abominations, who defile themselves — the temple of God — by loathsome sins of impurity: masturbation, contraception, abortion and homosexuality." He goes on to say, "only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. These

are the people who have kept the robe of their baptism white, without serious sin, because of the blood of the Lamb received devoutly in life."

If we believe Father Shamon, the city of God will not have many residents. It would be my hope that Bishop Clark's message about God's mercy and being slow to condemn would be more accurate.

**Patricia M. Slimmer
Barker Road, Pittsford**