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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.

# 'Rescues' foster increased dialogue

To the editors:

The title given to P. David Finks' (letter) of June 4, "Rescue tactics do not encourage dialogue" is far from reality. I and others have initiated and been invited to numerous dialogues with others precisely because we participated in abortion rescue missions. We have been invited to dialogues with those of a "pro-choice" stance by the Diocese of Rochester, by the Quakers, by colleges and high schools in the Rochester area, by community groups and churches.

These discussions by and large had not been taking place until rescues began, and they have increased the more that rescues have taken place. This could certainly be seen in the recent Operation Rescue "Spring of Life" campaign in Buffalo, New York. There was more discussion and dialogue on abortion and the value of human life in homes, on radio and television than I and others could previously recall.

This result of civil disobedience is exactly what Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail when he said, "Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such a creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to so dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored." Rescue missions are accomplishing this very thing — the community, which for more than a decade has largely swept the evil of abortion into its unconscious awareness, is being made to face it consciously.

P. David Finks' (letter) seems to question the very nature of civil disobedience and thereby questions the Catholic tradition which upholds it. When Pope John Paul II last visited the United States, he praised the tactics of Martin Luther King Jr. as "divinely



File photo

Police remove a pro-life protester who had locked his neck to a barrel of cement during an October, 1988, protest at the Houston Women's Clinic.

inspired" before the black religious leaders of New Orleans.

... Concerning this type of nonviolent direct action in relation to abortion, Pope John Paul II himself encouraged those who encounter people at the abortion site itself to make a final appeal to the people at the conscience of those going in for abortion to "save as many babies as you can." Addressing a pro-life delegation in Rome in 1986, the Pope stated, "In these matters, I take Mahatma Gandhi as my mentor." I ask myself, would the British have thought him a mentor to follow at the time? Was he not accused of acting uncivilly, escalating and even causing violence: And how is he looked upon today?

Because nonviolent direct action is so compelling and powerful a witness, those who participate in such ways are accused of being uncivil, violent and

fanatics, especially by those who oppose them or who seek to discredit a movement for change. ...

... While we stand up for life in all other circumstances, simply because we also stand up for unborn life in the womb, we often called reactionary or opposed to women's rights. Should these accusations stop us from applying the values and principles of our tradition to our conscience as a Catholic community and responding accordingly? Arthur Schopenhauer said, "The truth goes through these stages: first it is ridiculed; second it is violently opposed; thirdly, it is accepted as self-evident."

We need to recognize we are in the second stage and continue forward.

**Father Anthony P. Mugavero**  
**St. Bridget Church, Rochester**

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

# Talking alone is insufficient to halt abortions

To the editors:

I couldn't help but comment on P. David Finks' letter. I was saddened and appalled by yet another example of apostasy and compromise with the spirit of the world as demonstrated by Bishop Mario Conti with his removal of Father James Morrow from diocesan duties because he courageously participated in a Rescue Operation.

As stated in the news item from *The Tablet* — published in London April 11, 1992 — Cardinal Giacomo Biffi, Archbishop of Bologna, did not support the activities of these "foreign fanatics" ... "because (a rescue) does not achieve its purpose." The Cardinal's office reiterated the Italian Church's stand to "affirm its convictions in a democratic and respectful way." Probably the way Pilate condemned Jesus to death — democratically, when he publicly washed his hands of Jesus' Blood by turning Him over to the crowds — and respectfully, of course, when he said "I find no guilt in this man."

I don't believe any intelligent, spiritually-minded person believes that the sole purpose of rescue missions is to eradicate abortions from society. Although the ideal, it simply won't happen — because the atrocity of abortion is committed and defended by spiritually blind men and women. The Bishop believes that dialogue is the answer to abortion! Mr. Finks gives the impression that he is in agreement with Bishop Conti's views.

Tell me, how does one dialogue with



File photo

Police prepare to arrest New York Auxiliary Bishop Austin B. Vaughan during a July 5, 1988, Operation Rescue protest in Paoli, Pa.

"sleeping giants," with "dead men's bones?" How does one dialogue with men and women who have fallen asleep in their sins? I am reminded of an old Snoopy cartoon where Charlie Brown meets Snoopy along the way. Snoopy, with icicles hanging from him, is nearly frozen to death. Charlie Brown pauses for a moment before saying, "Snoopy, be of good cheer!" Friendly dialogue, wasn't it? But it did nothing to appease Snoopy's predicament! Likewise, dialogue alone will never rescue those innocent babies

from the death row of their mothers' wombs.

As in the days of Noah, the world lies sleeping as the flood of evil threatens to engulf us all — even the Hierarchy of our Church.

Father Morrow and all those who participate in the rescue missions are simply making the above statement by their presence. They are simply telling society, by their courageous willingness to be arrested, that abortion is a heinous crime that cannot be tolerated by our indifference. They are attempting to awaken the consciousness of every man, woman and child to this terror masterminded by Satan Himself.

Father James Morrow, and others like him, have been given the privilege to approach the judgment seat of God with the title over his head "foreign fanatic" because with it, he has become one with his Redeemer who also bore a title over His Sacred Head — "King of the Jews." Blessed are they who are persecuted for justice sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Ms. Finks, replace prayer, especially the Rosary, and Consecration to the Heart of Mary, with the useless dialogue you propose, as a sure means to victory over this atrocity! She is the New Arch that will shelter us from this present day flood of evil that is sweeping over the earth today.

Sadly, just as in the days of Noah, too few accept Her as such!

**Lena Shipley**  
**East Avenue**  
**Waterloo**