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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.



Independent Television Network via AP/Wide World Photos

VISION OF VIOLENCE: This still image — taken from videotaped footage by Britain's Independent Television News Network — shows emaciated Muslim prisoners held in a Serbian-run detention camp in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

No group has monopoly on hatred

To the editors:

I would like to commend Rob Cullivan for his fine piece on Rochester religious leaders' condemnation of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 27: "NEVER AGAIN: 'Ethnic cleansing' elicits religious leaders' concern").

Clearly, Bosnian Serbs must be strongly criticized for their "ethnic cleansing" policy. However, Cullivan's piece failed to provide an extremely important part of Roman Catholic history in Yugoslavia during World War II which greatly contributed to the ethnic hatred in this tragic part of the world.

During World War II, the Independent State of Croatia, a highly sympathetic satellite state of the Nazi Third Reich, systematically murdered 200,000 people, mostly Orthodox Serbs as well as Jews. Among the organizers and directors of this genocide in Catholic Croatia were members of the Catholic clergy as well as lay persons. The infamous "Ustashi" also was involved in the forced conversions of Orthodox Serbs to Roman Catholicism in which priests were voluntary participants in these crimes.

There are many excellent reasons for remembering this part of contemporary history in the context of Culli-

van's article. It reminds us that Balkan ethnic hatred is extremely complex and blame cannot be simply placed at the feet of one ethnic group alone. Equally important, we must be reminded again and again that no religious group has a monopoly virtue concerning the question of genocide in history. A larger perspective concerning ethnic violence and the role of religious institutions in contributing to the violence may serve to limit or prevent self-righteousness.

Dr. Kenneth L. Deutsch
Department of Political Science
State University of New York
College at Geneseo

Hopes intolerance arose from indigestion

To the editors:

I had hopefully thought that the day was over when we "proved" the truth of the Catholic Church by "proving" other religions false. Father Albert Shamon's column (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 27: "Devil can quote Scripture too") comes right out of pre-Vatican II apologetics.

Did not the conciliar documents speak respectfully of other religions? Is not all seeking for God admirable? To say of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon that "It all came from the

devil" is astounding. To then quote another priest saying: "Sometimes as in the Hindu demonic triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, they even aspire to a kind of direct parody of the Holy Trinity" is demeaning. Hindus do not consider their gods demonic, nor should we. I am sure that the Hindu concept of trinity has nothing to do with Christianity, and therefore is not a parody.

We arrive at truth not by asserting our superiority over others, not by proving the falseness of their ways

and beliefs but by humbly seeking to understand and to serve. I feel sorrowful that we've come so far and understood so little. People are not drawn to Catholicism by negativity and attack but by observing Catholics loving and serving all our neighbors without discrimination or judgmentalism.

I know Father Shamon to be a kind and loving man. I hope this column arose out of indigestion and not honestly held conviction.

Jim Mulcahy
Chidsey Road, Dalton, N.Y.

Reader perceives lack of reverence for lay women

To the editors:

I read the *Catholic Courier* each week — almost every word with the exception of the ads.

Occasionally I get a bit stirred up — even angry — at the era, at our young people, at our old people, and I observe a distressing lack of reverence in our society.

The prayers of Jesus were answered "because he submitted himself so humbly" (*Jerusalem Bible*); "He was heard because of his reverence" (*New American Bible*), Hebrews 5:7

Obviously the Word is meant for each of us, but, on this occasion, I would particularly like to recommend

Hebrews 5:7 to *Catholic Courier* writers Mike Latona and Rob Cullivan.

I read their lines regularly and enjoy frequently. I notice they have a problem revering lay women, however virtuous, and referring to them with a title — eg. Miss, Mrs. or Ms. They rarely miss appropriate acknowledgement for Bishops, priests, and sisters.

Men, in general, I guess, have always been referred to by their last names without title; perhaps they are too accepting.

Though I don't anticipate *Catholic Courier* coverage in the near future, I wish to state that I personally demand a title. I do not wish to be referred to as

Zielinski ever — certainly not in the *Catholic Courier*.

Mrs. Betty A. Zielinski
Seward Street, Dansville

EDITORS' NOTE: The *Catholic Courier* generally adheres to the journalistic style set forth in The Associated Press Stylebook — which for several years instructed writers not to use courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., etc.) either for men or women.

The stylebook's current edition allows courtesy titles for women only. Since we at the *Catholic Courier* find this to be inconsistent, we have retained the earlier rule. Our use of titles for clergy and religious — of both genders — relates to these individuals' official roles within the church.