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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.

Catholicism offers sacramental grace

To the editors:

I was most interested in your interviews with ex-Catholic Pentecostal Christians. I, too am a Catholic who left the Church for 10 years from the early '70s to the early '80s. I do understand what the families at Greece Assembly — not the church I attended — mean when they speak of the bonding of a "born again" faith. Added to this is a deep interest in each other's welfare, and the constant teaching of the importance of the "church family," usually meaning that particular church.

There are varying degrees of Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism, and they vary a great deal in their attitudes to the Catholic Church. As your articles showed, there are some very close spiritual ties between Pentecostals and Catholic Charismatics. The majority, however, of Fundamentalist Churches regard the Catholic Church as man-made, and not founded by Christ. Salvation they feel, within the Catholic Church is founded totally on "works" and not faith. The way to heaven is thus reserved for those who have been saved by a conscious commitment to Christ, at any age, if sincere. The theological viewpoint becomes a little muddled as to if this salvation may be lost? The "eternal security" believers say no, whilst some others say yes, but only through serious unforgiven sin.

Amongst these people is an immense love, knowledge and respect towards the Bible — some accepting only the King James version, whilst other denominations use a variety of translations. There is little talk of a church triumphant, where loved ones would continue their lives of prayer in heaven.



File photo
Jim Martin, a former Catholic, prays during the praise and worship segment of an Aug. 9 service at the Greece Assembly of God.

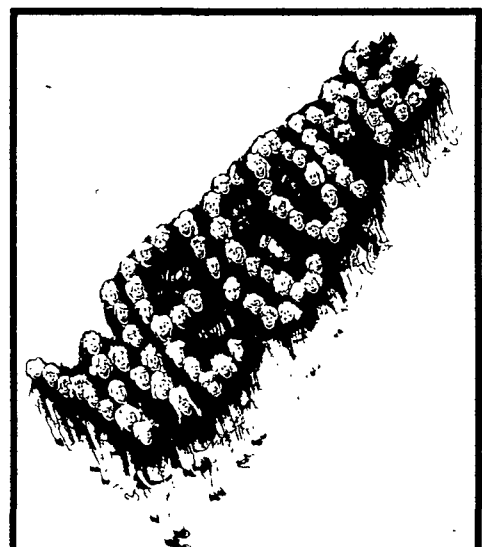
The "saints" are all who have made the life changing commitment here and now. The Blessed Mother is of no particular importance except as a Bible heroine, who said "yes" to God at a momentous time. One has to laud these denominations for their strong beliefs in what we also hold dear. The Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, and the Saving Blood of Christ; many Fundamentalists are surprised we've held to this too, for a very, very long time! They, though they would not thus see it, are propagating some wonderful Catholic beliefs — whence their forefathers learned them! — as an answer to "modernistic" faith, found in every corner.

To young Catholics, many tired of watered down versions of our faith, of parishes which lack a vital interest in the young, and many pulpits which are afraid to preach morality, all of this is intoxicating! Here is a wonderful friendly people, leading good lives, telling me how to get to heaven, "how can I go wrong?" They do not know that many of the Biblical injunctions to view morality as health giving and pos-

itive, are in essence what their parents and grandparents heard growing up, when Catholicism, like today's Fundamentalists, presented a challenge! This was strangely also an age when the seminaries were full and "Catholic family life" had a meaning. "Curiouser and curiouser," as Alice said.

If we are not to lose all our young people, we have to start teaching with love the strength of our Faith. In those 10 years, not a day went by when I was not lonely, not for people, but for the Sacraments. "Works" have little place for us, except as a sign of our love for Christ. Sacramental grace, daily renewed, is a total joyous gift from God, distributed to those living in this love. Sacramental life is full of great excitement and surprises and answered prayer! We have a Mother who said — biblically! — "all generations shall call me blessed," and who woos us with her winsome love to her Son. The Sacramental life is adventurous, often lonely, but always rewarding! Who is going to tell them?

Davina Mee
Cornwall Lane, Rochester



Worker deserves thanks for efforts

To the editors:

I very much appreciate (the attention) Rob Cullivan gave our "Know Your Parish Celebration" (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 10: "Hospitality ministry is key to growing parish").

However, I was misquoted at the end of the article in saying that the new process is a "far cry from the parish's efforts in the past. ... 'Before newcomers just got a phone call.'" Janice Rachfal has dedicated herself to the endeavor of personally welcoming newcomers for many years and we celebrate and appreciate her generosity! The way the article was written was quite an insult to her and an embarrassment to me. Please print this in "Letters to the editor" so she will get proper recognition.

Diane Knittle
Pastoral Care Office

St. Louis Church, Pittsford

EDITORS' NOTE: We regret that the quotation caused hurt feelings and embarrassment, but we stand behind its accuracy.

Reader ponders relationship between religion and politics

To the editors:

As I watched the Republican Convention unfold, it became obvious that emphasis for President Bush's re-election was placed on values. Many might suggest that religion & politics don't mix. I suggest that they do and always have, whether we are willing to accept this or not. If you studied the phenomena of Communism, you would find that religion played a dominant role in the policy of these governments.

The abortion issue is of great contention between the Republican and Democratic platform. We will hear the experts tell us, that this should not be the issue, and we need to look deeper into everything else. But, as a member of the Roman Catholic church I believe that irregardless of any other issue, I have a moral obligation to support a party that is in support of my beliefs. I do not protest on the streets on the abortion issue, I guess someone has to, so that it is brought to our attention. I suggest that there are other ways of resolving the issue, and in my mind this happens to be one of them.

There is a strong suggestion that the issue of abortion and that of the National economy are competing for votes, and this is a very realistic issue. It would also be realistic to say that family values do not include only abortion and morality, but extend and are filtered through our society and have resulted in corrupt Government and business practice. It has to start somewhere. If I voted for Bill Clinton based on the belief that he would change our economy, I might be putting myself in the position of materialistic. I choose to vote on the platform that suggests high-

er values, and trust that God will take care of the rest, since this is supposed to be One country under God, or is it? Isn't this what faith is all about?

While we are on the subject, I do have to mention a slogan widely used in Bill Clinton's campaign. This happens to be the reference to a "NEW COVENANT." Last I knew, a covenant was a promise between God and his people. This is bothersome to me because when I look at the Clinton platform, it tends to suggest anything Godly, so I have to wonder who is behind the power of this NEW COVENANT. I pray this country doesn't have to find out. I believe there is more at stake here than our pocket-books. We claim to be a Judeo-Christian nation. This may be the true test for all of us, and we have to be mindful that what we choose, we have to live with. So politics and religion do mix, although in some circles like oil and water. The real issue is virtue and values that encompass more than abortion.

It may sound like I am campaigning for President Bush, but not really. My campaign is for God, The God that holds the true power and strength of any nation. This is a power that many corrupt try to foolishly obtain, and that is the man that will tell me I am foolish or unrealistic. These are also the same people that might even want to have a good laugh about my views. But that isn't anything new. They laughed at Our Lord, and He happened to triumph through the Resurrection. They still laugh. I, for one, don't have a desire to be an object of the last laugh.

Stephanie Jones
Eaglehead Road, East Rochester