

1150 Buffalo Road
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340

President

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

Editor/Asst. Gen. Mgr.

Karen M. Franz

Editorial Department

Managing Editor

Richard A. Kiley

Staff Writers

Lee Strong

Finger Lakes

Rob Cullivan

Monroe County

Mike Latona

Southern Tier

Photo Editor

Babette G. Augustin

Photo Interns

Kellie Mc-Cann

S. John Wilkin

Business Department

Circulation Manager

Jeanne A. Morin

Office Manager

Amy D'Accursio

Receptionist

Lenna Hurley

Advertising Department

Advertising Manager

Bernie Puglisi

Advertising Account Exec.

Kathy Welsh

Production Department

Graphics Manager

Lorraine Hennessey

Graphic Artist

Kim Parks

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.

Questions efforts to re-date 'Daniel'

To the editors:

This letter is in response to the Sept. 3 article "Adherents proclaim day for the Rapture." To begin with, the word "rapture" comes from the Latin word "rapio." The Greek word used for "rapio" comes from 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and is "harpazo" which means seize, snatch, or take away. Although this word does not appear in the English translations of the Bible, the concept is clearly taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

Please compare these passages, which describes Christ's coming for believers in the air, to Christ's second coming physically and visibly to this earth at the end of the tribulation (Zechariah 14:1-11 and Revelation 19:11-16). Just because the word "rapture" does not appear in the Bible is no reason to reject the concept. The word "trinity" is not to be found either but the concept is present throughout the Bible.

Secondly, the timing of the "rapture" is completely and totally unknown and will continue to be until it actually happens. With all due respect to the MCD, the numbers they use are taken out of context. Matthew chapters 24 and 25 are concerned with Jesus giving his disciples and us some signs to observe and heed that would precede his return.

After describing the events that would take place at the end of this age in the first 31 verses of Matthew Chapter 24, Jesus concludes "truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (34). Jesus meant that the generation that was alive to witness the increase and intensity of the predicted signs would not die away until he came again. The 51.57 years given by the MCD is within the 40-60 year definition of a generation in the Bible, but the figure of 2166 B.C. as Abraham's time is not exact. To date the evidence of archaeology indicates Abraham lived — plus or minus — 2166 but this date is not certain. If, for example, the date should be 2165 or 2167, etc. this compromises the calculation accordingly.

To be fair, while I disagree with the group's calculations the idea behind it is correct: faith in Jesus Christ and his return should motivate Christians to live expectant and fruitful lives.

Lastly, your article made a mistake concerning the Book of "Daniel." Because "Daniel" accurately and literally predicted events that have taken place in history, critics for the last 900 years have tried, unsuccessfully, to place the date of the writing of "Daniel" after the events.

Father O'Mera concludes that

"Daniel" was written 400 years after the Babylonian captivity. The Babylonian captivity was from 605 B.C. to 538 B.C. 400 years from 538 B.C. is 138 B.C. but "Daniel" was already written then because the Septuagint — Greek translation of the Old Testament, including "Daniel" — was written between 285 B.C. and 246 B.C. nor is that the only proof.

The Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 at Qumran, dated 1200 B.C.-100 A.D., show grammatical differences that indicate they were written centuries, not decades after Daniel. Further, the scrolls found are copies of "Daniel" indicating the originals were written before the 2nd Century Maccabean Era.

Every single discovery of modern archaeology confirms the account given by "Daniel." Scripture scholars and historians are certainly not the ones denying the book of "Daniel." In this so called enlightened day and age it has become fashionable to teach that the Bible and particularly the prophetic books are full of errors. The truth is the Bible has been proven to be true both historically and in regards the traditional dating for all of the books it contains.

Timothy P. Perry
North Cavalier Road
Scottsville

Hopes synod will emphasize NFP method

To the editors:

We have all been called together in a diocesan synod to prepare for the future by formulating a prioritized pastoral plan. The six issues identified by the diocese that affect marriage and family life, the first synod theme are attempts to strengthen the family in an ever increasingly hostile environment.

Although the issues are very important, we are puzzled and disappointed by the failure to mention and promote Natural Family Planning as a means of enhancing family life. The financial demands of raising families are very



important detriments in deciding on family size. It has been a constant claim that artificial contraception is the best way of achieving this goal.

Yet it has been the teaching of many popes, especially that of Paul VI in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, that Natural Family Planning was the only real method of birth control that would nourish our relationship with God. In light of all the difficulty and controversy surrounding the encyclical as well as the whole issue of birth control how are young couples to make informed decisions concerning the size of their families?

A recent U.S. Government survey determined that the Sympto-Thermal method of Natural Family Planning was

the most effective way of preventing pregnancy. It was more effective than the pill, condoms and the IUD. There were no failures among those in the survey who practiced the method. There were no harmful side effects as are sometimes seen when using the artificial methods such as strokes, heart attacks, blood clot formation, life threatening bleeding episodes and pelvic inflammatory disease.

With the onset of the sexual revolution approximately 18 percent of the women in the childbearing age in this country have become sterile as a result of this last complication. The incidence of sterility in the rest of the world is less than half of what ours is now.

Natural Family Planning has helped couples to achieve pregnancy by identifying the fertile periods each month in a woman's cycle. The brief periods of abstinence required each month to limit the size of one's family, as well as the cooperation practiced by both partners in using this method has enhanced their mutual attraction and love needed to help sustain their marriages.

In light of the increasing evidence concerning the efficiency of Natural Family Planning, might the Diocese help change our attitudes concerning the way we choose the size of our families? Might the active promotion of the method in pre-Cana conferences as well as in other aspects of family and parish life make us as Catholics more open to this highly successful program? Could such a program be made mandatory for couples preparing for marriage so that they might effectively learn how to use it?

We the Catholic Physicians feel the Diocese could better serve the need of families by advocating the practice of this little known, very misunderstood and mistakenly unpopular method of family planning. People can learn more about the method of Natural Family Planning by calling 716/423-9430. Classes will begin early in the fall.

Thank you and God bless.

Michael R. Aiello, M.D., President
Catholic Physicians Guild
Rochester

Dedication to values of the Gospel demands weighing tough choices

To the editors:

In his October 1 letter (*Catholic Courier*: "Set priorities for election"), Richard Hussar said that "one most definitely would commit a mortal sin" and, quite possibly incur ipso facto ex-communication" by voting for a pro-choice candidate. Them's powerful words! Would the same be true by voting for a candidate who advocates the death penalty? That's killing, too. Who would be left for whom we might vote?

Perhaps you will recall an earlier letter in which I wrote that we must "go upstream" to where pro-life and pro-choice people can work together to help couples avoid unwanted pregnancies in the first place, thus lessening the demand for abortions. This has many ramifications, too lengthy to discuss here. Further, some politicians give "lip service" to pro-life to gain votes while equivocating by saying there is room in their party for the pro-choice sentiment.

Actually, our pro-life stance does not relate solely to abortion but embraces all areas of economic and social justice. In their statement on political responsi-

bility, the Bishops of the U.S. urged that we study all issues - the economy, arms control and disarmament, discrimination and racism, food, housing, environment etc. We were asked "to seriously and prayerfully examine candidates and issues in light, Gospel values." It is important that we remember this.

Not everything in this world is totally black or totally white. If it were, there would be no trouble making choices. And, life sure would be dull! There are many gray areas, so we must weight and consider and ask the Holy Spirit and help us in forming a right conscience.

Should I decide to vote for a person who is strong on social and economic justice, but happens to be pro-choice, I don't think I will have committed a mortal or even a venial sin and I won't have to mention it in the confessional. Should I ask my confessor, however, I believe he would agree that I had acted in good conscience.

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle, Rochester