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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.

## Urges teens to 'save' sex

**To the editors:**

Not too many years ago America's moral values were solidly established on the Judeo-Christian attitude of fear. It was a respectful fear of offending an all-powerful God and it was accompanied by a fear of social rejection if one were to be labelled an "immoral person." Although basic Christian morals have not changed, social moral values have changed drastically over the last 30 years and have been difficult to cope with by those with traditional Christian beliefs. Now here we are in the last decade of the 20th century, a century that has produced more technical and scientific achievements than all the previous centuries put together and amidst all of our knowledge, a new fear has been thrust into our lives — the AIDS virus.

So what do we do? How do we combat this new problem? Many promote the message of safe sex. But how safe is safe sex? For years condoms took a back seat as a form of birth control because of the failure rate, and that only measures failure in terms of pregnancy at the fertile periods; if relying on condoms for AIDS protection the concern for failure is every time that one is used. But no matter how small this rate of failure may be, not instead of an unwanted pregnancy, it can bring early death for those who play Russian roulette using condoms.

Instead of the farce of safe sex, why don't we promote the idea to SAVE SEX? Why don't we encourage our kids and young adults to SAVE SEX for marriage? Why don't we tell them that playing around before marriage not only invites pregnancy and/or AIDS, but



also makes it harder to commit themselves to that one special person when they do get married? Why don't we encourage them by stating that the difficulties and self-denial endured by a SAVE SEX lifestyle isn't any worse than the rigors of training for a sports team or preparing for a school play? Why don't we let them know that a SAVE SEX lifestyle is worth it after marriage — even better than winning a championship or getting an extra curtain call? Why don't we just try to help them enjoy their teen years and not have to wrestle with whether they should or shouldn't, and who with, and most of all, not have to fear that pregnancy or death might be the result?

In the last 30 years, many new birth control methods have been made available, yet we still had the demand to legalize abortion. We introduced sex education in the schools to help teach

our youth, yet the number of teen pregnancies is out of sight. If you don't agree with SAVE SEX as a moral or religious issue, can you see the need for it to save many young lives — maybe your own or your teenagers? It is being responsible for their actions — we haven't always taught them responsibility. It may not be easy to change, but it's got a far greater safety guarantee than the phony safe sex approach. And doesn't it sound refreshing? Doesn't it hold up some principles and ideals for our youth? Let's help them enjoy their teen years. There is so much for them to do during those years that go by so fast. And it can be so good for their self esteem and their future. Can we promote SAVE SEX? Well, if half of them do have sex, then half of them don't.

**Rod Discavage  
Baird Road  
Penfield**

## Says article understated persecution

**To the editors:**

I am writing in response to Lee Strong's article on Columbus in the Oct. 1 edition of the *Courier* ("The Many Images of Columbus: Ambiguous past paints multifaceted portrait"). His dismissal of any valid objection to Columbus glorification as a modern chance to criticize capitalism, "Euro-centrism" and the "mistreatment" of Native Americans, is grossly underestimated.

First of all, the Native Americans, particularly the Arawaks, were not "mistreated." They were victims of genocide. Secondly, it was gold, not glory, or proselytism, which "divinely motivated" Columbus. The capitalist dogma of Columbus can be directly applied to Oliver Stone's movie *Wall Street* with the character played by Michael Douglas saying, "Greed, for lack of a better word...is good!" As a Catholic, I'm appalled to visualize Columbus as a symbol of growth in the United States today.



The "spirit that unveiled the Americas" needs serious conscience examination. This country reeks of self-righteousness, prejudice, pride, and banal arrogance. It is no wonder Mother Teresa says that the worst poverty she's ever seen was here — in the United States. This spiritual ruin can be seen in articles like yours.

**Patrick Filliben  
West Washington Avenue, Elmira**

## Points out contradictions in issue's content

**To the editors:**

It seems incongruous to me that while the *Catholic Courier* (Aug. 27) ran an article about the horrors of "ethnic cleansing" and Father McBrien wrote of the sin of racism, Father Shannon's column was a disturbing exam-

ple of the equally shameful attitude of religious intolerance. This ignorance has resulted in untold deaths and suffering also.

**Carol M. Kordish  
Hill Road  
Hilton**

## Ties 'courtesy' to sacraments

**To the editors:**

I just finished reading Mrs. Betty Zielinski's letter in this week's *Catholic Courier* along with the editor's comment (Sept. 17: "Reader perceives lack of reverence for lay women").

I am angry and decided to speak out. The *Catholic Courier* is supposed to be a Catholic newspaper.

Priesthood and marriage are Sacraments in our Church, therefore the title Reverend or Father for a priest, or Mr. or Mrs. for people who are married are not courtesy titles.

I find the editor's note very demeaning. By de-valuing the titles, you de-value the sacrament. I looked up the word courtesy in Webster's dictionary, one definition given was respect. I think the editor owes an apology, to many good Catholics whom you have treated with must dis-respect.

I hope in the future you'll rethink your de-meaning policy on this matter.

**Mrs. Thomas Brown  
West Main Street, Lima**

**EDITORS' NOTE:** "Courtesy title" is the journalistic term for Mr., Mrs., etc. With respect to clergy and religious, we do use the titles Bishop, Father, Sister, Deacon, etc.

We question the assertion that married people deserve more respect than do single people, as we previously questioned the request that courtesy titles be used for women, but not necessarily for men. We remain open to reader input on the question — but we will not adopt any policy that fails to treat men and women equally, regardless of their marital status, race, age, religion and other factors.