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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.

Saddened by 'holocaust' on schools

To the editors:

I recently received some sad news. A dear, close friend of mine is dying. The friend does not have legs nor arms, but is made of steel, concrete and glass.

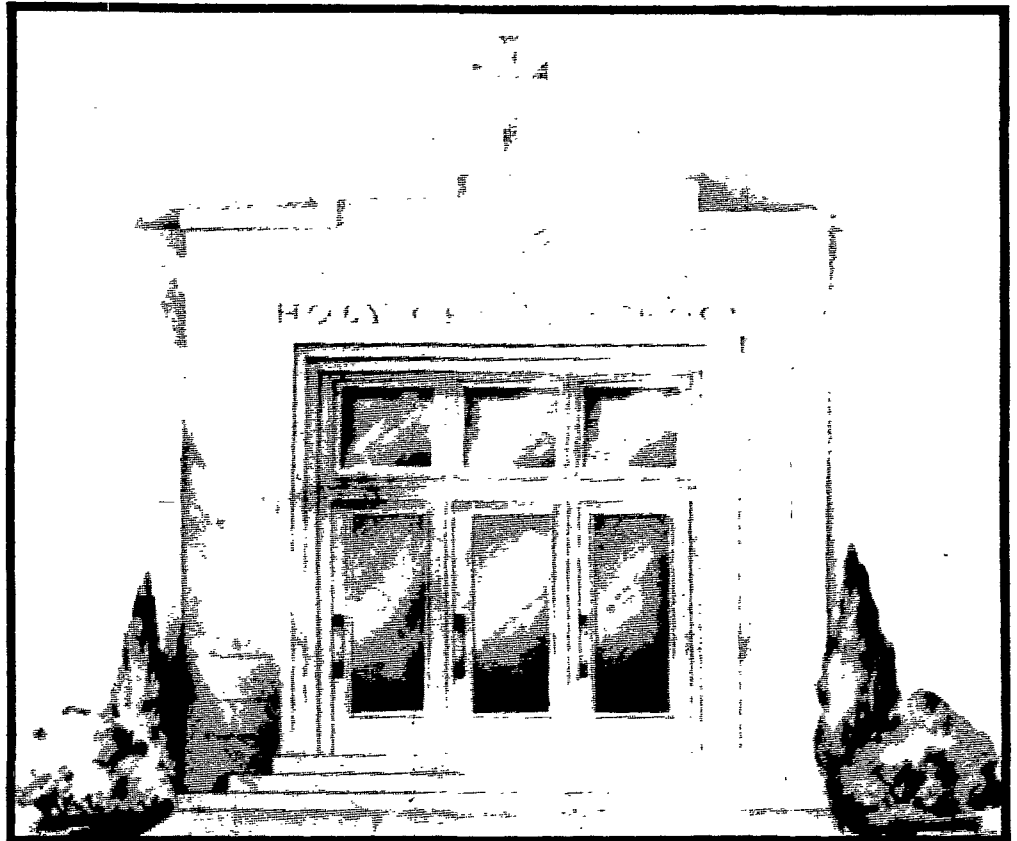
The friend is Holy Ghost School in the Town of Gates. Though only a building, its halls pulsate with the spirit and vitality of youth, innocence and generations of family pride and memories. The closing of this school ends 127 years of quality Catholic education in Rochester.

This may seem like old news in Rochester these days, just "another" Catholic school closing, but this is not "just" another Catholic School. Our Catholic schools since the formation of the "Quadrant" systems instituted by Bishop Clark have the qualities of Congress; a lot of committees, but nothing getting accomplished.

Our pastor at Holy Ghost, Father Alexander Bradshaw, is a member of the Quadrant board and is currently on sabbatical assignment and not available. Is it fair to restructure a school at this time when a very influential member is not even available? Was a proxy ballot sent to him?

The recent election held in this country emphasized family values and morals. What better way to establish firm moral values than attending Catholic schools? We should all have the opportunity to attend the schools of our choice, but that freedom is being stripped away from us.

Our Catholic schools should have remained as parish based schools. The



From the Courier files
Cover illustration from the 1953 brochure distributed by the Campaign Committee for the Holy Ghost School Building Fund Appeal.

parishioners at Holy Ghost are firmly committed to their school and would go to any lengths to save what our founding ancestors worked so hard to establish.

I applaud Dave Hasman and Diane Heberger, Holy Ghost Quadrant board members, for their valiant effort to try

to keep Holy Ghost open. Like these two dedicated individuals, there are several parents willing to take a stand in the community to fight against the holocaust inflicted on Catholic schools.

Jane Murray
Brewerton Drive
Rochester

View signals big step back

To the editors:

In two recent columns, Father Richard McBrien has stated that a human fetus may not yet be a person, a baby or a child. Wisely, he does not quibble over the fact that a human fetus is both human and alive.

The term, "person," is a legal definition meaning that someone is entitled to protection under the law. Similarly, the terms, "baby" and "child," carry with them an ethical responsibility to protect and nurture those so designated.

Thus, Father McBrien declares that, in his opinion, unborn human life may not deserve to be defined, legally or ethically, as deserving of protection, despite the fact that it is human and it is alive.

Scientifically, human life begins at conception. Legally, human personhood begins when the law says it does. Ethically, babyhood and childhood begin and end when society says they do.

Until 1972, the advance of civilization consistently involved extending these definitions. We abolished slavery, passed child labor laws, gave women voting privileges, and invented the concept of "adolescence." In the name of civilization, we have been horrified by



the Holocaust and condemned Columbus. Meanwhile, a huge and previously protected segment of the population has been deprived of its personhood and the "baby in Mommy's tummy" has been redefined as the "products of conception."

Even convicted criminals are entitled to appeal. The unborn don't even get a waiting period. Father McBrien's opinion represents a giant step backward for civilization.

Christine Bravo-Cullen
Lee Road
Dryden

Conference should condemn social wrongs

To the editors:

Does the Catholic Church seek to save sinners? Is homosexuality not normal? Does sinning have anything to do with the Gospel? The Oregon Catholic Conference would rather preach the wrongs and injustices of society rather than condemning sins of the flesh and the turning from them to believe that Jesus changes lives (see *Catholic Courier*, Oct. 22: "Gay Rights? Ballot proposals

challenge church's teachings on issue"). Oregon Catholic Conference could preach repentance of sin in all its forms. My church began to preach to heathens. My church needs to repent from not changing sins to uprightness. Jesus is being pushed out of the Catholic so-called good news.

Stephen McManus
P.O. Box 805
Hornell

Time remains to aid house

To the editors:

As Project Director of the Maternal & Child AIDS Intervention Program (Mary's House), I would like to take the opportunity to thank those people and parishes in the church community who have responded to Lee Strong's article (*Catholic Courier*, Oct. 22: "Funding woes may force Mary's House to close") regarding the financial problems plaguing Mary's House. A special thanks to the individual who anonymously sent a generous cash donation. While our goal to overcome a \$13,000 deficit is far from met at this time, it is encouraging to know that there is concern for the women and children in the diocese whose lives have been altered by AIDS.

World AIDS Day is December 1. On that day, could each of us spend a few minutes reflecting on those people in the world — and in our own community — who have been affected by AIDS? Consider the staggering number of deaths, those who are now ill, the thousands of children who are or will be orphaned, the countless numbers of caregivers, and those who have grieved.

Mary's House is a small place. We can't heal all the wounds caused by this epidemic. We can, however, reach out to people in the Rochester area to help ease their burden. One of our clients recently wrote to me saying, "It is my experience that God is working through my Case Manager ... to shower me with His goodness and grace for my life." This eloquent statement tells me that Mary's House is worth saving, that contributions, large and small, are put to good use. It's not too late to help!

Sharon Nyquist
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