

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 Intern
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.



This painting, titled 'Annunciation,' is by Italian Renaissance painter Cima da Conegliano.

File art

We must listen for God's messages

To the editors:

The vessel was Mary. The messenger was Gabriel, an angel from God. The mission — to carry Jesus into the world.

If an angel visited us today, would we notice? Each day God does visit us through His messengers. Sometimes, they come in forms of friends, neighbors, coworkers and family. Other-times, they come in the form of news headlines, a street person asking for a quarter, or a quick memory from the past. They bring messages of warnings, and action steps to obtain a brighter future. Most often we do not recognize these messages for what they are. Why? We have not learned to listen! When the angel visited Mary, she was filled with fear and confusion. The angel exhorted her to, "LISTEN."

To listen. This is an art that most of us need to develop. We miss so many opportunities because we do not hear the messengers. We take our families for granted, and therefore hear only half of what they say to us. Coworkers are not appreciated. We wear blinders

to work, and keep our noses to the desk all day. We rarely look at our neighbors, and strangers are avoided like the plague. We cannot be messengers or receive messages if we refuse to interact with people.

As we move through Advent, let us be aware that this is the season of messengers — and messages. This is the time when we read of Gabriel's visit to Mary, and Mary's visit to Elizabeth, and of the angels appearing to the shepherds on the hillside, announcing that Christ the Savior has been born. It is also the time when we hear that "Santa's coming to Town," and receive many Christmas cards and hear from relatives that we do not see throughout the year.

Let us listen for the messages sent to us today. Starvation in Somalia, crime rates rising, families separating, teen pregnancy and suicide rates increasing, etc. Do we HEAR what these headlines are saying to us personally? Do we HEAR our responses when our children attempt to speak to us as we watch T.V.? What about our response

when our children don't speak to us at all? Do we Hear the message of their silence?

What is OUR mission? Will we be asked to carry a message this day? Will we say, "yes," as Mary did? Reflect on the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary, it was indeed an awesome encounter. A young, Jewish girl, not really knowing what was happening to her, took a risk and said, "yes" to her God. In doing so, she set in motion a set of events that would affect the entire world. The birth of Jesus Christ who brought salvation and eternal life for all of us.

Our mission will differ from Mary's, but our "yes" is as valuable in God's plan. Today, let us stop and listen to every person who contacts us. Let us open our minds, ears and hearts to every word they say to us. God is speaking to us today! Let us not miss His message.

Patricia Amato
Morrow Drive
Rochester

Allow permanent deacons to become priests

To the editors:

Because of the coming critical shortage of priests in this diocese alone, the church is already preparing for even large parishes to share a priest, with lay persons as parish administrators. To avoid this drastic situation it's been suggested that the church import priests from countries that actually have a surplus. However, owing to language and culture differences, it's doubtful that American congregations would willingly accept this, especially since it would reduce us to the status of a mission country. I propose that with Vatican approval there's a more viable alternative.

Years ago at St. Bernard's Seminary when an ordained deacon left the ministry, it was considered almost as much a loss as if a priest had left. This was because a deacon was just one step from priesthood and like the priest had been "ordained," a special sacrament not then granted to laymen.

Since Vatican II, however, a growing number of laymen have been made "permanent" deacons, that is not destined for priesthood but ordained none the less. Nationally about 95 percent of these are married men, the chief barrier to their becoming priests. If those who wished it were allowed to become priests and could still live as married

persons, it would greatly alleviate the priest shortage. Also, since for the most part married deacon families are already self-supporting, there'd be no additional financial drain on parishes.

Though a sufficient number of celibate clergy is still the ideal for the U.S., it's apparently unattainable in the foreseeable future. There are however precedents for a married male clergy though none at all for women priests. Among the apostles, the church's founders, were some who were married, including their head, Peter. And through the centuries the rule of priest celibacy hasn't always been in effect, even for Western Rite Catholics. In the Eastern Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, married priests have always been allowed. That there were always

a few even in our own diocese was never publicized. In fact some Eastern Rite Catholics resented this downplaying of their presence and felt they were closer to the Orthodox Church. There have also been other exceptions to the celibacy rule in recent years.

We know that only the Pope can lift the ban on married priests even though intrinsically it's a matter of custom not of faith or morals. And already-ordained deacons are the logical candidates. It would seem, therefore, that in view of the above precedents, the U.S. hierarchy should be petitioning the Pope to institute such a change and without delay.

Marcella S. Ennis
Bonesteel Street
Rochester

Respect life from conception to natural death

To the editors:

Congratulations to the voters who turned down the Euthanasia Initiative on the California ballot in November.

We must remind folks that because human life is sacred, we must work to regain respect for human life from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death — as it always was in our land before 1973!

If you don't belong, join the Rochester Area Right to Life Committee, 675 Ling Road, Suite 3, Rochester, NY 14612, their phone number is 716/621-4690. Or join a group closer to you, if you're closer to another one.

We can all do some good! We have so much to be thankful for!

Mary Rita Crowe
East Main Street, Rochester

ate

umber at
se they
ed.
lude de-
d histor-
n report-
th of the

massacre
e, is not
ords of
wn said.
such an
that Ma-
e has the
g to Na-
sion and

it, Joseph
because
orldwide
rote, "In
was no
pire."
er, about
es or var-
ed in his
Questions

ere is no
orce that
y histori-
y favorite
edagogy,
r, is for
3 to pro-

it biblical
hat there
n argued,
ract from

although
r in some
ils which
ally, they

i concep-
; that the
avid; the
y; and the
lazareth.
nt agree-
at a case
y of such
e. "Yet I
a concern
ple to the
in them-

EVE
NZA



ation
st
000
rson
isting

ne
ame
ame
game
ST GO,

er, Party

t, Decem-
sh on bus.
Geneva,

e today:

HIS
rk 14456
r
470 or
m)