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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.



This painting by Gerard David is titled "Christ Taking Leave of his Mother at the Beginning of His Ministry."

Would God send a daughter as savior to modern society?

To the editors:

Should women be ordained clergy, ie. Deacons or Priests?

People against women clergy argue that as Jesus and His Apostles were men, our clergy should be men. Come on, that was 2,000 years ago in a male dominated world! Men went out and women were slaves to their homes; women were basically second class citizens. Would women have been allowed to preach 2,000 years ago? Would people have listened to them or followed them? I really doubt it.

Jesus loved his Father and us so much that He gave up His life to open up the Gates of Heaven. His terrible suffering and death set the ultimate example of love. Yes, many women 2,000 years ago loved God and would have died for him — such as the Blessed Mother, Mary Magdalene and Veronica to name a few. Again, I doubt a woman would have been subjected to the suffering and death Jesus received. Thus, God had to send His son to save us.

Another argument people use against women clergy is that as only women have the privilege of giving birth, only men should have the privilege of being clergy. This is a biological reason and has nothing to do with the qualifications of being ordained. I remember a priest at Notre Dame saying that Jesus, to be perfect, although a man, had to think as both a male and a female. He had to be able to preach and answer

questions related to men and women.

As for qualifications, our clergy have to be teachers, show compassion, be counselors, business people and examples of Christ — as our male clergy are! Now think for a moment — who were our first teachers? Our moms at home and probably women grammar school teachers. As for compassion, when children get hurt or sick, they go to their moms. Our moms, religious sisters and many human relations personnel are examples of women counselors. As for business people, who runs many homes and businesses? Housewives and secretaries. Finally, for examples of Jesus, one can easily choose as many men as women. So you see, as our present clergy are qualified, women clergy are equally qualified.

So when you really consider the situation — God sent his Son out of practicality and acceptability. Fifteen years ago, in a college religion class, I made this statement "If God wanted women to be priests, He would have sent His daughter." How unfair, cruel and incorrect I was. If God had to send His child today, God would choose either His daughter or son and both should be accepted. I hope and pray the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church realize this and act accordingly.

I look forward to comments, both negative and positive.

Steve DeLucia Jr.
Marquart Drive, Webster

Not fools or heretics, but faithful?

To the editors:

In a letter to the *Catholic Courier* published Dec. 10 ("Does CUF chief know something others do not?"), Mr. Raymond McCormick wonders about those "... Bishops who openly offer the hope that the hierarchy will ... (ordain) any qualified person to priestly orders," including women. Mr. McCormick asks: "Are these servants of the Church fools and/or heretics?"

This is an interesting question, because it is clear that we must call these bishops *something*, but it would be uncharitable to call them fools, and our sense of ecumenism forbids us from calling *anyone* a heretic. At the same time, mindful of the directives of Pope John Paul II on the question of female ordinations, we are also uneasy in referring to these bishops — and those persons who campaign for women priests — as "loyal" or even "faithful" Catholics.

In an address to 23 American Bishops Sept. 23, 1983, Pope John Paul stated that "the Bishop must give proof of his pastoral ability and leadership by withdrawing all support from individuals or groups who ... promote the ordination of women to the priesthood." Therefore, would it be too strong to say that the champions of women's ordination are acting in defiance of the Pope? The *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* didn't think so. On the front page of the Nov. 19 edition we read that the recent letter of the (National Conference of (Catholic) Bishops on women in the Church "does not change Pope John Paul II's ban on women priests, but it did defy his strict instruction that the bishops should not even discuss the subject."

So there we have it. Those individuals who are promoting, or even publicly discussing the possibility of women priests are acting in disobedience to a "strict instruction" of the Pope. Defying a strict instruction of the Pope, of course, is a very serious matter. In reference to Mr. McCormick's question, we may be uncomfortable in calling those individuals who promote women priests "fools and/or heretics," but let us not pretend that they are faithful Catholics.

Brian Sullivan
Bedford Street
Rochester

Sisters praise bishop for remaining with the United Way

To the editors:

We fully support Bishop Matthew Clark's participation on the United Way board. Bishop Clark is sensitive to the special needs of women and children who are the poorest of the poor in our community, and his contributions as a caring and knowledgeable board member will help shape directions for United Way's strong, collaborative efforts to relieve the burdens of so many among us.

We reject the published view (in the *Democrat and Chronicle*) of the president of St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild — a small group of attorneys which does not presume to speak for the majority of Catholic lawyers in Monroe County — which essentially holds that our opposition to abortion must translate into isolationism and withdrawal from joint

fundraising efforts if some of those with whom we join are offering abortion services through other funding.

Some lawyers in Jesus' day felt he compromised his message by associating with those whose lifestyles and values radically differed from his. Yet it was by his presence among them and in his refusal to hold himself out as superior to them that Jesus gave witness to his message most lovingly and effectively.

We believe our bishop capably and morally responds to the Christian challenge of finding common ground for serving when he remains at the table with civic and religious leaders who desire to work together to help our neighbors in need.

Leadership Teams of
the Sisters of Mercy and the
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester

