

# CATHOLIC COURIER

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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.

## Opinion

# Offer hope to Iraqi kids

### To the editors:

The U.N.-U.S. mission of restored hope in Somalia is to be commended. President Bush emphasized this is being done primarily for the children of this fifth world nation. Certainly the pitiful situation, of these children, motivates us to be compassionate. Our concern is for the adults as well, including those who disagree with the U.N.-U.S. presence in their country.

The media, for whatever reason, has not exposed the atrocities that came to the innocent children and civilians of Iraq. Thousands of children, 5 years and younger, continue to die from polluted water caused by the bombing of the water-purification plants by U.N.-U.S. forces. Due to lack of medicines the children continue to die. The policy of the U.N.-U.S. refuses to allow medicines into Iraq for the innocent. This is a cruel and anti-Christ policy. We need to be Pro-Christ.

What can we do? Write (the president) if only a postcard, asking him to allow medicines into Iraq for the children suffering from cholera and dysentery. Also ask for the rebuilding of the four hospitals that were bombed in the Iraqi-U.S. war.

Do we not need to pray for compassionate action for all children, for all people?

... Jesus, I am sure, requests restored hope for all children: "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

Deacon Eugene C. Fuerst  
Simpson Road  
Rochester



This photo from May, 1991, shows a Kurdish infant lying helpless and gaunt from cholera at a refugee-camp medical tent along the Iraqi border. To prevent loss of body heat and dehydration, health providers wrapped the child in a metallic-foil blanket.

File photo

# U.S. bishops should not eliminate holy days

### To the editors:

Well, the American bishops have certainly been busy. After spending nine years — and who knows how much money — discussing "women's issues," a majority of them concluded that they couldn't agree.

But, they did agree on, and last month announced that, three holy days of obligation (January 1, November 1

and August 15) will no longer be "obligatory" when — now don't laugh — they fall on Saturday or Monday.

In a past article in the *Catholic Courier* the point was made that holy days were instituted early in this country's industrial history to ensure that the Catholic workingman was given a day off now and then — thus the compulsory church attendance. When labor reforms

later guaranteed vacation and sick days, the religious requirement seemed superfluous. However the American Catholic Church retained the observance of the feast days, we were taught, because of the importance of the events being celebrated.

Now we must conclude that the feasts of: Mary, the Mother of God (Jan. 1); the Assumption (Aug. 15); and All Saints (Nov. 1) have no intrinsic value — unless they fall on a weekday that will not compete with the Sunday attendance — or collection.

Or was this action taken because there were so few folks at these holy-day liturgies that it just wasn't worth the expense of turning on the church lights?

In any case, the American bishops need to solve this dilemma and do more than reduce the "requirements."

Why is Mass attendance down on Sundays and holy days? Why aren't hundreds of people clamoring at the doors of their churches to come to the celebration of the Eucharist once, twice or every day of the week? Why do many young people look upon "going to church" with the same enthusiasm that they'd feel for a root canal?

Why don't the bishops listen to what people are saying instead of naively taking actions that could alienate a large segment of the church-going population by casting aside — once more — the beliefs that they grew up with?

And fellas, perhaps you should speed things up a bit — if you do nothing but talk about these problems for nine more years you may eventually have to cancel Sundays.

Grace Carnes  
Eagle Ridge Circle  
Rochester

Mary Lou Brown  
Southampton Drive  
Rochester

# We should strive for perfection in imitation of Jesus, Our Father

### To the editors:

Your writer, Michael DeLorme, did not realize it but he provided his own answer to uphold the "consistent ethic of life" when he wrote about the death penalty (*Catholic Courier*, Nov. 26: "Fully intends to remain inconsistent").

He said: "It is God whose patience, understanding, compassion and forgiveness are without limit. Those who presume to imitate Him without first having struggled for, and obtained, a high degree of — if not perfection in — sanctity are the ones who are playing God. To pretend to be able to forbear whom God, or the Saints, have the resources to forbear, is to play God."

What's wrong with that? We have been constrained "to be perfect as Our Heavenly Father is perfect." That's not "playing" God! The more we practice being like Him, the more we become like Him!

I am sure Father David Knight would not mind my quoting from his powerful essay, "The Scandal of the Cross." He wrote, in part:

"Jesus teaches that the fullness of life, authentic liberty, and the only effective pursuit of happiness in the world all comes down to one thing: learning to love as God does, which means enduring evil with love, loving back with the fullness of His love in response to everything that is."

"The doctrine of the Cross presupposes the doctrine of grace. Without the gift of sharing in God's own life, God's own act and power of loving, what Jesus says about taking up our cross and enduring evil with love would just be absurd. It is humanly impossible. But it is possible for those who can love divinely, and this is what grace empowers us to do."

If your readers are interested they may obtain the entire essay by writing to Apostolate of Printed Word, Sacred Heart League, Walls, Miss. 38086, asking for their booklet 500002291, "That You May be Healed."

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