

1150 Buffalo Road
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340

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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.

Pro-life efforts need help from priests



AP/Wide World Photos
Activists from Citizens Concerned for Human Life picket Jan. 21 in front of Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood in Albany, one day before the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. This year's march marked the 20th anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion in the United States.

To the editors:

Recently, I had the privilege of traveling to Washington, D.C. to participate in the annual March for Life. As a first time marcher, I was amazed at the number of people involved and especially pleased to see so many priests and nuns openly being a witness to this all important cause. A friend of mine who was kind enough to show me the ropes made a point to thank each priest that he saw for being there. I wish I had done the same.

You see, their presence and their position on this issue is vital. The only way I feel we can combat this atrocity is through spiritual means. We cannot do this without their leadership.

Last month at the Prayer Vigil for the Feast of the Holy Innocents only one priest was present. This bothered me. I realize that our priests are overworked and wearing many hats but we need them desperately. Without them the odds are incredible. The press coverage is totally biased, our present government is amoral, the media glorifies pro-choice and even our education system is misguided.

Before we left Washington, I learned about the changes President Clinton enacted while we were marching. I wanted to cry. It seemed that the 200,000 people who were there — and I say 200,000 not 75,000 as reported by the *Democrat and Chronicle* — had no voice at all. I prayed most of the trip back home for answers.

The answers came very clearly to me on Sunday during 11:30 Mass. Our beautiful priest gave a separate mini homily on standing up for the unborn. I believe every soul was stirred that day to reflect, decide and act. This action came in the form of a postcard campaign protesting the Freedom of Choice Act. Without Father's impassioned speech, I'm sure we would have gotten very little participation. I'm pleased to report that all the cards were signed and are on route to Washington.

I would like to thank Father Dom (Mockevicius) and all priests who day after day give us the spiritual and moral leadership that we need especially where pro-life is concerned. I also would like to thank all the bishops, priests, and nuns who were able to go to Washington and pray that next year more clergy and laity will be represented at the March for Life.

Henry M. Korytkowski
Solmar Drive
Rochester

Janice Armstrong
Parnell Drive
Churchville

Associate with United Way, but don't 'accommodate' it

To the editors:

The Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph have written a beautiful letter of commendation relative to Bishop Clark's participation in a leadership role in the United Way (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 14: "Sisters praise bishop for remaining with United Way").

They remind us of Jesus' association with those whose life styles were in question in order to give witness to His message of salvation. However, they fail to mention His attitude toward the Roman leaders, Pharisees and Scribes of His day. He was open to them but did not sit with them to accommodate them. Did He not refer to many of them as "brood of vipers" and challenge them at every opportunity?

The United Way in committing itself to the support of The Planned Parenthood Association and its plans for an abortion clinic along with its "how to" sex education efforts for children is in

no position to say it is open to a hearing of God's message for His people. There is no question that the United Way does good things for many poor and indigent people. However, must that — Humanistic — good be at the expense of an untold number of innocent lives?

Would that the bishop had the courage to speak out and say that this is contrary to God's laws and challenge the United Way to cease its support of Planned Parenthood. As an alternative, would it not be proper for him to sponsor the organization of a God centered United Way with a call to all organizations of conscience to join. The same help could be offered to the poor and the indigent at no expense of innocent human life. It would be a difficult heart breaking undertaking, but it would be an effort of love for God and all of His creation.

Judgmentalism only deepens divisions among faithful

To the editors:

In his letter to the *Catholic Courier* published Jan. 13, 1993, ("Not fools or heretics, but faithful?") Mr. Brian Sullivan tells us not to pretend that those bishops and other persons who campaign for women priests are "faithful" Catholics.

I wonder if this "calling a spade a spade" would apply to people like myself who, while not exactly promoting the priestly ordination of women, are calling for the Church to undertake a re-examination of its doctrine of exclusion in light of new historical, theological, and cultural insights. Those who are either pushing for women's ordination or, like myself, have serious questions about the current policy, should not be subjected to having their faith called into question.

Christian faith is a personal, interior knowledge of God in Christ — a knowledge not only of mind but just as much of heart. One comes to this knowledge of God through the impulse of divine

grace and the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Without a window into a person's mind and heart, there is no way to judge the presence or absence of this faith.

Many confuse faith with belief. A belief is an expression or formulation of the knowledge we have through faith. There are many Christian beliefs — some of which are not shared by all Christians — but only one Christian faith, the object of which is not a doctrine or sacred text, but God our Creator and Redeemer.

By impugning the faith of bishops or anyone who dissents from a Church doctrine, one engages in an act of judgmentalism that only serves to deepen divisions within the Church at a time when all the faithful should be working together to discover the fullness of truth in Jesus Christ. The Church is a living, breathing growing organism which has not reached perfection, and does not yet have all the right answers. If it did, the Church and the Kingdom of God

would be one and the same. The Church must not be afraid to seek greater truth and wisdom in each new age; if it stops, it will certainly perish.

All of us who call ourselves Catholic should never shy away from dialogue and discussion especially when our differences are great. Throughout the Church's history it took human conflict and controversy to move the Church closer to the perfection God desires it to be. We have to believe that in God — with whom all things are possible — even these differences will somehow lead to the strengthening of God's Church.

So, rather than tearing down those who are troubled by certain Church teachings, rather than calling their faith into question, let us instead join together in prayer to ask the Holy Spirit to unite the will of the Church — and we are all the Church — to the will of God.

Ronald J. Tocci
West Church Street
Fairport