

CATHOLIC COURIER

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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.

W. Randolph Smith
Rochester

Opinion

Two writers cast votes for EWTN

Anything less would mean much too little

To the editors:

As Greater Rochester Cablevision evaluates a selection of networks for its forthcoming 24-hour religious program channel, Catholic representation is a concern. EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) is the premier Catholic cable network and ought to be available in appropriate measure.

For those unfamiliar with EWTN, it is America's largest religious cable network. EWTN offers a 24-hour schedule of spiritual-growth programming for the entire family including weekly teaching series; talk shows; documentaries; live coverage of church events from around the world; and devotional programs such as "The Holy Rosary." Currently, EWTN reaches approximately 16 million viewers.

The merits of EWTN or the breadth of Catholic Faith expression does not necessarily find automatic accommodation from a cable television company. Some individuals have voiced recent concern that Catholic interests could be grossly under-represented here as in some other communities where a gratuitous one network-one size fits all approach is the sole cable offering. Apparently, this is such a possibility that the suggestion has been advanced that Catholics should be prepared to support an alternative interfaith network in the hope of preserving some Catholic content. VISN (Vision Interfaith Satellite Network) is one such recommendation.

VISN is owned and operated by a consortium of approximately 50 national faith groups. It provides a basket of programs concerning matters of faith and values which are contributed by all of the participating member denominations. Such a format would certainly diminish Catholic programming to a competing hybrid of 50-plus other faith groups. Imagine, our faith reduced to a 1/50th representation. A little bit of Catholic Faith here; a little there, is hardly an attractive proposition.

Obviously, Catholic spiritual requirements must be shared with the interests of other major denominations. Many cable television companies have previously considered the relevant issues and successful formulas have been developed. One model arrangement is that offered in the Washington, D.C. area, which is approximately 18 percent Catholic compared with 27 percent in Rochester.

The Montgomery County, Maryland cable company in suburban Washington selected EWTN and Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN), a Christian non-denominational network, when they initiated their religious programming channel three years ago. EWTN and TBN are presented on alternate days at 24-hour intervals. These two networks share Sunday's schedule with the Jewish Television Network (JTN). This is a popular arrangement that provides deep spiritual satisfaction for a majority of the community, on a predictable schedule that encourages extended viewing.

Outstanding examples can be imitated, and Greater Rochester Cablevision has an opportunity to offer a genuine community service. EWTN is recognized as the Catholic cable network, and anything less for Catholics would be substantially less.



Speak up on cable choices; don't let opportunity pass by

To the editors:

On Feb. 11, Thursday evening, there was a meeting held at the Brighton Reformed Church on Religious Programming via Cablevision. Attending was a representative from the Greater Rochester Cablevision Co., Mr. Gregory Hunt. There were only a few people attending, some of who came from our Catholic Community, who like myself, were looking for a new television channel with some depth of faith and values. Mr. Hunt conveyed to us the disinterest of the people in the Rochester Community in the two different surveys that were taken in the past few years in regards to religious programs.

It seems now, with the expansion of the number of stations that will be transmitted over cable, we will again have the opportunity to stand up and be counted! These new surveys will be sent out in the next month of two. There are five different networks being considered, one of which is a totally Catholic station "Eternal Word Television Network." The second on which the Greater Rochester Community of Churches favors is VISN/ACTS, which has a content of 8 percent Catholic programming. We need to become more informed on the options that we will be asked to

choose.

During the Diocesan Synod, one of the questions addressed was: "How can we as church strengthen Christian Marriage and Family Life in all its forms? The answer that came up most frequently in our Diocese was: "We could strengthen families through better Catholic Moral Education and Forming Right Consciences. Most of our priests do not have the time to address these issues during the short time at Sunday Mass. What better was than to have moral teachings from credited teachers on cable TV directly into our homes?"

I personally have seen some of the EWTN's programs and have enjoyed them. There are daily Masses, Rosary devotions, programs addressing family issues, Scripture studies, children's specials, lives of the saints among many other presentations. In respect for those of other denominations, it would be possible, I am told to time share between two different networks.

Can we allow this opportunity to slip through our hands or are we willing to make our voices be heard. It is our choice!

Edward and Dorothea Lada
East Street
Pittsford

Urges letters on behalf of unborn

To the editors:

Due to illness of a loved family member I was unable to attend the 20th annual March for Life Jan. 22, in Washington, D.C.

Anne Batterby, a member of Cluster Parish-St. Anne's, St. Gregory's Respect Life Committee was my proxy. She prepared a good report.

These are some of the highlights. Many teenagers were among those from Palmyra, Macedon, Marion and Newark who boarded the bus Jan. 21st, at St. Mary's in Waterloo.

Buses from all over the United States brought thousands to Washington, D.C. All protested the 20th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade — a law that allows unlimited abortion.

People from our area met with Sen. (Alfonse) D'Amato's legislative aide for Pro-Life issues, Peter Phipps. Don Peters, vice-chairman of New York State Right to Life and Jean Head, New York

State delegate to the National Right to Life spoke to an overflowing standing room only crowd. Our group also met with aides of congressman Bill Paxon assuring of Paxon's continuing pro-life stance.

Gathering at the Ellipse before marching up Constitution Avenue speeches of Pro-Life Groups were listened to. There were Catholic, Protestant and Jewish speakers. The Archbishop of Guam along with 50 members from his country were there. Estimated crowd of 250,000. Archbishop Sean O'Malley from Fall River, Massachusetts delivered a beautiful closing prayer. Join the Pro-Life — help release the unborn children, let them enjoy the Right-to-Life and inalienable rights we sometimes take for granted. Write letters, phone, and pray for your senators, congressman to have a change of heart — be Pro-Life.

Rena B. Camblin
Meadow Drive, Palmyra