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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.

Spirit speaks, but we might not listen

To the editors:

Father Hart's column (*Catholic Courier*, March 18: "Not every idea is a good idea") for me raises a healthy question about the validity of the assumption that seems to be implicit in local parish Synod meetings, namely that "What God wants of us here and now" will be the recommendations that get the most votes. Having prayed for direction, this majority will have been prompted by the Spirit and manifested through gut feelings. And yet, I would be confident that in Joan of Arc's time, the bishops would have come together and have prayed for guidance before burning her at the stake. And again, they must have sought guidance before unleashing the Inquisition.

For balance, Father Hart points out the need to listen and give credence to the "small voices and not just the crowd ... even ... things that make us uncomfortable..." but experientially I have to say these seem to have gotten lost as soon as uttered in the meetings in which I participated, and never made it to the level of "recommendation" for any further consideration.

At the outset of Synod preparation, when we received a questionnaire as to our concerns for the Church, I experienced uneasiness because while the social expression of Jesus' teaching was well represented, I could find nothing, no reflection of any concern about, for example, spiritual direction and nothing about prayer. It seemed to me the Synod thinking was starting several rungs up the ladder instead of beginning at the beginning. I cited these concerns as we were invited to do, in the blanks provided but never did they subsequently surface.

I am concerned about Spiritual Direction, or rather its absence, in the modern sense of the term wherein two persons come together in an effort to discern what Christ may be doing in the context of their own lives. This awareness is important throughout life but especially so for the elder who needs desperately to encounter real spiritual nourishment to help her/him face the anguishing events of physical deterioration and the immobilization of sickness — alone — as many of us do.

My concern about prayer runs like this: the education of nearly everyone has gone so much farther than was common at the time Mary gave the rosary to Dominic — and this is not putting down the rosary in any way — that we need to become aware our religious, or better,



spiritual education has not kept pace, for most of us, with our secular education. This creates a huge void. There is a tendency to try to fill this emptiness with various substitutes such as cults, extraterrestrial beings — and I don't mean Angels — psychics, astrologers, transcendental meditation etc. instead of the spiritual treasures and forgotten traditions of our own church.

For example, I believe a great many people would find helpful actual teaching on the various methods of praying in order to find the one that best suits their personality thus making it easier to pray more. And "praying more" is merely living the intimacy God calls us to with himself. How many of us today know the utter joy of that intimacy which can be found, or better, which we can be open to in the contemplative prayer of the Cloud of Unknowing?

Alas, the "little voices" of these con-

cerns were eliminated in the Synod meetings, like candidates are eliminated in the Primaries. So now I ask myself, must I work on my own gut feeling so I can also reach the conclusion that perhaps the Holy Spirit is not that interested in having us learn easier ways of praying more, i.e. greater intimacy with God? And to come to the acceptance that perhaps the Spirit is not as concerned about our awareness of what Jesus may be doing in our lives, as I am?

Instead, Let me quote Father Hart's last sentence as perhaps one that should have prefaced every Synod meeting: "Not everything proposed is born of the Holy Spirit who guides us." And I would add a corollary: Some things deposed may be so because of our human limitations, rather than their lack of worth.

James G. Connor
Ontario Center Road, Ontario

Questions veracity of spokesman's comment

To the editors:

With reference to a reply (see *Catholic Courier*, March 25: "Story ushered in sad day for Catholics") by Deacon William Schmitz on an article in the February 25 edition of this newspaper I concur.

I attended several meetings with Deacon Schmitz and Father Norton. Meet-

ings were also held with representatives of Eternal Work Television Network and with Greater Rochester Cablevision and for Father Norton to claim that EWTN supporters never sought his support on behalf of EWTN is entirely untrue.

From the outset it was quite obvious that Father Norton had no interest in

EWTN but in another network that would cost over \$100,000 dollars to even get it off the ground, whereas EWTN could be had for a mere fraction of that.

Deacon Schmitz and I as representatives of the Knights of Columbus went out on a limb to sponsor EWTN for a period of time in the hope that the Diocese would pick it up.

The Knights of Columbus, in favor of good wholesome Catholic programming, supported our efforts vigorously while money was available. A poll taken in Catholic churches in this area found 10,000 signatures supporting EWTN

So to say that EWTN supporters did not seek the support of the Diocese does not correspond with the facts.

Patrick J. Murphy
Silver Birch Drive, Rochester
EDITORS' NOTE: Our article of Feb. 25 reported Father Norton's acknowledgement that the Knights had sought his support in previous efforts to obtain EWTN. Also, the Knights have scheduled an open meeting on EWTN from 2:30-4 p.m. Sunday, April 25, at Holy Spirit Church, Webster.

Church agencies should stay out of campaign to control weapons

To the editors:

(I) received the latest *Catholic Courier* yesterday and just can't believe the Catholic Church or its agencies are getting on the bandwagon of gun control (see March 25: "Catholic Family Center favors gun-control law"). We need criminal control, not gun control. I do not believe our Church or any of its agencies should be involved in this issue, nor in the gun buy back programs as stated in the Feb. 18 issue. I'm pro-gun having

hunted and owned guns the past 74 years.

Furthermore, if the Thanksgiving Appeal funds the CFC, I will no longer support the Appeal, nor any other agency that supports and/or advocates gun control.

Gun laws/ordinances only penalize and harass the law-abiding citizen. Criminals ignore and laugh at them.

Bernard E. Wholeben
East Washington Avenue, Elmira