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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.



File photo

Geneseo junior Frank Costello (center) reflects during one of the daily Masses conducted by campus ministr at the school.

Funding cuts hamper campus-ministry efforts

To the editors:

In (the *Catholic Courier's* March 25 section) on Newcomers, your article on campus ministry at SUNY Geneseo ("Ministry can play big role at colleges") mentioned how that ministry is an important bridge for young people.

Many of the future leaders of our parishes, and all of our future vocations to professional ministry, must at some point in their lives attend the university.

Every year, the campus ministries of our Diocese send trained and experienced young lectors, eucharistic ministers, parish council members, fundraisers, knowledgeable servants of the poor, volunteer coordinators, etc. out into our parishes. Every year, the campus ministries in our Diocese send out vocations to train for lay, religious, and priestly ministry in the Church. Although Geneseo is a state university, our campus ministry has produced over 50 such vocations.

Campus ministry also sends out many professionals into the public and private sector who understand and accept Catholic social teachings. Newman Geneseo's Appalachian Service Project involves 60 students every year in direct service to the poor and reflection upon the social teachings.

At Geneseo, there are currently two Catholic Campus Ministers and 3,000 Catholic students. Other campus ministries in our Diocese suffer a worse ratio. The Diocesan Synod booklet reminded us that 62 percent of the people who leave the Church do so between the ages 16 and 25. It is not a coincidence that many of these young people encounter challenges, sometimes hostile challenges, to their faith while in college.

Without campus ministries, these

young people are forced to face the challenges alone. Campus ministry offers the fertile sanctuary of Catholic community life in the intellectual and moral marketplace of the university. When young Catholic people face the challenges together, their faith is often strengthened. When they face the challenges alone, their faith is often destroyed.

Campus ministry, like many other Diocesan ministries, has suffered greatly from budget cuts because of recent shortfalls in the Thanks Giving Appeal. The vast majority of our students are not wage earners. They have time. They have talent. Right now they do not have treasure. They are, however, the future contributors to our parishes and our Diocese. We recognize that by encouraging good stewardship habits within their limited means.

We know from the Synod surveys and the Synod process that our young people are a high-priority concern among the faithful. But the pastoral care of the young people on our campuses is directly threatened by the loss of revenue in the TGA. This loss of revenue is partly caused by the economy and partly caused by issues which have made people angry. When someone chooses to cut support for the TGA for a single reason, many ministries like ours suffer devastating effects.

If we are not willing to support and nurture our young people in college during those crucial years, the voices of atheism, fundamentalism, materialism, and addiction are well financed and ready to fill the void.

Wes Kennison and Father Jim Hewes
Chaplains, SUNY Geneseo
Geneseo, N.Y.

Writer twisted tithing remark

To the editors:

How often do all of us take the spoken or written word out of context — and bend it to serve our own causes. We choose to interpret everything we read and hear in the light of how it reflects or reviles our own belief. Such is the case with Florence Goodwin's views (*Catholic Courier*, March 25: "Disturbed by views on UW").

In the Sacrificial Giving talk I gave at St. Pius X, the remarks cited were about tithing — and I specifically said — "...give 5 percent to your own parish and the other 5 percent to the world's poor — and the world's poor can include — Catholic education, the TGA or the United Way." The appeal was not to support the United Way as much as it was to exhort Catholics to re-examine their reasons for giving and then what they gave and where it goes.

However, in view of Ms. Goodwin's use of these remarks to springboard into her personal agenda concerning UW, I can only say LET'S GET REALISTIC! First — if Catholics en masse should withdraw their support of UW and start to send their contributions directly to the charity of their choice — two things would occur:

1) Those charities would receive that amount — but it would be no windfall.

2) When reviewing requests and budgets UW would reduce their contribution to the charity by the amount received through private donations, and would, therefore, free up other funds to be used as UW determined.

Let none of us be naive — if punishing any institution by withholding funds or contributions is your cry — then how about carrying it a step further and refusing to pay taxes. Surely anyone of us can find something we do not like with how bureaucrats and elected officials spend our money. President Clinton recently announced that he will ask the federal government to pay for abortions for the poor — this will use the tax money from all of us. But we do not refuse to pay taxes, because we fear the Law and because we know that many worthwhile programs are supported by our tax dollars.

Catholics, more than any other religious denomination, punish their church by withholding contributions. Read *Catholic Contributions* by Andrew Greeley to understand a bit better why the Church is experiencing financial difficulty.

Finally, concerning Bishop Clark's continued presence on the UW board — there is no better place to have a Defender of the Unborn than in the midst of the battle he chooses — rather than standing on the sidelines as an unaffected observer. If not Bishop Clark, then who — if not now — then when?

Tom McCarthy
North Park Drive
Rochester

Eliminate repetition — replace letters with comics page

To the editors:

As a regular reader of the *Catholic Courier*, I have noticed that your Opinion page repeats the same themes again and again:

- 1) Abortion is awful and bad.
- 2) School consolidation is awful and bad.
- 3) The Diocese of Rochester is awful and bad.
- 4) Bishop Clark is awful and bad.
- 5) Gays are awful and bad.
- 6) Father McBrien is awful and bad.
- 7) The Magisterium is wonderful and good.

8) EWTN and Mother Angelica are wonderful and good.

9) The Latin Mass is wonderful and good.

10) Medjugorje is wonderful and good.

11) Old-time nuns are wonderful and good.

12) Old-time priests are wonderful and good.

May I suggest that until some new themes are forthcoming you replace the Opinion page with a comics page?

Rev. Robert L. Collins, pastor
St. Thomas More Church, Rochester

