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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.

U.S. foreign aid should help children

To the editors:

If you could do a lot more to help hungry children in places like Somalia, Sudan, and Haiti without spending an extra penny, wouldn't you do it? I would; and I'm hoping that Congressmen Houghton and Hinchey and Senators Moynihan and D'Amato would as well.

Our government spends \$25 billion on foreign aid. Nearly half of that is used for military and "security" purposes to fight the Cold War, even though the Cold War is over. Our foreign aid program needs to get with the times! Poor and hungry children and sustainable development should be the focus of our foreign aid.

Somalia demonstrates the need for a dramatic about-face in U.S. foreign aid. During the past decade, our government sent \$748 million in mostly military aid to the Somali government. If we had given development aid to Somalia to invest in health care, education, agriculture, rather than military aid to prop up a dictator, thousands more Somali people might be alive today and the chaos might have been averted.

It's not too late to prevent future tragedies like Somalia from happening. If passed, the Many Neighbors-One Earth bill, now before Congress, would reduce the amount of military aid we send to developing nations and fund



File photo

In this photo from December, 1992, U.S. Marine John Moore gives medical care to a Somali child in a Mogadishu slum.

programs that promote child survival and sustainable development.

I urge Congressmen Houghton (31st Congressional District) and Hinchey (26th district) and Senators Moynihan and D'Amato to cosponsor the Many Neighbors-One Earth bill. Our foreign

aid programs should provide shovels and spades, not guns and grenades.

Kathleen M. Dubel
Director of Justice and Peace
Southern Tier Office
of Social Ministry
Elmira

Irked by 'sensationalism,' sexism in column

To the editors:

Approximately one year ago when I began receiving the *Catholic Courier*, I spent some time each week reading the newspaper from cover to cover. It took me approximately four weeks to discover what Rev. Robert L. Collins so adroitly pointed out in this week's paper (*Catholic Courier*, April 29: "Eliminate repetition — replace letters with comics page") that the range of topics covered by this publication's editorial page could be neatly categorized by 12 time worn and somewhat weary topics. I found the rest of the paper to be directly in keeping with the synopsis. At that point I gave up reading the CC and would quickly breeze through each week to see if per chance there was anything that a modern day, well-educated Catholic — whose children don't attend diocesan schools — would want to read. It wasn't until this week that some-

thing finally caught my eye and I am not only disgusted by its inclusion in this paper, but ashamed that the church I call my own continues to allow such blatant sexism to continue. I refer to the article by Father Albert Shamon (April 29: "Beware of the bad sirens in today's world").

In the first place, I am mystified by the fact that a 1993 edition of a newspaper would print an article citing a relatively unnoteworthy television program that is nearly 20 years old. This is relevant? Secondly, I am appalled that this publication would present such a myopic pint of view without bothering to further explain where such narrow thinking originated. For example, reading this article I was angered that Shamon's focus as entirely upon women as an evil force in the world — a belief which has been perpetuated for centuries, based mostly on the fear of the church and its male hierarchy that

women would become too powerful — both psychologically and financially.

Indignant I was that the mythology of the Sirens was used to characterize the women's liberation movement — believe me, a truly liberated woman would waste no time attempting to lure in a shipful of drunken, scurvy ridden, foulsmelling, toothless sailors!

Finally, and perhaps most revolting, was the fact that by omission Shamon placed the blame of sexual promiscuity singly and squarely upon the shoulders of women — according to Webster it takes TWO to commit fornication.

As I read through the Gospel reading (John 10:1-10) I pondered the following: In his attempt to draw on the wisdom of mythology why did the good Reverend not address the abduction of Persephone or the rape of Europa? Perhaps these would have been more timely and relevant metaphors. The symbolism within this part of the Gospel is richly imbued with wolves sneaking in to steal the sheep from the shepherd. Any five year old will tell you that the wolf is the one who eats grandma and little red riding hood — male dominance theme. It is the wolf who tries to break into the houses of the three little pigs — another male dominance theme. Historically it has been the beautiful young maiden who has been "snatched and scattered by the wolf" (John 10:12), not the other way around. Apparently Rev. Shamon should have spent more time on his exegesis.

In closing I can only conclude that the very inclusion of this article by the *Catholic Courier* staff was a weak attempt at journalistic sensationalism, a somewhat ignorant attempt to boost reader interest. It has completely squelched mine!

Kathleen A. Turturo
North Hoopes Avenue, Auburn
EDITORS' NOTE: We're sorry Ms. Turturo was offended by the column, but we reject her conclusion about why we published it. Father Shamon's conservative views have been part of this newspaper for much longer than any of the current staff has worked here. It runs every week — whether the staff agrees with it or not.

Marian R. Welch
Grove Street, Elmira

Changes in church will take time

To the editors:

A question that plagues many women in the Catholic Church today is how can you be Catholic and a feminist at the same time? I have personally been asked this question by others and have asked myself. Through research and prayer I have come to some conclusions that I would like to share with my fellow women who are struggling with this very important question.

The first thing that we have to realize is that the church is like every other facet of our life's in which we will undoubtedly encounter sexism. In one form or another whether it is denying our young girls the opportunity to serve on the altar or not ordaining women, the sexism that is rampant in our society is not exempt from the church.

When we realize what we are going to encounter we must strive for change. I know that this is easy to say, but a hard thing to do. We have been trying for years to change the church and we still don't have the results we strive to

achieve. In our journey to change we must remember that the church is very old and that being so well established that change comes slowly. The changes that Vatican II brought about were needed for all the people in the church for a long time, but the church took many years to change. If we remember this when we struggle for change our energy will pull us through to the day when changes do come.

The final and most important thing to remember when considering whether to be a Catholic and a feminist is your faith. The love of our Lord that has called us to strive for change is calling us to stay Catholic. Staying in the church, not running from conflict and ultimately bettering the church for the Glory of God, is the greatest praise we can give God.

I wish you strength in your struggle with your faith and support in the quest for change.