

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.

'Socialistic efforts' help perpetuate bad attitudes on problems of poverty

To the editors:

I commend your concern for the poor and powerless. However, I totally disagree with your attitudes and approaches to solving this problem (see *Catholic Courier*, April 22: "Agency aims to uproot poverty, powerlessness," which focused on the Campaign for Human Development).

Your article about the young couple and their "dream" of owning a video arcade nearly made me weep with disappointment that you would cite this as an example of uprooting poverty.

What about the old standby, honest hard work? Too many Church and government programs virtually exclude intense individual effort as the primary means of bettering oneself. Instead, their hand-holding, pitying efforts often reinforce the delusional, self-pitying attitude that many non-working "poor" have.

My grandfather lived in abject poverty on a farm in Northern New York as a boy. He had little education. But did he look to the government or charity for a

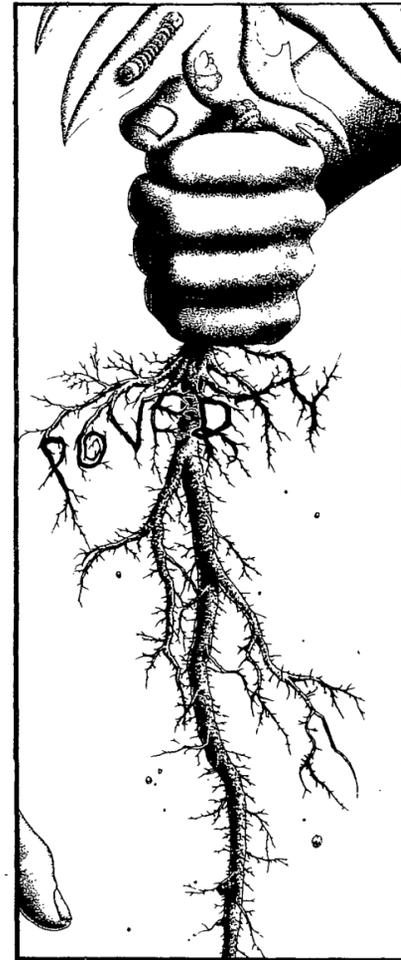
better life? NO! He worked long hours in various jobs, lived a decent, moral life, was active in the Church, and made a modest, comfortable life for his family of five.

It's unfortunate that your well-intentioned, but misguided socialistic efforts help to perpetuate the "world owes me a living" attitude in people. This only exacerbates society's problems, not solves them.

Perhaps the Church should realize that the problems of poverty can only be overcome by dedication, strenuous personal effort — sometimes painful — and taking responsibility for one's life. Nothing else has worked, so why not give it a try.

John J. Lyng
Maple Street
Hornell

EDITORS' NOTE: Like all *Catholic Courier* articles, the story in question presented the opinions of the individuals and groups specifically cited in the text — not necessarily those of the bylined staff writer or of this newspaper.



Confusion on Mary due to poor translation

To the editors:

With respect to a recent letter alleging Our Blessed Lady was a single and unmarried mother (*Catholic Courier* April 8: "Mary's life speaks to new generations"), nothing could be more false. As the noted Mariologist-theologian Rene Laurentin has noted: at the time of the Annunciation when then Archangel Gabriel appeared to her, the Blessed Virgin was already the married spouse of St. Joseph. The mystery of the Annunciation was presented by St. Luke in his Gospel as the "mystery of the married virgin." The Greek word for "betroth-ed," applied to the Virgin by St. Luke, means "married," and it is unfortunate that the poor translation "engaged" has only served to mislead readers of Scripture.

Pope John Paul confirms this under-

standing of Holy Writ in his beautiful letter on St. Joseph (Redemptoris Custos) where he writes:

"Above all, the 'just' man of Nazareth possesses the clear characteristics of a husband. Luke refers to Mary as 'virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph' (Luke 1:27). Even before the 'mystery hidden for ages' (Ephesians 3:9) began to be fulfilled, the Gospels set before us the image of husband and wife. According to Jewish custom, marriage took place in two stages: first, the legal, or true marriage was celebrated, and then, only after a certain length of time, the husband brought the wife into his own house. Thus, before he lived with Mary, Joseph was already her husband" (no. 18).

One can add here that only on suppo-

sition that a true marriage had been contracted before the Annunciation could the honor of Joseph, Mary, and the Child be truly maintained. If Mary had become a mother months before, she and Jesus would have been branded with an indelible stain. Interestingly, such an insult to the honor of the All-Holy Mother of God and her Divine Son was indeed made by some of the early opponents of Christianity. It is astonishing to witness some self-professed Christians engaged in the same calumny, casting doubt on the Blessed Virgin's marital status as the lawful wife of Joseph at the time of the Annunciation.

Dorothy Macaluso, Chairman
St. Pius X Chapter
Catholics United for the Faith
Harwood Lane, East Rochester

Funding cuts make youths feel unwanted by church

To the editors:

We read with alarmed recognition and strong agreement the letter from Gene-seo Newman Chaplains Hewes and Ken-nison, regarding our diocesan young adults at universities (*Catholic Courier*, April 29: "Funding cuts hamper campus-ministry efforts").

We are active parishioners, involved in the Synod and parents of young adults. We know that the crushing disappointment resulting from cutbacks to Youth Programs throughout the diocese have made our young people feel like misplaced, unwanted, unneeded members of the institutional Catholic Church.

Many have sought and found welcome elsewhere at this most critical juncture of their lives. We are active parishioners, involved in the Synod and parents of young adults. We know that the crushing disappointment resulting from cutbacks to Youth Programs throughout the diocese have made our young people feel like misplaced, unwanted, unneeded members of the institutional Catholic Church.

This is much more than just a sad but inevitable shame. It doesn't have to be this way! It is a horrendous failure to love compassionately, to which we as professed followers of Christ are certainly accountable.

Their energies and quest for belonging

directed elsewhere can certainly be hooked into destructive directions as the drug and cultist underworld can frighteningly attest. But when their search leads them to a different faith tradition, we see that God can transform even our most reprehensible offense into occasions of hope. Our young adults are the most unifying, ecumenizing energy we know.

For our parts, as mid-life Catholic adults, we long to welcome, journey, work and dream with the church of the future now even as we learn from the church of the past's wisdom. If there is ever to be one fold, one shepherd, the young can show us how.

Let's build upon the collective wisdom, timely truth and divine opportunity of the Synod and work together to support programmatic funding for our Youth Programs — diocese-wide; to vigorously protest their lack and to work creatively to seek alternative sources of support. When we nurture and treasure God's gifts of life entrusted to us to guide, we are truly acting as the faithful Stewards God's grace empowers us to be. Nothing less is worthy of any of us as His Church.

Rick and Joanna Carroll
Downing Street
Big Flats

Family remembers priest with great fondness

To the editors:

The Diocese of Rochester has lost another of its priests with the untimely death of Rev. James Tierney from Hornell (see *Catholic Courier*, April 1). My family is especially saddened with the passing of our very special friend.

We first became acquainted with Father Jim over 25 years ago when he was assigned to St. Agnes Parish in Avon. We became instant friends and over the years shared many joys and

sorrows too numerous to mention. When we adopted our daughter, it was Jim whom we chose to be her godfather and it was Jim who spent many hours with us on our first day as new parents.

We affectionately called him "Uncle Jimmy" and will miss him more than words can say. We will always hold his memory in a special place in our hearts reserved for those whom we dearly love.

Mary Lou Whitford
Rochester Street, Avon