

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.

Stands by earlier letter

To the editors:

I am responding to the letter titled: "Confusion on Mary due to poor translation" by Dorothy Macaluso in the May 27th edition of the *Courier*.

I have no argument with the information Ms. Macaluso offers in her letter on Mary; in fact, I learned much the same many years ago in the parochial school I attended for 12 years. According to Jewish custom the contracting parties of the "betrothal" were the parents or families of the bride and groom to be. Many dictionaries define "betrothal" to mean "a promise to marry," or "a contract with a view to a future marriage." Traditionally, the "betrothal" took place some time before the groom took his bride into his home and the marriage was consummated. And the Jewish people looked upon the betrothal as legally binding, and the woman was treated as married, as far as extramarital sexual intercourse with another man was concerned.

I was not confused about this when I wrote my letter to the *Courier* about Mary being hope for unwed mothers. And I do not doubt that some of Mary's contemporary neighbors may have whispered behind her back upon learning she was pregnant before Joseph took her into his home as his wife, even though they were betrothed. People will be people, sinful but loved human beings.

And I do not claim to be otherwise, even though I became a legal Christian Catholic on November 3, 1935, when I was baptized in St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., in the basement of the Church during the 40 Hours Devotion; the building was

being renovated at the time. And I have been learning throughout my life to become a self-professed Christian, i.e., just who I am in Christ Jesus.

Jesus himself associated himself with the scandalized and marginalized of his times; "because I tell you these words of scripture are destined to be fulfilled in Me: 'He was counted as one of the rebellious.' Yes, what it says about Me is even now reaching its fulfillment." (Luke 22:37). But he also said: "And blessed is he/she who is not scandalized in Me." (Luke 7:23).

I stand by what I wrote in my previous letter to the *Courier*, regardless of what anyone thinks, or decides to accuse me of; it doesn't matter. The faith journey of a Christian is ongoing, and none of us are perfected or finished products; just loved and forgiven. Thank God!

God is compassionate to all of His creation, including unwed mothers. Scandal, like beauty, is seen through the eye of the beholder. "The insults of those who insult you, fall upon Me." (Romans 15:3).

**Patti Federowicz
Clover Road
Apalachin**

EDITORS' NOTE: Along with this letter, Ms. Federowicz sent along a copy of a vicious, unsigned, note she received — post-marked from Waco, Texas — in response to her previous letter to the *Courier*, published April 8. The staff of this newspaper was chagrined to learn that one of its subscribers would write such an inexcusable note, and wishes to publicly apologize to Ms. Federowicz for inadvertently subjecting her to that abuse.

Review fostered 'consensus' doctrine

To the editors:

The current in Monsignor Shannon's article "Book examines complex issues spurred by Vatican II!" (*Catholic Courier*, May 27) is full of doctrinal, liturgical, moral, and theological eddies that serve no constructive purpose in channelling Catholicism.

The Monsignor asks many questions about the practice of Catholicism and answers them in a way that relegates Holy Scripture, personal responsibility

and the Papacy for example to a matrix wherein the community and society are the determinative factors.

In other words the monsignor favors a "consensus Catholicism" which is the pathology the Catholic Church is suffering from today. "Consensus Catholicism" in overemphasizing community and societal aspects injects a politically correct motivation into Church life, thereby sidetracking the influence of tradition, the Papacy, and yes Christ Himself.

Let a modernist Catholic speak or write and you will often have great difficulty in distinguishing the words and concepts from a sociological and/or economic presentation.

The young in particular soon sense the hollowness of such "religious practices" and consequently fall away in droves from parishes which operate on that basis.

**William T. Hammill
Clardale Drive
Rochester**

Favors intervention in Baltics

To the editors:

Please be advised that I feel the United States should take more of a participation in the former country of Yugoslavia. I am a disabled veteran of World War II and fully realize the dangers that we may face if we fulfilled this policy. I belong to St. Joseph's Parish in Penfield, NY.

**Roderick M. Cunningham
Parkwood Lane, Penfield**

Letter on liturgical practices angered 'altar girl'

To the editors:

This is in response to Shirley F. Schuhart's letter about her being a woman and objecting to certain things about the church (*Catholic Courier*, June 10: "Mass goers are captive audience for improper practices").

Your letter wasn't too bad, but there was one major idea that you stated, that really I guess you can say made me mad!

"Then there is the sorry excuse for altar girls, 'The boys aren't coming.' Hate to tell you, but that's real sorry for you to say that. I'm 16 and have been an altar server for about six years now. And I'd like to admit that I'm very good at it. There are a lot of girl servers at our church, and I'm proud of it. I find the

girls to be a lot neater, and actually better than some of the guys, anywhere. Sure, maybe you like the older more traditional standards, but I can bet you anything that God is very happy to see "us girls" participating at Mass, especially the children. If anything what your saying is a sin, because you kept a closed mind on your whole (letter)! Things have changed a lot in the church, and I see it for the better. And if the boys weren't coming to church, then who would be serving the priest then? If it wasn't for the girls filling in, I guess there would be no one, and then that would be sad.

**Melissa Gradwick
Goodburlet Road
Henrietta**

Notice to Readers

We have received numerous letters responding to the June 24 advertisement purchased by the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild. We have delayed publication of these letters so that we might present as many of them as possible at one time. Thus, two pages of our July 15 issue will be devoted to letters on this topic. We thank the letter writers for their patience.

Choice of words creates confusion on aim of clusters

To the editors:

I am writing in regards to the article entitled "Rochester parishes set to cluster," published in the May 20 issue of the *Catholic Courier*.

The writer of the article, Rob Cullivan, uses the word merger several times when discussing the clustering of parishes. It is my understanding that Bishop Clark has continually emphasized that the process discussed is "clustering," not a merger. The clustering process is meant to preserve the individual identity of each parish. A merger involves the ending of two entities and the creation of something new. The use of the word merger in the published article leads to confusion and misinformation at a time when we are all called on to deal with more and more changes within our parish communities.

I ask that you please use the proper terms when addressing this issue in the future.

**Philomena Mrkus
St. Anthony's Parish
Fayette Street
Elmira**

EDITORS' NOTE: The word "merger" appeared twice in the article in question — including once in the sentence: "Father Shaw emphasized that the merger would preserve each parish's individual identities..." We also should point out that, although the parish families themselves do not merge, the individual parish staffs do merge into a single cluster staff.

We recognize the potential for confusion associated with using the word "merger" in stories of this nature, and do attempt to avoid it insofar as possible. To consider the situation in a humorous light, however, we note that total avoidance of the word "merger" would lead to chronic clustering of the word "cluster" in articles on clustering.

Numerous references to 'siblings' of Jesus can be found in Bible

To the editors:

Shirley Schuhart, in a June 10 letter to the editor, objected that a homily 90 percent suggested that Mary had more children after Christ. Should she wish to read about this in God's Word, I suggest that she read the Gospel according to Mark. A shorter option would be Mark 3:31-35; Mark 6:3; Mark 15:40; Mark 15:47 and Mark 16:1. Other related references include Matthew 27:56; Luke 24:10 and Acts 1:14.

Why does the Bible show so many references to Christ's siblings? Perhaps God wants us to stay focused. The entire Bible, from Genesis through Revelations, points to Jesus Christ. As Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6).

**Brian Lavell
Chestnut Crescent
Rochester**