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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.

Guild's ad generates barrage of letters Founding member: ad spoke for the few



St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild

Does the Synod promote the Catholic faith?

The Diocese of Rochester has been preparing for a General Synod which will meet on October 1-3, 1993. While the Synod's general themes of family life, parish life and social justice require our community's attention, the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild is concerned that the synodal process be incorporated into matters that are not appropriate for a Diocesan Synod. Proceeding from this concern, the Guild has prepared a letter to the editor of the Catholic Courier...

To the editors:

I wish to respond to the paid advertisement of the Board of Governors — St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild. I was a founding member, former member of its board and a past president. I have practiced law for more than 40 years, but never was trained in or attempted to render opinions on Canon Law. I believe the same may be true of the Guild's board members. I will not, therefore, even attempt to refute their statements on a point by point basis.

At the Guild's founding, enthusiasm ran high, and it was our expectation that its appeal would be a broad-based ecumenical membership and approach to consideration of the Church's pronouncements of moral principles on society's complex civil and criminal issues, such as the death penalty, the right to life, the criminal justice system. We never intended to be our Bishop's legal advisers.

We rejected, at the outset, naming the organization the Catholic Lawyers Guild, and in our early years, counted some communicants of other faiths among our members. Unfortunately, over the years, there has been less and less membership input into statements and programs, and increasingly more and more conservative viewpoints taken, resulting in my and other board and membership resignations.

At the last Board meeting I attended some years ago, my view that one of our forums include spokespersons for views dissimilar to those of the majority

This position paper by the Board of Governors-St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild originally was submitted to the Catholic Courier as a letter to the editor. Notified that it was four times too long to appear as a letter, the board opted to run the full text as a paid advertisement.

of the then Board was rejected. It seemed to me that if any organization would invite discussion and debate, much less a hearing, it would be one composed of lawyers. However, it was deemed unnecessary even to hear the others — the Church's positions were immutable.

I believe the statement by the Board of the Guild is not expressive of the views of the majority of Catholic lawyers, or even a majority of the Guild's membership among whom the position paper was not presented, dis-

cussed or put to a vote. It is, at most, the view of a majority of the Board who were present at a meeting.

I, for one, and speaking for many, thank our Pope John Paul II for the appointment of Bishop Matthew to our diocese, and thank our Bishop for raising the laity of our diocese to the measure of participation in the Church envisioned by Vatican Council II, as fully evidenced in the Synodal process and participation.

John L. Greisberger Stonington Drive, Pittsford

'Nemos' should remove blinders from eyes

To the editors:

This letter is prompted by the three-quarter page ad in your June 24 issue placed by the "Board of Governors — St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild." I am a lawyer and a Roman Catholic. I withdrew from the Guild several weeks ago before I had any knowledge of the ad. I have delayed in writing this letter because after reading and re-reading the ad I needed time for shock therapy. The piece provokes many questions and thoughts, some of which I set forth below.

Who made and what motivated the decision by the Courier to run such an ad? What motivated the Guild Board to withhold their names? In the balance of this letter I will refer to them by using the word Dickens used in Bleak House for the forlorn character who had no name — Nemo.

I assume that each of the Nemos is a trained, competent and practicing Civil Law lawyer but is each a trained, competent, practicing Canon Law lawyer, a wholly different genre of law as I remember from some limited instruction in Canon Law several years ago?

I'm advised that the cost of such an ad is \$876. Was that the best use for that money?

Would the Nemos preclude any discussion of pros and cons of Rome policies by clergy or laity? For example, would they have forbidden Paul from challenging Peter, the first Pope on the then requirement of circumcision for Gentiles? Had Paul not been successful in changing Peter's stance our church might have remained only a small Semitic sect in Palestine.

Would they have silenced any who spoke in opposition to the Spanish Inquisition or any who spoke in support of Galileo, or would they have deplored any effort to stop the Church from selling indulgences in Martin Luther's time?

Is it wrong for Bishop Clark to be "intension" with Rome on an issue but right for the Nemos to be publicly "intension" with our Bishop? They view with alarm the presence of "special interest groups" but are they not a "special interest group?"

How does their public attack on the Bishop square with the numerous

injunctions in the Gospels to love one another?

Even though I know not who they are I freely give the Nemos the benefit of any doubt on their good intentions but I do hope they will remove their blinders so as to enlighten and be enlightened by the open exchange of ideas among people of good will in the fresh air coming through the windows opened by John XXIII and Vatican II.

E. James Hickey East Avenue, Rochester

Woe unto lawyers for taking away the key to knowledge

To the editors:

Jesus said: "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves and you hindered those who were entering" (Luke 11:52).

Thomas Feverel East Avenue Rochester