

## Guild's patron avoided fallacies contained in ad

To the editors:

The Board of Governors of the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild (paid advertisement, June 24) have gone to great expense to express their views and deserve respectful commentary.

I fear that your readers may get distorted view of the Synod process from the emphases of this ad. It is not accurate to say that "the goal of the Synod is to attack substantive issues of Catholic doctrine, discipline and faith." No one who has studied the 88 Regional Synod Recommendations generated and reviewed during the pre-Synod meetings of the past year could reasonably say that. The Board of the Guild have chosen to focus their concern on the two "Prophetic Recommendations" involving priestly celibacy and the ordination of women. In so limiting their analysis of the Synod agenda they may mislead readers unfamiliar with the pastoral content of the 88 Regional Recommendations. I strongly urge the *Catholic Courier* to publish all final Synod Recommendations as they become available; in their present form they are thoughtful pastoral documents, reflective of the depth of faith and solicitude for the whole Church which I have seen exhibited in every Synod delegate I have met in all the Synod meetings I have attended.

The "preservation" — and lively flourishing — "of faith and discipline" are precisely what the 88 recommendations are all about. When the delegates at the Regional Synods ranked these proposals, in preparation for the final Synod agenda, I was moved by the wisdom and charity with which they identified the most important ways to deepen and extend the faith and mission of the local church. It is therefore not necessary to remind those involved in the Synod process that "under no circumstances may such a Synod define any new article of faith or decide any doctrine in dispute." The

Synod planners and the 1,500 delegates know well what a local church is and what a local Synod can properly recommend to the Bishop.

St. Thomas More was an extremely able and just controversialist; as such he always avoided such common fallacies as false causality, false dilemmas, and argument ad hominem. To identify Bishop Clark as the responsible cause of certain views expressed in parish Synod meetings because he is Bishop and has convened the Synod is false causality ("after this, therefore because of this"); to oversimplify the historical process whereby the thinking of the magisterium is formulated and re-formulated is to propose false dilemmas to the faithful; and to argue the character and merits of the Bishop rather than argue the character and merits of proposals arising in the Synod is argument ad hominem.

While Thomas More did not share the view of those who supported Henry VIII's position, he did not impugn their personal loyalty to the Church in order to argue his position. Rather he respected the inviolability of the consciences of those with whom he disagreed, just as he asked them to respect the inviolability of what his conscience said to him. After his sentencing he said to them: "I verily trust and shall therefore right heartily pray that ... we may yet hereafter in heaven merrily all meet together, to our everlasting salvation." It is salutary for all of us to think of that meeting: it moves us daily to deeper truthfulness, charity and humility in our discussions with one another, and will guide us to enter heartily and merrily into the deliberations of the October Synod.

Mary Sullivan, RSM  
Upton Park  
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: If space allows, the *Courier* will publish the final recommendations this fall.



St. Thomas More

## Group's statement discredited its patron, namesake

To the editors:

I am not an expert on the life of St. Thomas More but I have read a few biographies of his life and the history of those times. I have reflected on his life and spirituality. I cannot imagine St. Thomas More agreeing with the statement which appeared in the advertisement from the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild. I wonder how many members of the board of governors of that organization have ever read a biography of St. Thomas More, reflected on his life, philosophy and spirituality.

The signers of that statement discredit their namesake and patron. I hope some of their membership will have the courage and sensibility to take out another advertisement apologizing to the Diocese of Rochester and to Bishop Clark.

I must also say that I think the *Catholic Courier* should be more selective in the quality of advertising they are willing to accept and print.

Father Walter L. Wainwright  
North Main Street  
Canandaigua

## Commends Bishop Clark for Synod

To the editors:

What a joyful experience to participate in the diocesan Synod!

Our Bishop, Matthew Clark, has recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit working amid thousands of believers. The Synod process will result in the formulation of recommendations that will be implemented in our diocese. Good theology, it would seem, should reflect God's will and the words of Jesus are: "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38) and "let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches" (Revelation 3:22).

Unfortunately, there are those who view the Bishop's job description to be the defense and promulgation of canon law generated by human beings. But again, as Jesus said "this people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." (Mark 7:6-8)

I commend Bishop Clark and all those Synod participants on the parish and regional level for sharing the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in their lives and striving to be true to God's Laws.

"If you continue in my Word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:31-32)

Timothy Geen  
Landing Road, Rochester

## Ad distorted synod effort

To the editors:

I am writing to commend Father Joseph Hart for his July 1 column, in which he rebuts the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild's attack on the Synod process. As a participant in that process at both the parish and regional level, I find the Guild's characterization of it distorted almost beyond recognition. The vast majority of the other participants would, I am sure, agree with me.

George Dardess  
Harvard Street, Rochester

## Are guild members today's Pharisees?

To the editors:

I couldn't believe what I was reading: The "advertisement" paid by the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild. Who are the people anyway under that title? No signature, no name. Have they ever read in the Bible Matthew 12:1-15? Would the people of St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild be the Pharisees of today? Please, Bishop Clark, keep up the good work and I thank God for who you are.

Raymonde Lachance  
Lower Hill Lane, Fairport

## In a word, 'yes!'

To the editors:

"Does the Synod promote the Catholic faith?" asked the recently published paid advertisement containing a lengthy letter from the Board of Governors of the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild.

In a word, yes!

C.M. Bochen  
Penfield

## Priest-lawyers see no unorthodoxy in Synod

To the editors:

The 24 June 1993 issue of the *Catholic Courier* featured a paid advertisement signed "Board of Governors — St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers Guild." The advertisement described the Diocesan Synod process as evidence that our Diocese and Bishop are not in communion with the Bishop of Rome, His

Holiness Pope John Paul II. As attorneys who have left the practice of law in order to be ordained priests for this Diocese, we wish to comment.

Great care has been taken to ensure that our Diocesan Synod be conducted in full compliance with the Church's canon law. The advertisement objects that some of the proposals emanating

from the parish and regional synod discussions call for actions beyond the authority of our Diocese and our Bishop.

Specifically, the authors of the advertisement point out that proposals have been made suggesting the ordination of women and of married men to the priesthood. These proposals arose out of parish discussions concerning the availability of Sunday Mass and the other sacraments to the people. Canon 465 of the Code of Canon Law states, "All the proposed questions are to be subject to the free discussion of the members during the sessions of the synod." The Bishop must, therefore, allow the discussion of these matters by the synod delegates. However, at the end of the general synod, having heard the discussion, the Bishop will have to remind the delegates that such proposals are contrary to the current discipline of the Church and therefore cannot be acted upon. For this reason, those proposals which exceed the authority of a Bishop or of a Diocese to effect have not been prioritized in the Synod process.

There is nothing unorthodox about our Synod.

Father Alexander H. Bradshaw,  
Holy Ghost rectory, Rochester;  
Father Joseph R. Catanise,  
Holy Trinity rectory, Webster;  
Father Gary Tyman, Newman  
Community, University of Rochester

## Sister-lawyers say hundreds decline guild membership

To the editors:

We have the privilege of serving as delegates to the 1993 Synod. We welcome the Synod as a chance for the people of God, who are the Church, to make recommendations which will help all of us to carry on Jesus' mission more effectively.

Responding to each point in the recent advertisement (purchased) by some of the Catholic lawyers who serve on the governing board of the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild would require taking out a similar \$1000-worth of space in the *Courier*.

Simply stated, we disagree with the reasoning and the conclusions of those few lawyers. We don't dispute their right to state their case, but tellingly,

following sweeping pronouncements and extensive rhetoric, the writers decline to sign their names — and therefore, their number — as if "Board of Governors—St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild" is a well-known, rather than an obscure, entity, whose name itself evidences an ability to interpret canon law and promote the Catholic faith.

Just for the record, we and hundreds of other Catholic lawyers in this area are not and choose not to be members of the Guild for reasons such as this paid advertisement.

Gaye Moorhead, RSM, Esq.  
Jamesine Riley, SSJ, Esq.  
West Main Street  
Rochester