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CATHOLIC COURIER

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NY
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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.

Embarrassed by 'oversight'

To the editors:

I'm very disappointed. For several weeks I've been watching the *Courier* always confident that the next issue would provide coverage of an important event in our diocese. I wish it had not been overlooked.

On May 14th, 24 persons from the Rochester and Albany Dioceses were awarded Master's Degrees — an additional three received Certificates — from St. Bernard's Institute, a Graduate School of Theology and Pastoral Ministry. Since then in the *Courier* I have read listing and/or coverage of high school graduates and graduations, ordinations to the diaconate and ordinations to the priesthood, but nary a word about the event at St. Bernard's Institute.

I'm embarrassed that the efforts and accomplishments of these individuals have not been acknowledged in our diocesan newspaper. It is true that six of those honored in the St. Bernard's Institute graduation ceremonies were recently ordained as deacons in Rochester and deservedly so, received recognition in the *Courier*. However, the others from our diocese have remained unacknowledged in the press. But are they not worthy of recognition? Their pursuits and achievements in the Master's Degree Program in areas of Theology, Scripture, and Pastoral Ministry required generally a minimum of four years of study with courses taken primarily in evenings, weekends, and only in the daytime when work schedules would permit.

Yet because of diocesan requirements and personal goals, they pursued the master's degree programs in order to enter or continue in positions of church ministry including Director of Religious Education in a parish, Pastoral Associate, or Pastoral Counsellor. Certainly these careers in Church Ministry can not be pursued in expectation of salaries commensurate with those in the secular world. Yet for these individuals, working in church-related positions was important enough that they pursued their goals even though in some cases the pursuit of the master's degree took as many as 10 years because of family or financial responsibilities.

I thank God for such individuals as these. Their work and efforts in Church-related positions will provide a vital force and spiritual lifeline in our parishes where there are inadequate numbers of priests and religious to meet the increasing demands for their time and energy. The Church looks to each of us, ordained or not, to bring Christ, to be Christ for one another in our parish life. We are grateful that some among us have made this a life mission by seeking training and education to prepare them for their roles. We would hope that what they have done and are doing will inspire others to serve in similar ways.

Lina B. Hill

Ridge Road West, Spencerport

EDITORS' NOTE: Rarely do we actually cover — that is, send our staff out to — graduation ceremonies. The class lists and information on high school graduations that was presented in our "Graduation" supplement was submitted by the schools themselves. Readers also may note that we did not cover commencements at Nazareth or St. John Fisher colleges. Neither time nor space allows for such coverage unless some aspect — the commencement speaker, unusual size or makeup of the class, or some other feature — makes it especially newsworthy. Nevertheless, we applaud the achievements of those who received degrees and certificates from St. Bernard's Institute this spring, and wish them the very best in their ministerial endeavors.

@pinion



Sarah Grout of Lima's Eilm Gospel Church performs with her mime troupe Silent Word at the June 6 Celebrate Life Rally held at Manhattan Square Park in Rochester.

Pro-life ethic must protect all creatures

To the editors:

Thank you for your article about the Celebrate Life rally on June 6 at Manhattan Square Park (*Catholic Courier*, June 10: "Rally honors life, protests clinic"). While I applaud the purpose of the rally and the march to the Planned Parenthood headquarters, I was distressed to read that marchers "released pink and blue balloons to represent the children who would die" in the abortion clinic that Planned Parenthood intends to open this summer.

The marchers may not know that every year thousands of birds, fish, and other animals mistake deflated balloons for food and die after ingesting them. Releasing balloons puts many of God's creatures at risk. As part of a pro-life ethic, we should help to protect wildlife by not releasing balloons into the air. Keep hold of your balloons — and spread the word about the potential hazard that balloon releases pose to animals. Thank you.

Carol A. Highsaw
East Squire Drive, Rochester

Don't destroy good with bad

To the editors:

Dialogues must continue!! We should never take a view that "My mind's made up — don't confuse me with the facts." The only means we have to resolve our diverse attitudes over any issue is to communicate. Though we thoroughly understand our position on any matter — we will never comprehend our opponents unless we talk openly to each other — Dialogue with our adversaries is the only device available to opening closed minds.

In one of His parables, Jesus presented a man whose enemies sowed weeds among the seed he had just planted. Upon discovery, the servants asked the Master: "Did you not sow good seed? How is it then that weeds grow among them?" "My enemies have been at work," he replied. "Let us go out and tear up the weeds," they said. "No," he ordered. For in tearing up the weeds you will destroy good plants as well. At the harvest, gather and separate — storing the wheat in my barns and binding the weeds over to the fire."

Did he provide for modern time a

solution to the UW/Planned Parenthood dilemma? Was the Master not saying: Do not rip up the good with the bad! Do not deny the good issue for the perceived sake of destroying evil. Permit them both to flourish — and they will be dealt with — in my time!

And one more item — to keep the fires burning! United Way made their goal this year! The Catholic diocese TGA failed — again — to meet a reduced goal!!

Is it possible that the divisiveness preached by a few zealots has backfired?? That instead of punishing the UW — Catholics are punishing their own diocese! Are there, in fact, good seeds or programs being destroyed due primarily to the misguided efforts of servants who are not following their Master's lead? Surely the issues deserve more prayerful thought rather than vehement reaction.

More shots will surely be fired before closed minds will open.

The dialogue will continue.

Tom McCarthy
North Park Drive, Rochester

Heed pontiff on justice and peace

To the editors:

I guess everyone is getting sick and tired of listening to all of the arguments for and against women priests — and deaconesses — and maybe the opinion page is turning into the comics! Actually, there's room in the church for both points of view and down deep I am certain John Paul II believes that. He hasn't censored our Bishop! The Holy Spirit is with us. The church isn't going to fall apart. Honest!

Instead of wasting time on such polemics we should listen to what our Pontiff has to say about the pursuit of peace and justice in the world. There's no room for dissension there. Our universal priesthood — clergy, or laywomen and men — demands that we have great love and respect for the dignity of all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, or sexual orientation. We cannot escape the admonition to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. We must pray and work for peace in our own hearts and peace and reconciliation

within our families, including our extended families — church, neighborhood, city, country. Peace within our hearts and in our families is where world peace and justice begin.

One case in point: How many of you knew there was an International Conference on Human Rights in Vienna June 14-20? I didn't see one mention of it in *Courier* as of this writing (June 22) and very slight mention in the secular press. In my parish, many sent postcards to Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, uniting with Amnesty International, to ask U.S. leadership in the conference. Ours was a small voice but at least we "lit our candle." If those who quibble over incidentals in the church would devote more time to the issues of peace and justice, perhaps our voices would be heard.

By the way, look up the "Corporal Works of Mercy." Sins of omission are most often worse than sins of commission!!

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle, Rochester