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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.

Architectural items draw comment

One conservative does not intend to 'come around'

To the editors:

I would never have written this letter if the remark by Michael J. Doran had not upset me (see *Catholic Courier*, July 1, pages 1 and 14: "New churches, renovations reflect Vatican II reforms"). I quote: "A lot of these conservative people initially resist. It takes three months and they come right around."

St. Patrick's, Owego has been renovated. They have ruined our beautiful old church. Many, many people have left our church to attend other churches in the area. The Sunday collection no longer covers the expenses. All because of this drastic renovation. These people will not "come around in three months."

To other parishes that have not renovated **THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE LOSING WHEN YOU MAKE THESE UNNECESSARY CHANGES.**

Thanks for letting me get this off my chest.

Michael Morgan
Owego



File Photo
Bishop Matthew H. Clark dedicated the new church building at St. Jude the Apostle Parish, 4100 Lyell Road in Gates on June 27.

Pastor of 'travesty' welcomes aid

To the editors:

Being the present Pastor of the "architectural travesty" (see *Catholic Courier*, July 22: "Review board needed to preserve patrimony") also known as St. John the Evangelist Church on Humboldt Street in Rochester, I would like to respond to Mr. Larry LoMaglio's letter.

I always understood that Churches were built first for worship and prayer and only secondarily for architectural beauty. The renovations of the previous Pastor and Co-pastors were accomplished to enhance the atmosphere of prayer for the people of this community following the guidelines of Vatican II. In my opinion, they renovated a worship area that does assist this community to

pray. This was done while enriching the true architectural gems of our Church building that are our stained glass windows.

Further, I cannot see how the two St. John's in their present form are similar. Our renovated Church does not resemble St. John's on the Ridge at all.

However, wanting to be open to the deeply-felt opinions of Mr. LoMaglio, I would welcome his financial contribution to assist our city parish as we continue our efforts to enhance our Church by adding an elevator and a new front entrance. I pray these will not add to the "architectural travesty."

Father Kevin P. Murphy, pastor
Humboldt Street, Rochester

Open design creates gymnasium ambiance

To the editors:

RE: Vol. 104, No. 39, Page 1, July 1, 1993. When I enter a church like St. Jude's with its open design, I want to grab a basketball and shoot for three points.

When I enter a church like Ss. Peter and Paul, with its communion rail, I pray and meditate.

Joe Leahey
Furman Lane, Alexandria, Va.

Questions foundation of deaconess claim

To the editors:

Father Joseph Hart's guest piece headlined "Recommendation causes surprise" spoke of delight over the result of the Synod, even in this diocese working hard to remove whatever might crowd a "full recognition of women's ministry." It's hard to suppress chuckling, as over a kid-gardener first marvelling he actually harvests the very seeds tended.

Suggesting that perhaps women may have been ordained and counted with the clergy on a par with and as deacons Father Hart seeks substantiation in "the classic work" *Ministry of Women in the Early Church* by Roger Gryson, a study of the Syrian-Byzantine milieu. This work reveals that women entered the sanctuary, where the bishop called upon the Holy Spirit while he and others lay their hands upon her veiled head extending the "Divine Blessing."

Father first renders for us the Council of Nicaea. Its canon 19 referring to deaconesses is dealing with the returning to Catholic Faith of heretical Paulianist clergy. They treated deaconesses as if clergy even without the laying on of hands. The Council pointed that up summarily clearing away these obstacles. One is misled if construing that this Council had addressed issues about women and laying on hands...

Though Gryson does write on page 164 "women deacons received a true ordination that in no way was distinguished formally from that of their masculine colleagues," the material can more easily make a case against, rather than for, women having been ordained

and sacramentally entering into "the order of Melchizedec."

In examining the Byzantine rituals for the ordination of deaconesses in the Barberini Greek Euchology one finds rather that deaconesses were indeed "distinguished formally" from their "masculine" colleagues. Though receiving an "oratorion" diaconal stole, it was wrapped around the neck over the "maforion," a veil covering her head. Stole ends hung down in front. The stole was not off to one shoulder with the end free to be held as in the hand of a deacon preaching. She did enter the sanctuary but approached to receive the cup from the bishop, and not to distribute as a deacon. She expressed the contrary sign by placing the cup back on the altar. A momentous gesture considering "the order of Melchizedec." The priest candidate knelt on two knees, the diaconal on one. A deaconess candidate remained fixed bowing her veiled head. She did not rest her head on the altar as in priestly ordinations. For her, laying on hands appears then to convey no more than solemn blessing...

The prayers in ceremony said for a deaconess were not those of the male deacon "inclusivised." They were set for a different intent of servanthood. Whatever was used as the "Divine Blessing," not a single manuscript of completed text for deaconess is extant. It seems sequentially unlikely that the "Divine Blessing" would have been the same as for deacons because the image of Christ's male priesthood maintained for the Church would not have misled to it. Some might find in this only humilia-

tion and malice. Others discover in this submissiveness the loving image of Christ's humility.

It seems to me the reason the ordination, that is, the "ranking" given these deaconesses passed "peacefully accepted" is because this clergy were NOT attempting a sacramental priestly ordination, but a solemn blessing of the highest honored lay servant that conjoined with their male counterparts.

Gene Charles
Geneva Turnpike, Canandaigua
EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

Letter headline garbled European geography

To the editors:

Whoever puts the title lines over the letters to the editor needs a refresher course in European geography. Thursday, July 8's issue printed a letter from Roderick Cunningham under the title "Favors intervention in Baltics." If you check your world atlas you'll see the Baltic Sea in the north of Europe bounded by Sweden, Poland, Estonia, etc.

The dictionary defines Balkan as, "of or pertaining to the Balkan Peninsula or the Balkan Mountains." That includes Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and Greece.

Give credit to my wife, Dottie, for noticing it before I did.

Karl Denninger
Almeda Street, Rochester
EDITORS' NOTE: Good catch! So much for writing headlines hurriedly — and off the top of one's head!