

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.



File photo

Pope John Paul II talks with then-Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie during the Anglican leader's Oct., 1989, visit to the Vatican. The two signed an agreement to work for "full ecclesial communion."

While striving for unity, don't compromise truths of faith

To the editors

Reading the *Catholic Courier* of July 22, I was alarmed by the article on Karl Keating and his organization, Catholic Answers ("Pope's visit to draw anti-Catholics: Apologist plans to counter efforts"). Alarmed that there is a need for such a group.

I was raised a Roman Catholic, but spent 10 of my adult years in an evangelical church, which exhibited none of the anti-Catholic rhetoric Mr. Keating describes. It is greatly disturbing to discover such bias exists, and even more that an organized effort is being made to dissuade people from the Faith.

In the same issue I read an article on ecumenism by Monsignor William Shannon ("Synod must reaffirm ecumenism"). I feel the same deep long for unity that those of all Christian Faiths are experiencing, but in our prayerful quest for unity, we must maintain the doctrines that are at the very root of Catholic-Protestant disagreement.

Having experienced both Catholic and Protestant faiths on a committed level, I am in agreement that Christ can and does save through both. However there is a palpable difference between my walk with Him in the evangelical church and the much deeper, fuller relationship with Him that arose after my

return to Catholicism. Although many factors contributed to this, the greater emphasis on obedience and the precious gift of His presence in the Holy Eucharist within the Catholic Church were without question the strongest determinants of this difference.

One of the basic points of disagreement between Catholic and Protestant is over faith and works. Are we saved by both, or faith only? It seems to me that Scripture does not separate the two — if there is faith, there will be works, as they are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit within us. Works without faith will not save, and faith without works is dead.

Doctrines such as these, when opened to the light of the Holy Spirit, can be reconciled. However, the sacraments are a vital means of sanctification and spiritual strength. They must be preserved as they were clearly set forth in Scripture, and the Catholic Church must stand fast in upholding sacramental doctrine.

I don't speak out of expertise or theological knowledge, but out of my heart. I long for Christian unity, but let us do nothing to compromise the deep truths given to the Apostolic Church.

Sandra Dunn
Mattie Street
Auburn

Why intent on reunifying churches?

To the editors:

Concerning Monsignor Shannon's view on "Synod must reaffirm ecumenism" (*Catholic Courier*, July 22):

There is that word again; ecumenism — furthering Christian unity, especially among Christian churches. Why is it that the Monsignor is so bent on re-uniting with the various religions that formed after choosing to leave the Catholic Church after the Protestant Reformation.

Ecumenism is the child of fundamentalist, charismatic Christians whose sole mission is to debunk Catholic dogma. They are wolves who have infiltrated the Catholic Church as sheep, but whose purpose is to attempt to destroy the magisterium of the Church from within with their "progressive" ideas.

Monsignor Shannon speaks of "a time going to Colgate Divinity School campus and feeling as if he was going into enemy territory." He adds now "I, moreover, have had the privilege a number of times of speaking in the Divinity School's halls." I must admit he

sounds like he has "progressed." Oh, and Monsignor, enemies are on the opposite side — you needn't worry.

Michael Valerio
Malin Lane, Penfield

Eucharistic Prayer now offers deeper challenge

To the editors:

Under your "Letters Policy" there is a call for reflections on life in the church, and so I offer this recent reflection.

Sometimes I ask myself how much does the liturgy of Mass sink into my spirit and challenge me. How much of it do I actually participate in? I want to focus on the prayer which calls us to grow in love with our Pope, Bishop, all the clergy and all God's people. Doesn't this call us to pray for each other, for all our "shepherds?"

During the liturgy of the Eucharist we know we are uniting our prayer with the prayer of Jesus, while He asks us to remember.

This is how that particular prayer

It's OK to laugh

To the editor

Three things:

1. Concerning the shortage of priests in our diocese, and in America in general, I wonder if anyone has done some serious investigation into the growing seminaries in Africa? Father James Collins has pointed out that according to word of mouth, as well as news stories, the Church has planted seeds and is reaping great harvests in that continent. Why not bring some of those priests here to help fill the shortage? There may be several reasons. First, this could be propaganda, that there isn't a birth of the Church in Africa. Second, no one has thought about this idea. Third, the idea has been thought of and rejected for one or more reasons: cultural differences, theological differences, political reasons, etc. Fourth, and hopefully in the works, it is being quietly investigated. History shows us that many priests of various nationalities came to the new world, such as the Irish priests in the south in this century.

2. Father McBrien's column (June 17, 1993: "How Would Jesus Judge Us Today?") falls into a familiar pattern that avoids much of the issue. His reference to the scribes and pharisees is easily equated with the leaders of the churches today. This game is called "Ain't it awful?" The implication is that more leaders are bad than good. This is silliness. The greatest number of the clergy, in any faith, are there because of a Fundamental belief in the goodness of God. They show it by their care, concern, and actions. A curse upon any leader, religious or otherwise, is the bureaucracy that necessarily builds up around him/her which hides and/or stifles the goodness of these people. One group Father McBrien ignored was the "little people." Look around at the common people. They are varied in everything but one: they are the doers of the little tasks without which life would not go on. It is easy to see that Jesus would be as happy today with the great number of these good people — leaders and little people — and as saddened by the evil ones as he was when he walked the earth. I am a sinner, everyone is a sinner. Jesus knows that; but would love us anyway, if we let him.

3. Anyone who takes himself too seriously is in for a let down. Let your hair down — print at least one joke every week. If you don't believe God has a sense of humor read Mark Twain, or look at a platypus. I am enclosing a copy of the *Joyful Noiseletter*, a publication of the Fellowship of Merry Christians. Maybe you'll see that it is OK to laugh. God does.

Francis E. Whitford
Brady Street, Elmira

came to challenge me more deeply, through a little gold plaque with the inscription, "In loving memory of Margaret Tomasso, January 29, 1992, donated by family and friends." Each time I've used that exercise machine to which it is attached in the St. Mary's Cardiac Rehab, I ask Margaret to pray for me. I had no idea who she was, until quite unexpectedly I met her son, Father Paul Tomasso, three times in a little less than a two-week period. Now when I see the plaque, asking Margaret for prayers, I strongly feel her reply, "Pray for my son." Let's remember all!

Dorothy Frederick
South Clinton Avenue
Rochester