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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.

# Group endeavors to promote Office

To the editors:

Responding to your article on Rochester's discovery of the Liturgy of the Hours (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 23: "Conference to key on reviving practice for laity"):

Focus on the Eucharist, an informal association, has been quietly promoting the Divine Office for at least a dozen years now. It is our practice to prepare for our monthly evening Mass and short adoration with Vespers, usually of the day, to encourage people to enter into the mind and heart of the Church through that which she makes available to us — the normal way, one might say, of entering the mind of Christ in order to take our place in the fullest degree in salvation history. The Church opens herself to us in the Mass and in its halo, the Liturgy of the Hours that flows from the Eucharist in thanksgiving and then gathers speed toward it again in desire.

We have insisted from the beginning on the proper relationship between Mass and Office while promoting both... Many local priests have helped, encouraged, corrected and welcomed us over the years. Somehow or other, God keeps us going, visiting different churches,

chapels and oratories during a year. We will meet next at St. Philip Neri Church, 1776 Clifford Ave., Rochester, Nov. 4, at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited.

Interested persons may write me for a six-month schedule at the address below. ...When a parish develops its own adoration program, it is not necessary for us to return there. It would be the same with the Hours. We seek to go only where we are wanted, but we are very much open to new invitations!

An ideal way to expand participation in the Office would be for parish priests to pray Morning or Evening Prayer in the place where they will say Mass at that time, inviting the people to pray with them...

(There is something very encouraging to find them steadfastly praying the Office together, always open to being joined by others.

The *Courier* article stressed that Lauds or Vespers services take less than an hour. It would be more reasonable to say less than 15 minutes, especially in the company of Mass. Under certain circumstances, the psalms and canticles of

these hours can be worked into the Mass... There can be danger in promoting the Hours completely apart from Mass, especially as an hour-long service.

If one thinks but a moment, it is easy to recognize that the basic Sunday morning church services of at least most of the Protestant Churches are organized around psalms and other Bible readings, hymns and prayers, their communion services usually appearing infrequently. That typical Sunday service is what is left of Lauds for them.

The early protesters kept Lauds, a ready structure for prayer, as they shied away from the Mass. As a longtime convert from the Episcopal Church, I find Lauds especially more than ever a prayer for unity.

It is the task of Catholics — always, seeking unity among Christians — to recognize the positive links here and to gather in the strands carefully: The lovely halo of the Mass is just that, the aura intended to bring us ever more deeply into union with the mind and heart of Christ as He displays it for us daily through His Church, that our self-donation in the Mass may be the more intense and our eucharistic union with the Lord ever more secure and absorbing, all the more blessings to be scattered upon the world.

**Judith Echaniz**  
347 Barrington St.,  
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

## Cable network offering videotape of youth day

To the editors:

(The Eternal Word Television Network) does not have the right to offer tapes of the Holy Father's World Youth Day Pilgrimage in the Denver area. So they kindly sent me the number to call 1-800-225-5222.

The Denver Archdiocese is having one made of the highlights in color and the above phone number is the one for that.

This will be ever so much better than what the secular media offered for sale, after the Holy Father's last two visits to the United States. What they sold were designed to fulfill their purpose of American Catholic and Pope John Paul II bashing.

**Mary Rita Crowe**  
Main Street, Rochester



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
A diocesan youth waits at the Greater Rochester International Airport Aug. 11 before boarding a chartered flight to Denver for World Youth Day.

# Magisterium not last word on conscience

To the editors:

Recent correspondence regarding the birth control issue seems to center on "dissent." The impression is given that

the teaching of the magisterium is the last word on the issue. If one chooses to disagree with the magisterium, one is wrong. The teaching of the magisterium,

however, is only one element in the process of conscience formation. Let me illustrate with a series of questions:

- 1) What is my situation requiring a moral judgment?
- 2) What specific action or response is being considered?
- 3) What are the arguments pro and con regarding the action or response?
- 4) What elements of a Christian vision of life have a bearing on the arguments — teaching of magisterium, opinions of responsible theologians, advice from good Christian friends, etc.?

Once these questions are answered, the person's conscience is formed and the person must follow it. Therefore, someone who has formed his/her conscience correctly and disagrees with the magisterium does not deserve the label "dissenter."

**Father Robert L. Collins**  
St. Thomas More Church  
East Avenue  
Rochester

## Visiting priest broadened horizons of parish

To the editors:

I would like to publicly thank my pastor, Father William Amann and the many parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's Church in Hamlin for truly opening their hearts and their homes to Father Charles Bundu from Tanzania, East Africa.

Our Pastor, Father Bill set the tone for this beautiful outpouring of love and hospitality by asking his parishioners to be receptive and welcoming to Fr. Charles. Their response was wonderful and it was love at first sight for all of those who were willing to take the risk of getting to know someone from such a different culture!

What a marvelous learning experience this was and our horizons were broadened in many ways.

Father Charles came to us ready in heart, mind and soul and we responded in kind. What an enriching experience for the adults as well as the children and youth. How amazing it was to see two cultures so very different mesh together so well.

It is unfortunate that Father Charles could not have stayed longer because the entire Diocese would have been enriched by his presence.

**Norma E. Holmes**  
Paul Road  
Rochester