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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 original, signed 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 letters writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

Mail letters 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.

Liturgy of Hours leads way to heaven

To the editors:

Almost 60 years ago I ventured into the St. Thomas More Bookshop in Harvard Square, Cambridge, Mass. at tea time. A Benedictine monk, a student at Harvard across the street, shared not only tea with me, but a panoramic view of the liturgical life of the Church. After 16 years of Catholic education, it turned my life around from anxiety about the inner self to the unmitigated joy — to this day — of joining my voice, no matter how spiritually rusty, out of tune or discordant, to the universal chorus of praise and thanksgiving, rising always like incense from earth to heaven. Later, I found (the liturgy of the hours) an excellent tool for other teenagers to throw off their egocentricity and share in something bigger than themselves. Ecumenically, Vespers or Evening Prayer is a beautiful device for sharing prayer with the Protestant community; and our Jewish brothers are often surprised and pleased to know how much time we spend on the Old Testament. Dorothy Day made it the way to go.

In my first enthusiasm I sent out a call

to others. Eleven men responded who promptly informed me that "a woman in matters of the Church should be silent" and took over the meetings! A hebdomadarian was assigned to change the Hour we said biweekly — as we learned the skeletal format of the Divine Office — to insure that the complete cycle of Hours was offered to God each day.

To me there is an analogy between the structure of the universe and the universal prayer of the Church which is the song of the Holy Spirit, who is the soul of the Mystical Body of Christ. The Son/sun is its center, and the moon is Mary, reflecting only the light of the Son. The liturgical seasons are like the course of the planets revolving around the sun in eternal fidelity to their mission, talking us from the advent of the Messiah to the Parousia following Pentecost. Its feasts of saints are like the multitude of stars in the sky, some near, some faint, but all beckoning us in the dark of our "valley of tears" to look upward.

The words of the hymns, psalms, canticles and intercessions may not seem to apply to us at times, but it is exactly

what applies to some unknown person that day. Read Psalm 31 and think AIDS.

Years ago I taught a class of 60 teenagers awaiting trial or sentencing in a San Jose, California prison. I boldly begged from Hanford's Newman Club 60 paper backs of the Psalms, as a personal gift to each one, and then introduced choral speaking as my method of instructions. The psalms said it all and better. It was God, not I, who was exhorting them to change their lives. We all found it a very joyous, exhilarating experience.

Lastly, the Office of Readings opens our minds to our deepest spiritual culture as we read and ponder the writings of the great masters — the early Fathers of the Church, personal accounts of heroism, martyrdom, conversions, ecstatic declarations of faith, and enriching excerpts from Church documents.

The Hours center around the Theme of the Mass of the day. Come. Take a step along its path. It will lead you straight to heaven.

Mary Locke

Park Avenue, Rochester

Harsh judgment shows columnist's naiveté

To the editors:

I was appalled and incensed by Father McBrien's article ("Hypocrisy of the Bosnian women") for its harsh judgment, devoid of objectivity and understanding.

One can tell from the naive statement that the author never experienced first hand the ravages of war. I did, and have personally known their brutalizing and dehumanizing impact on the human spirit.

I understand the reaction of the Bosnian women, who tried to use the humanitarian convoy to the Muslims as a shield for their safety. They struggled and fought for their own survival and that of their children.

I want to point out that in time of war, the human thinking is warped by the horrors of the war, which breed suspicion, fear, utter coldness in otherwise compassionate hearts. The instinct of survival emerges as the most powerful motivator of the human behavior. Did Father McBrien live through any personal experience that qualifies him to be an objective judge of such behavior?

Concerning the lack of "political



A Bosnian Croat refugee from the Muslim-controlled city of Zenica holds her son in a school gym being used as refugee center.

clout" of the young people to whom the Virgin Mary appears, I want to recall the fact that our Blessed Mother always appeared to humble people like Diego at Guadalupe, Bernadette at Lourdes, etc.

This seems to confirm the Gospel's words: "God chose those whom the world considers absurd to shame the wise; He singled out the weak to shame

the strong" (1 Corinthians 1:27). The Lord is very mysterious: "Your ways are not my ways; Your thoughts are not my thoughts."

The rationalism of the human mind fails in front of the inscrutable mystery of the Divine Spirit.

Alberta Compare

Watson Road, Fairport

Support campaign shows no compassion for 'victims'

To the editors:

The people of Spencerport are to be commended for their compassion and loyalty in their support of Father Bob Winterkorn. He has certainly done good things for many of us who live and work in this great community. However, we

cannot forget that also living and working in our community are people who have been deeply hurt by the same man who has done so much good ... By the visible support of green ribbons we revictimize those who have been abused and we refuse to have compassion for

those who have been deeply wounded... As a woman, I find it extremely disturbing that our community has been so irresponsible and so insensitive to those who have been abused. The frenzy and insistence that the victims be found and exposed is reminiscent of days gone by in Salem, Mass., when women were burned at the stake for witchery.

I believe that support for Father Bob is important for his recovery, and prayers can bring him nothing but good. But let us not forget that we are also called to be compassionate, understanding and loving to those who have been hurt by him.

One thing I remember about Father Bob was that he always tried to see both sides of a story without making judgments. Perhaps if we are to truly support him, we should learn from this example.

Susan West-Verrsluis
Ogden-Parma Town Line Road
Spencerport

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited due to legal concerns.

News article cannot convey profound sadness of parish that lost 'eloquent, brilliant' pastor

To the editors:

As a parishioner of St. Januarius Church in Naples reading your recent article about Father Eugene Emo I was reminded of an old quotation that reflects the observation that "the good men do seldom lives after them..."

I am sure that many fellow parishioners and area residents strongly feel that we must never minimize the many gifts he shared during his tenure among us.

Just the vibrant growth of our church in membership and spirituality alone is

a testament to his leadership. His unique rapport with other churches in the community, his involvement with social services reflect his dedication.

He possesses gifts of eloquence and brilliant scholarship. So many times as I listened to his homily I thought to myself, "He should be speaking in a vast cathedral."

The black and white newsprint unfortunately cannot reflect the real meaning of our loss — our profound sadness.

Margaret H. Van Nortwick
Andrews Way, Canandaigua