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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 as well as legal concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable.

Mail letters to: *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for verification purposes.

Miracle could resolve Irish 'troubles'

To the editors:

I read with interest the *Courier* article on the violence in the Northern six counties of Ireland (Nov. 4: "Killings in Northern Ireland are worst in years").

I totally agree that peace between the warring factions is paramount, but to leave those who "back violence" out of the negotiations is lunacy.

The majority of those in Eire and the Northern counties deplore the violence, and would welcome some political solution, yet the murders continue. If the IRA and UFF are barred from participation in any political formulas, we can rest assured there will be no end to the broken bodies and shattered lives.

Ireland, perhaps more than any other country in the Western world, is open to the moving of God's Spirit. The Irish people understand that God is not constructed from contemporary opinion, that His power is real, His love unstoppable, and His intervention in the affairs of men a certainty. It remains to convince the IRA and UFF that they are also subject to HIM.

There have been hundreds of solutions offered to the Troubles since 1967, and all have fallen into the melee of diametrically opposed convictions. The IRA will not accept anything short of British withdrawal and the unification of all Eire, and the UFF and company are terrified at the prospect of Irish rule. These groups are the principal players in the violence, and to push them to the fringes of any attempt at negotiations



File photo
The coffin containing the remains of Mark Rogers is carried through the streets of Belfast by his brother, Thomas (left), and his brother-in-law Liam Hunter during an Oct. 28 funeral procession. Rogers was one of two council workers killed by Ulster Loyalists Oct. 26 in apparent retaliation for an IRA bombing.

would only ensure business as usual.

In the end, I believe God will prove to be the only power capable of resolving the conflict. Who among Ireland's politicians has the power to transform angry hearts, to develop a plan of such utter perfection that both sides would agree to it? Who has the wisdom to search the souls of hardened men and find the one point of vulnerability that will blossom into healing and reconciliation?

I suppose believing a miracle will occur seems a little simplistic in our sophisticated world, especially when we tend to have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. However, we have witnessed too many miracles in the last few years to doubt their existence. Heaven will have Her way.

Sandra Dunn
Mattie Street
Auburn

Writers seem fearful of Holy Spirit's urgings

To the editors:

I am quite concerned about the constant negative attitudes expressed in the letters page of the *Catholic Courier*. After reading the October 28, 1993 issue I feel the need to respond. Two letters in particular warned readers to be aware of the evils which had come from the 1993 General Synod.

The delegates of the general Synod came together prayerfully and in good faith to discern the will of the Holy Spirit. Liberals, conservatives, middle-of-the-roads, male and female, 16-year-olds, 45-year-olds and 80+ year olds — people of great diversity of belief and background worked together, listened to one another, respected the integrity of one another and came to challenge your diocese. What was accomplished was not the will of a few disgruntled feminists, but rather the will of the Holy Spirit as expressed through the prayerful experience of over 1,400 delegates.

The writers of these letters seemed to be most appalled at the prospect of women exercising leadership and clerical

roles in our church and the danger of dissent in our midst.

Dissent is nothing new to our time and place in the church, it was present among the apostles and disciples while Jesus walked the earth, and in the post-resurrection church. There are many accounts of this throughout the New Testament. Dissent hasn't destroyed our church, rather it has made it stronger, more compassionate and better focused on what it should be about in building up the reign of God. Jesus would not have supported a "love it as is or get out" mentality among his disciples, rather he would have called them to love each other and to work together in peace and understanding. Nor would he have ever rejected those who in good faith work for justice and compassion.

Dissent should never be a criteria for judging faithfulness, nor, is it an obstacle. Certainly it is much safer to remain quiet, but that is not answering the call of the Holy Spirit.

Feminists are not upset by the fact that Jesus was male, nor do they try to deny it

by using inclusive language. However, it must be pointed out that the humanity of Jesus rather than his maleness was the element necessary for his redeeming act. The addressing of God in male terms is a problem, because according to my *Baltimore Catechism* God is pure spirit and as such is neither male or female. As for being included in the terms of brothers or men, I don't feel any more included in them than my father or brother would feel in the terms of sisters or women.

It was pointed out in these letters that the ordination of women to the priesthood would be a divisive factor in the church; this is not supported by public opinion polls or the vote of the Synod.

Those who would limit the ordained priesthood to celibate males are on shaky ground Scripturally. No where have I been able to find the establishment of a celibate male priesthood by God the Creator or by Jesus.

Male Christians are not the only ones capable of acting "in persona Christi." In baptism we are all included in the Body of Christ. Because of my vocation as Christian and my call to pastoral ministry I should represent Christ in my interactions with others. It is not gender but openness to God's great love and mercy which allows us to be part of the Paschal Mystery. It is my prayer that someday, I will be eligible for full participation in ministry through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Don't be anxious to push me out the door of Catholicism; I'm not trying to get rid of you. You are very important because you are loved by God, just as I am, and because you keep me honest and focused on my beliefs.

I would like to thank Bishop Clark for his concern for and support of women in our church; but we are at the beginning of a long journey toward full participation. I would also like to thank him for his courage and wisdom in convening our Diocesan Synod.

Maureen S. O'Neill, pastoral associate
Church of the Holy Ghost, Rochester

Encyclical is 'gift of the Holy Spirit'

To the editors:

I would like to take issue with Father Richard McBrien's column, that "Expectation for Encyclical are too High."

As a member of the laity, I feel this "Splendor of Truth," encyclical is a special gift of the Holy Spirit, at a time when many of theologians and church leaders are questioning the official teaching and moral doctrine of the Catholic Church. This has caused confusion among the laity as to what is right or wrong.

Those difficult words Father McBrien speaks of, "consequentialism and proportionalism" are theories that attempt to judge the morality of acts only on the basis of results and intentions. The Pope has insisted that some acts are "intrinsically evil" and cannot be justifi-

fied by good intentions and results.

I feel we should be able to understand this encyclical through the teaching of our Bishop, who as the shepherd of his flock, has the grave responsibility of keeping us informed and directed in strict communion with the church.

There have been many excellent articles written, explaining the contents of this encyclical, including *Our Sunday Visitor* and *Catholic Twin Circle*, (October 17, 1993) and "The Truth about Freedom," by Father Neuhaus in the *Wall Street Journal* (October 8, 1993).

As Pope John Paul states, "Authentic Freedom is ordered to truth;" let us all pray to be witnesses of the truth.

Rita McCraig
Box 60
Jasper, N.Y.

World Photos
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