

CATHOLIC COURIER
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NY
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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.

Opinion

Priests honor bishop on anniversary

To the editors:

One of the most influential writers of the Catholic Church in the second century was St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch. Condemned to martyrdom for being a Christian, he was brought in chains to Rome for his execution. On the way he wrote seven famous letters to various Churches. In all of these letters he urged the people of the churches he was writing to stand with their bishop. His reason for saying this was his understanding of the Church, expressed in his well-known words: "Where the Bishop is, there is the Church."

The people of the local Church of Rochester saw those words of Ignatius come alive at the (Rochester-Monroe County Community) War Memorial on October 5, 1993, when many representatives of our local church gathered around our bishop in the closing liturgy of the general synod meeting. It was a moving picture and a most concrete expression of the meaning of Church to see Bishop Clark at the altar with the people of the local church, laity, religious and priests gathered about him.

This vision of the church has found expression not only at the synod, but in the daily life of the Church of Rochester, since Bishop Clark was installed as the eighth bishop of Rochester on June 26, 1979. Since the day of his installation Bishop Clark has been a true shepherd. He has labored diligently to implement the insights of the Second Vatican Council. He has always exhibited a willingness to listen to people and continues to make every effort to see to it that collaborative ministry of religious, laity and priests becomes a lived reality in our local church.



File photo

The people of the diocese gather at Rochester's Community War Memorial Oct. 3, 1993, for Bishop Matthew H. Clark's celebration of the 125th-anniversary Mass concluding the General Synod.

We appreciate the difficulties attendant on being a bishop in these days of change and transition. Bishop Clark has weathered these difficult times well with prudence, care and concern. There are times when he has had to make hard decision, even unpopular ones. He has not hesitated to do so when the good of the church demanded such decisions.

We believe that Bishop Clark is respected and loved by the vast majority of the people of this diocese and also by its priests. We believe that there should be times when it is appropriate for us to articulate publicly the respect and love we have for our bishop. That is why in this year of the Synod we wish to declare the joy that is ours in having Matthew H. Clark as our bishop. We pledge to him

our continued support and loyalty. We have chosen as the date for this expression of our affection for him the occasion of the 31st anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, which occurs on December 19th. We pray God's blessing upon him and offer our deepest gratitude for all that he has meant to the local Church of Rochester.

Fathers John Hedges, Andrew Teuschel, John Rosse, Robert Collins, Gerald Connor, James Cosgrove, Bruce Ammering, Walter Cushing; and Monsignor William Shannon.

EDITORS' NOTE: The names above are those of the nine priests who circulated this letter among their brethren. In all 199 diocesan priests signed the letter.

Hopes future columns will shed more light

To the editors:

Ever since the time of the prophet Samuel, the desire of the People of God for an earthly King has been a bad sign: "We want a king so that we in turn can be like the other nations; our king shall rule us and be our leader and fight our battles." Yahweh said to Samuel, "... they have rejected me from ruling over them" (Sm. 8:20, 7).

This parallels the people's rejection of the nonviolent Jesus as their king when he was on trial before Pilate: "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). This collusion of empire and religion produced the execution of Jesus.

There is a strain of Biblical thinking that calls us to a certain Christian anarchism. To fully embrace the Kingdom of God we must simultaneously despair of earthly forms of government which always conflict with it. The more centralized the authority, the more suspect it is. Jesus warned His followers they would be hated by all nations for their allegiance to Him. Satan was able to tempt Jesus with the rule of all the kingdoms on earth because it was his to offer! (Lk. 4:6).

Father Shamon in his column on the Feast of Christ the King (*Catholic Courier*, Nov. 18) takes none of this into account. Most distressing was this paragraph: "In AD 313 the Roman Empire became Christian through the direct intervention of God when Constantine marched to engage Maxentius in battle at the Milvian bridge."

The spirit of Constantine who killed his enemies under the Sign of the Cross he had placed on his banners and the spirit of the Pope who later crowned him Holy Roman Emperor is much closer to the spirit of Antichrist than to the spirit of Jesus. Certainly Constantine marks the reversal of 300 years of adherence to the nonviolent love of enemies that had been the hallmark of Christian life. Also, having become aligned with empire, the Church began to

split apart when empire inevitably split.

The question in our diocese is not how we might be advocates for more moral government as Father Shamon suggests. Remember, Samuel warned the people that when they came to cry out on account of the evils of the King they had chosen for themselves, God would not answer them.

The real question is about our own consistent adherence to the expressed and implied teachings of Christ the King, particularly the command to love enemies (Lk. 6:27 ff., Mt. 5:38 ff.). Will Consistent Life Ethic and Catholic Moral Education which

are now the second and third pastoral priorities in our diocese — not to mention Consciousness Raising; sixth by only two points — lead us beyond "just war" theories to the more traditional and obedient nonviolence of the early Church? If not, there is no point to evangelization efforts and we stand to lose the partial consistency we still have.

In the future, I hope Father Shamon will shed a clearer light on this question as he has on others.

Mark Scibilia-Carver
Cold Springs Road, Trumansburg

Area does have 'true' Catholic course

To the editors:

This letter is in response to Richard V. Hussar's letter printed in the *Courier* Nov. 11. He mentioned he is not aware of any "true" Catholic courses on sex education taught in this area.

My wife and I teach Natural Family Planning as certified instructors from the Couple to Couple League. The League teaches the Sympto-Thermal method of determining fertility. The classes have full respect for Catholic teachings and call our students to follow the practice of chastity within their marriages.

The methods taught are 99 percent effective in avoiding pregnancy. Many of our student couples have experienced difficulty with fertility and use the method to achieve a pregnancy. We also teach many other aspects of a healthy sexual lifestyle which includes nutrition and its effect on females and male fertility.

Are earnings agency's aim?

To the editors:

We are all obligated to do God's work here on earth. Therefore, I wonder how performing abortions at Planned Parenthood's abortion clinic can be considered as working for God?

The only way that Planned Parenthood is working for the "almighty" is their working to earn the "almighty dollar."

Dianna R. Ives
Simpson Road, Rochester

The Couple to Couple League believes that sex is reserved for the renewal of the marriage covenant. We discuss these principles with our students and encourage them to pass the information along to their families and friends. The League also believes it is difficult to expect young people to respect a message of premarital abstinence when their parents resort to artificial means of birth control, living a contraceptive lifestyle within their home.

For Christians wanting to find a method of birth control which respects *Humanae Vitae*, please look within the *Courier* for dates, locations and times of our next classes. We welcome all married couples, engaged couples and mature adults wanting more information of this wonderful gift of fertility awareness.

Yves and Debbie Robinson
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