

Catholic Courier

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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.

Is pope condoning violence?

To the editors:

Horror after horror! Even more horrifying than the "School of the Assassins?" (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 20, page 1) was the article, "Vatican: World must focus on Balkan war" (page 5). It appears that our beloved Pope John Paul II has agreed to the opening of what could well become an abortion clinic in Bosnia. That is, he has provided a moral OK for military action in the area.

While calling for days of prayer and fasting, the Pope nevertheless feels he is a powerless witness to a process of death in the Balkans. He is frustrated that the international community, which is apparently not as powerless as the community of Jesus' followers, has failed to deal with an evil situation. He wants the nations to undertake "humanitarian intervention ... not primarily ... of a military type, but any kind of action aimed at disarming the aggressor."

Jesus was familiar with such aggressors, though the Romans had won long before. Jesus was not passive in the face of evil. He prayed, fasted and acted. He was not content to present moral principles and leave it to others to apply them, which is how the article describes the Pope's position. Jesus took it to them! That is, He took Himself, the Nonviolent Truth of God, to Jerusalem to confront an evil situation of religious complicity with injustice and violence. Unfortunately, His followers were imagining anything but Jesus' way of disarming aggressors when they fled His arrest scene.

What of Peter after the Lord forbade violence in His own legitimate defense? Peter denied he even knew a man who had let himself be taken so easily and he was absent at the Crucifixion.

We can hope and pray that our own Pope will be unashamed of Jesus and His example and that he will show imagination and courage. One can imagine a courageous Pope inspired by Jesus, Francis, Gandhi and Dorothy Day. He could call on Orthodox and Muslim leaders to go to Sarajevo with him to engage in prayer and non-violent action that could utterly confound the city's attackers and exorcise demons of hatred and fear. In Medjugorje, he could pray in reparation

for the massacre of 300 Serbian Orthodox on August 6, 1941 by Catholics on the same Mt. Podbrdo where Our Lady Queen of Peace has appeared.

To be willing to take upon oneself the sins of the nations in such fashion may risk life itself. It was not unthinkable that the apostles share Jesus' fate; that they drink from the same cup. Today, a witness to the Gospel of Peace and Reconciliation in the Balkans involves personal risk.

NATO leaders have made it clear that

bombings are how they are likely to interpret the Pope's moral principles. Why has John Paul hesitated to empower the universal Christian community with a more radical following of Jesus' non-violence? Perhaps he is hindered by 1,700 years of "just war" theory.

One hopeful thing in this issue was the list of Father Roy Bourgeois' Rochester appearances on page 14.

Mark Scibilia-Carver
Cold Springs Road
Trumansburg

Catholics must recognize communism is the enemy

To the editors:

The front page article of the *Catholic Courier* (Jan. 20: "School of Assassins?") stated that the U.S. military regularly trains Latin America military officers who then return to their respective countries and commit human rights violations; especially against the Catholic clergy.

Such attacks on the U.S. military aren't new but it is important that we consider the source of these charges. The Maryknollers are one source who have criticized U.S. support of anti-communist forces in Latin America.

One of their own, Sandinista foreign minister Miguel d'Escoto served an atheist government.

In El Salvador, slain members of the Catholic clergy had connections with the FMLN guerrillas; another Marxist organization. This doesn't excuse their murderers but it does give insight into the reason for these killings.

It should also be noted that the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and leftist guerrillas in El Salvador have been involved in many assassinations and acts of terrorism.

Despite leftist threats, voters in El Salvador voted in the government they now have. In no way did they voice any support for the guerrillas and liberation theology.

Ironically, I have noted little protest for the persecution and murder of

Catholic clergy in communist countries.

China and Cuba come to mind where many Catholics have suffered loss of life as well as torture.

We Catholics should realize that Marxism, i.e. communism is our enemy and the enemy of all faiths.

Robert W. Bart
Ithaca

EDITORS' NOTE: The article in question did not state that "the U.S. military regularly trains Latin America military officers who then return to their respective countries and commit human rights violations; especially against the Catholic clergy." The article stated that critics make this charge.

Do school initials have extra meaning?

To the editors:

The initials of the U.S. Army School of the Americas are, by providential coincidence, the same letters added in the past to a Hispanic child in the birth certificate, when the father was not known, meaning "no other surname" (*sin otro apellido*), and implying bastardy...

Need I say more?

Dr. Enrique Hernandez-Miyares Jr.
Chili Avenue, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with our letters policy.

Officials must remember that they are servants

To the editors:

Financial control and responsibility are sadly lacking in too many sectors of life — family, private business, government religions, etc. Every human being is responsible for his or her stewardship be it mundane or spiritual in this life. Deci-

sions, to do or not to do are made by each one of us of our own free will.

Control and responsibility are the two main words to be used in spending and in purchasing when people's money is involved, regardless of sector. Prudence, wisdom and restraint must be used in a

Solomon-like manner in expending or buying, only on as needs basis, never spend more than can be afforded!

I have seen occasions when a successor in various sectors has been strapped by the "sins" of predecessors, like an albatross around his or her neck! What a sad situation to be straddled with, especially in the family and even churches of every denomination.

Let us take the religious sector as an example where successors are the victims of an unwanted inheritance such as a salary expenditure of over 50 percent — fringe benefits included — of the gross income/contributions. What a sad state of financial affairs caused by lack of administrative ability, financial responsibility and control. This despite the fact that a clergyman is fulfilling his religious duties as expected of him by our heavenly father. He may very well be a deeply religious clergyman but a poor administrator, possibly due to lack of training. Sad but true in too many cases.

I believe in tithing to my church and giving to responsible charities religious or otherwise. I also believe the receivers must practice financial control of contributions and be responsible administrators.

Finally, to all administrators, regardless of sector: purchase and spend wisely with control and responsibility!! As the timeless proverb states, "You are our servants, not our masters."

Francis J. Mastropietro
Clark Street, Auburn

Parish Profile offered awakened memories of less-favorable time for Rte. 104 Catholics

To the editors:

The feature on St. Mary's Parish, Ontario, (*Catholic Courier*, Parish Profile, Jan. 13: "St. Mary's parishioners provide helping hands") brought back memories of a far different time along Route 104 East. Several years ago, in the towns through which that road then passed, Catholics, except in Webster, were persona non grata. As a result, it was very difficult for a priest to even buy a piece of property for a Catholic church.

The late Monsignor Charles Shea (then Father Shea) had been appointed to build and administer a church in one of these towns. He therefore asked his friend my late father, a Civil Engineer, to purchase and survey a piece of property for him. Any opposition came too late and the church was subsequently built.

Another religion-related incident also occurred some years later in Fair Haven. At that time we owned a cottage near this town and periodically attended St.

Thomas Church in Red Creek — the nearest to us — and we were therefore well aware of the lingering anti-Catholic sentiment.

Father Elmer Heindl, now in residence at St. Charles in Greece, was then the pastor of St. Thomas. He felt that the many Catholics who came to the nearby Fair Haven State Park, should have a conveniently located place for their summer worship. Thus, in view of the religious situation, he performed a feat everyone considered phenomenal. He persuaded the Fair Haven Masons to sell him their building — and at a very reasonable price — for use as a summer chapel. This action was truly a bright spot for 104's Catholics.

It was a pleasure therefore to learn, that though Route 104 itself still lacks the total reconstruction needed, the religious climate in the towns now adjoining it, has evidently improved considerably.

Marcella S. Ennis
Bonesteel Street, Rochester