

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.

'Noise' builds to crescendo of love

To the editors:

I hesitate to respond to Dr. Dennis Murphy's letter expressing his belief that the "shortage of religious in the Catholic Church is due to the loss of sanctity of the Church and to the Mass which has been reduced to a frivolous social gathering etc." (Catholic Courier, Feb. 3: "Preserve sanctity of the temple"). I truly am at a loss. I lack his eloquence and erudition. However, as a proud and happy Catholic lay person, I'm compelled to make the attempt!

The Church has lost its "sanctity?" Its "solemnity" maybe, but definitely not its sanctity! I no longer enter feeling intim-

idated by statues of the "Holy" creeping to find a seat to place this sinful and unworthy body, hoping that my presence is not an affront to an all perfect God! I know now that God resides within me endowing me with the "potential" to become much more than I am. Yes, He does extend an invitation to join Him at a "dinner party." He has much to tell me of my obligations to perform and get involved. He says that my "quiet" body sitting in "solemn reverence" is not the essence of His message. True, this does change the atmosphere of the "temple." I now sing out — off key, to be sure, but with joy and pumping blood! I clap my

hands, sway my body — and, at the end of Mass, ask "Lord, how can I serve you?" I've been made aware from the pulpit of my brothers' needs and told that as a Baptized Catholic I have an obligation to act! Dr. Murphy, we don't lack reverence today. We simply are not allowed to hide behind "solemnity" any longer. Idle, clasped hands will not bring us Home. Dirty, helping ones will!

Again, Dr. Murphy, you are offended by the "omnipotent" God being reduced to our "buddy." I honestly believe that if God wanted to remain "aloof" and "worshipped" He would not have bothered to send Christ! Fifth-graders are taught that yes, they have a "buddy," a "best friend." Christ is waiting at their shoulder, always there, hoping for the invitation to be the guiding force in their lives. They definitely do have a buddy! "Lack of reverence?" No! More tangible love — an awareness of just how special they are — for God to walk beside them!

"Silly games and activities to occupy the crowds?" Oh Dr. Murphy, one of us has surely missed the point! Even the little children are brought to God's Word by taking active participation in a game or activity which gives understanding to a message which is just beyond their present level of maturity. However, their young hearts are trained to respond.

"Ministers taken for granted?" No! We are strongly impressed that our Pastor is in there with us, not above us. We all have a job to do! That does mean "noise" yes, but haven't you noticed the smiles on people's faces, the joy in the children attending Mass with their families, the warm hugs and expressions of "Welcome" from the "Greeters" at the door? Isn't your heart filled with anticipation in coming to the Lord's banquet? Doesn't happiness have a "Sound?"

I agree with you, Dr. Murphy, that quiet and reverent prayer is essential to our growth. Thomas Merton reminds us that no matter how busy we become, we must never forget that prayer and the Eucharist is our "spiritual food." We simply no longer see our Mass and our Church as "serious and solemn." We have discovered the real presence and real significance of God. That's why our "Temple" is no longer "quiet." It is, to use your words, "building to a crescendo" — but of performing love. Listen. Listen to our music, and join us.

Evelyn A. Dodd
Windmill Road, Pittsford

Sample rite at St. Stanislaus

To the editors:

Dr. Dennis K. Murphy's anguished letter of Feb. 3 ("Preserve sanctity of the temple") prompted me to encourage him — our Holy Father is well aware of Catholics like Dr. Murphy who long for the traditional liturgy and the awe and sense of the sacred which accompany it. In fact, he issued a letter (*Motu proprio Ecclesia Dei*) in 1988, urging bishops to grant to the faithful who were attached to it, the Mass of the 1962 Roman Missal.

Bishop Clark graciously consented, and since last June, St. Stanislaus Church on Hudson Avenue in Rochester has been the site for this precious heritage. The pastor and parishioners of St. Stanislaus have carefully preserved the tabernacle on the high altar, as well as statues, candles, etc. in this beautiful church.

Because the church is conveniently located off Route 104, the 1:30 p.m. Sunday

Mass time enables Catholics from the far reaches of our diocese to attend. Holy Day Masses are also scheduled, but at different times. Those times are usually announced in advance. All the Masses are offered by several of our own diocesan priests who share our love for this sacred rite.

Most of the Masses are quiet low Masses. However, strains of sacred music intermingle with clouds of incense at the occasional High Masses. The next two are scheduled for March 13 and April 17.

Sanctity, solemnity, quiet, and awe are components of the Tridentine Mass, and not all Catholics like these qualities, but for those like Dr. Murphy who do, the sacrifices required to travel to St. Stanislaus are spiritually rewarding.

Jean M. Lloyd
Glendale Park
Rochester

Lent is ideal season to increase repentance for sexual offenses

To the editors:

Our Lord came on earth as the God-man to redeem mankind and win eternal salvation for all of us.

John, the Baptizer, the one who was to prepare the way of the Lord's emergence, preached repentance. Repentance means to be truly sorry for our sins and to sincerely amend our lives. John denounced those that came to him for merely ritualistic reasons without a change of heart (Matthew 3:7-12).

Our Lord's message too was very simple and quite clear — repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. Unless we are obtuse, we must realize that this directive was not just for the people of that time but for people of all time.

Many people in those days and down through the ages up to our time did repent and are numbered among the saved. But I submit that there are others in today's world that are directly lacking any repentance. And the sins that are most predominant involve sex in one way or another. Those who are guilty want to be accepted as normal, moral, respectable people even though in their heart of hearts they know they are not.

And sexual sins are particularly heinous because they desecrate our body which is meant to be a temple for the living God (1 Corinthians 6:19). St. Paul warned us: "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Thank God that forgiveness is available and possible up to the moment of death. But for one to rely on a death bed conversion is the height of folly. The time to repent is now — before we are called to judgment.

The season of Lent is a good way to begin or increase true repentance through alms, penance, and prayers. Say it often: "I am most heartily sorry for all my sins ... I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

Jerry Paladino
Route 14
Rock Stream

Writer creates stigma against God

To the editors:

Concerning the article in your Jan. 20 edition "N.O.W. member scoffs at new right," the *Catholic Courier* has stooped to yet another new low. Why would *Catholic Courier* publish a mistress to Planned Parenthood's twisted view? The National Organization for Women does not even have an iota of truth even worthy of comment on rights, especially in a "catholic" newspaper. To further my point, it would be comparable to a member of Operation Rescue writing a commentary in a Planned Parenthood newsletter. This would not be allowed by the opposition, why would it be allowed by the *Catholic Courier*?

For the unfortunate souls who were subjected to Ms. Strand's perfidious comments, let's clarify the truth. To start with the basics, it is true that we are all created in God's own image; however the maleness of the supreme God is revealed by Jesus Himself in called God "His heavenly Father." Surely, Ms. Strand does not doubt Jesus' knowledge of knowing who His Father is. In the same light of truth, the Mother of God the Son is the Holy Blessed Virgin Mary. What greater tribute to women everywhere could there be than to elevate all women by Our Lady

being the true mother of Jesus and of each one of us? Is the real problem with equality the non-acceptance of our pre-determined role? Her distortion of truth continues, as she states "women have been consigned to the parts department in the church of the past." One need only look at Ms. Strand's view of woman's creation "from the expanded male rib" to realize she is creating a negative stigma against God that leaves one questioning God's motives. This was the same type of propaganda used to pit the Germans against the Jews to establish a hate-base against the Jewish nation. Define the enemy, identify the problem, instill fear in society, establish a power base, which is their true motive all along. Her propaganda continues as she relates that a woman's head is replaced spiritually by that of her husband's in marriage. She directly refers to St. Peter in his first letter "wives be submissive to your husbands," but she fails to state that Peter directs husbands to "likewise bestow honor on the woman." One can only conclude that Ms. Strand's bible is a bible that only tells you what she wants you to hear. Propaganda at its best.

Michael P. Valerio
Malin Lane Penfield