

OPINION COMMENTARY

Program provides preventive care

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.

To the editors:

Your recent articles concerning the "Diocesan Synod" and "The International Year of the Family" addressed the need for the Church to do more in the area of facilitating marital communication not only prior to the wedding, but throughout the marriage.

We wish to bring to your attention that the Catholic Church already offers such a program — it's called Worldwide Marriage Encounter. It was started by Catholic couples and priests right here in New York state 25 years ago and has spread worldwide to over 92 countries with over 2.5 million couples having experienced the weekend. It's a crash course in communication presented from a Catholic perspective but open to all happily married couples regardless of faith, race or financial status.

It seems to us that Marriage Encounter is the perfect follow-up to Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter and could help reduce the number of couples who end up in troubled marriages and then have to rely on the wonderful healing program of Retrouvaille. These programs are not in competition, but are uniquely complementary to one another. As in medicine today with the focus on prevention, our goal should be to keep the marriage healthy and alive and not in waiting until the little disillusionments and upsets that we all can experience are allowed to grow like a cancer in our relationship until the marriage is terminal.

Solving individual marital problems



has never been the goal of Marriage Encounter. Instead, during the weekend a husband and wife are given the opportunity to share the feelings which so often are kept buried inside. They are taught how to make such communication a part of their everyday lives. While the modern world stresses individualism, Marriage Encounter emphasizes the beauty of belonging totally to another. While society seems to glamorize tem-

porary relationships, Marriage Encounter teaches that marriage is a joyous celebration of God's plan for men and women.

We can both attest to how much this weekend has done not only for our relationship but in our spiritual life and commitment to the Church. And we're not alone.

Truly from our own experience in talking with other couples, and the growing number of annulments granted by the diocese; the need for increased marital communication, hence Marriage Encounter, is greater now than ever before. Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends are given

every month right here in the Rochester Diocese.

For more information on upcoming weekend dates here in Rochester, or for more information, call us at 964-2383 or 1-800-795-LOVE. It's a wonderful way to fall in love with each other and your Church all over again.

Bill & Kathie Lenhart
Curtisdale Lane, Hamlin
and Father Jack Murray, CSB

Scripture warns about 'great falling away'

To the editors:

I'd like to thank Michael DeLorme for his wonderfully lucid letter in the Jan. 27 *Courier* ("Get in sync with moral tradition").

Those of us who support the Vatican's teachings do so not out of a mindless docility but because they contain the unmistakable ring of spiritual truth.

The same voice who speaks to us in the Holy Scripture — remember them? — and tradition can be recognized in current Vatican teachings. It is that of the Holy Spirit, maintaining the truths given us from the beginning. He will not alter truth to suit our more "enlightened" times, and those who would do it in His place cannot claim to be led by Him.

There are false doctrines creeping into all of Christianity, for instance the growing movement to include the worship of female deities in an heretical attempt to make Christianity relevant to women. True, this movement is at present on the fringes of organized religion, but how long before it begins to sound "reasonable" and "compassionate" to the open-minded thinkers in the Church?

We were warned in the Scriptures of a

Keep abortion out of health-care program

To the editors:

The Declaration of Independence, second sentence, says "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Would you kindly look up a dictionary these words "endowed, certain and unalienable"?

Then please write or call your three Congresspersons and let them know you do not want any national health care plan that includes abortion. Because abortion is not health care. This is also self-evident.

Mary Rita Crowe
Main Street, Rochester

great falling away before Christ's return. Not a reformation, but an apostasy. This falling away is not characterized by the fact that we all sin and fall short of God's glory, but by the belief that we have the right to determine our own spiritual and moral parameters. In other words, Truth is whatever the individual claims it is, and it's all acceptable to the Godhead.

We have a wonderful freedom in God's grace and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. This freedom enables us to conform to Christ's image without being

hopelessly shackled to sin. It in no way gives us the right to reject His rock of Truth and find our own way in the shifting sands. Such a course is apostasy, even when taken in the name of love. Love is unconditional acceptance of the sinner, not the sin. Compassion is love reaching out to heal, not finding the lowest common denominator for spiritual standards.

May the Holy Spirit renew His church to stand against the gates of hell.

Sandra Dunn
Mattie Street, Auburn

Budget plan threatens assistance to growing numbers of the hungry

To the editors:

With the release of President Clinton's proposed, Fiscal Year 1995 budget, the national debate regarding spending priorities, investments, and deficit reduction will increase to a level where short-term expediency will drive both immediate and long-term human needs. While some federally-funded programs can be deferred and in some cases eliminated, food for the hungry — whose numbers are steadily growing — is a need which must be met now.

The president's budget calls for elimination of supplementary commodity purchases — food staples: rice, flour, canned fruits and vegetables, etc. from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). This dry fact disguises the human price to be paid; those who cannot maintain a steady supply of food for themselves and their families will, if TEFAP is lost, simply have to do without.

President Clinton's well-intentioned efforts — I think — to transfer federal dollars to help pay for health care are, in this instance, short-sighted. Inadequate nutrition leads to poor health; it is more cost-effective to provide preventative care — in this case, nutritious food — than to medically treat those who are undernourished.

For the young, proper nutrition is es-

essential for success in school. And while school lunch programs — and in some schools, breakfast — are doing fine work, what happens when schools are closed for weekends, holidays, and vacation periods? Don't forget that one out of every five children in the United States suffers from hunger; the loss of TEFAP will only exacerbate this tragic statistic.

In 1992-93, the Southern Tier Community Food Bank distributed over one million pounds of TEFAP commodities to Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins County food pantries and soup kitchens; this is the equivalent of 25 tractor trailer loads. A proportional loss will affect the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania.

It cannot be assumed that other programs will pick up the slack. The Food Bank will work with area donors to acquire additional food, but there is a limit to their capacity as well. In order to assure quality food for those in need — who, by the way, include the 25 percent of food recipients with full-time jobs, the "working poor" — the public needs to let Congress know that deficit reduction cannot be achieved at the expense of the hungry.

John P. Farrer, Director
Southern Tier
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