

OPINION COMMENTARY

Catholic Courier

1150 Buffalo Road
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340

President

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

Editor/Asst. Gen. Mgr.

Karen M. Franz

Editorial Department

Managing Editor

Richard A. Kiley

Senior Staff Writer

Lee Strong

Finger Lakes

Staff writers

Rob Cullivan

Genesee Valley

Mike Latona

Southern Tier

Staff Photographer

S. John Wilkin

Photo Intern

Lauren McFalls

Business Department

Circulation Manager

Jeanne A. Morin

Office Manager

Amy D'Accursio

Receptionist

Lenna Hurley

Advertising Department

Advertising Manager

Bernie Puglisi

Advertising Account Exec.

Kathy Welsh

Production Department

Graphics Manager

Lorraine Hennessey

Graphic Artist

Kim Parks

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 letter 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.

Readers react to fingerprinting

Applauds dioceses for avoiding position on government issue

To the editors:

Regarding Rob Cullivan's balanced report on the Church's reaction to fingerprinting food stamp recipients (*Catholic Courier*, March 10: "Church's reaction mixed to fingerprinting").

I normally abhor fence sitting but in this case I applaud the various Dioceses which have not taken a Pro or Con stand on fingerprinting food stamp recipients. The issue of fingerprinting does not easily lend itself to right and wrong conclusions because with this subject we are dealing with personal Feelings and Perceptions; with a capital F and P.

In this case I am content to support the judgment of the government agencies which have the responsibility for making and enforcing the rules governing the distribution of welfare benefits and initiating systems which protect against fraudulent receipt of food stamps so long as there is no clearly implied stigma attached to those systems.

In my adult life time I have had six different jobs - I prefer to call them career starts. I have also been unemployed twice. Three of my jobs required fingerprinting which, I could have inferred, implied a lack of trust in me. I chose instead to take the broader view that fingerprinting implied a lack of trust in a small percentage of job seekers who also were or had been wrong doers. I would have had the same view if fingerprinting was required in order to receive my unemployment check or if I was unfortunate enough to require welfare benefits.

I have been appalled by the mean-spirited, counterproductive finger pointing that has found verbal and printed expression in the community.

I submit that this subject has been talked to death and that the responsible government officials should either implement or cancel the fingerprinting plan.

Richard B. Blankfield
Nichols Street
Spencerport



File Photo

Stigmatizing the poor contradicts teachings

To the editors:

Regarding the article, "Church's reaction mixed to fingerprinting," the following may be helpful for reflection for those who find the opposition of Church leaders less than understandable:

"(We) should refrain from actions, words, or attitudes that stigmatize the poor, that exaggerate the benefits received by the poor, and that inflate the amount of fraud in welfare payments." (From *Economic Justice for All*, Nov., 1986.)

Additionally, in the same document, the bishops remind us to have the same attitudes about programs for the poor as programs for the middle and upper classes: "Some of the most generous subsidies for individuals and corporations are taken for granted (e.g., tax breaks) and are not even called benefits."

There was no confusion in the mind of Archbishop Oscar Romero, the 14th anniversary of whose martyrdom is noted this month, and whose life in honor

of human dignity and our Church's preferential option for the poor gave witness to his proclamation that "A Church that does not unite itself to the poor in order to denounce from the place of the poor the injustice committed against them is not truly the Church of Jesus Christ."

It's hard to imagine clearer reflections of Jesus' own statement of his mission as recorded in Luke 4:16-21, specifically, and generally throughout the Gospels, and in the House of Mercy's Organizing Project and the Catholic Family Center representatives' statements, we have local examples that the mission is still envisioned and lived. To the extent that we fail to read the signs of the times, to that extent do we lose sight of God's Presence in the most unlikely places, and even the very Good News God continues to make known.

Judith E. Kiehl
pastoral associate
Holy Trinity Church
Webster

History, tradition insist on male priests

To the editors:

The letter in the Jan. 27, 1994 issue of the *Catholic Courier* from Sheryl Zabel on feminism begged for a charitable but truthful response. She stated that her personal "non-serviam" was accepting what she called, the "patriarchal authoritarianism in Christianity." What left me astonished was her next line, in which she emphatically stated with all the conviction of an ex cathedra pronouncement, that the Church's patriarchal hierarchy, "is not an essential part of the Good News of Jesus Christ." I was sent reeling.

The historical fact is, that our Lord Jesus Christ entrusted the full propagation of that self-same Good News and the fullness of the ministerial-priesthood only to the 12 apostles. The Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church #20 said, "Therefore, the Sacred Council teaches that bishops by divine institution have succeeded to the place of the apostles, as shepherds of the Church." ...

... The male bishop is extremely significant and in fact, an indispensable part of the Good News! It is undeniably God's will that a male episcopate exist throughout all time, as was shown in the manner in which He chose them. Even the pope himself, has no authority to change this. Also, the Blessed Virgin did

not partake of the ministerial priesthood, although she was more worthy than all the apostles put together, if holiness alone was the criterion. It was not.

The Scripture passage that is cited most often, and misinterpreted most inevitably by feminists is Galatians 3:28 in which St. Paul mentioned the equality between men and women. He was simply speaking of the incorporation of the children of God into the Mystical Body of Christ through Baptism, regardless of any natural differences. This has nothing whatsoever to do with the ministerial priesthood. Many attempt to promote the idea that Jesus was affected by the cultural and sociological conditions of the day, in His not choosing women as apostles. However, He actually broke with not a few of these cultural conventions as is seen in Luke 7:36-50, John 4:1-45 and John 8:1-11...

... All feminists - moderate or radical - would do very well to humbly read the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood" and also Pope John Paul II's "On the Dignity and Vocation of Women." There are some very beautiful and profound teachings in these documents...

Certainly, we must all remember that men and women are equal in dignity in

the Church but simply unequal in office according to the mind of Christ. The priesthood is not a "right" but a tremendous gift! ...

... In Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People #51, ... Pope John Paul II spoke to us with profundity on the Church's ability to ordain only men. He said, "This is a practice that the Church has always found in the expressed will of Christ, totally free and sovereign, who called only men to be his apostles; a practice that can be understood from the rapport between Christ, the Spouse, and his Bride, the Church. Here we are in the area of function, not of dignity and holiness."

In his address to the United States bishops on September 23, 1983, the Holy Father said, "Bishops are to withdraw all support from any individual or organization ... who promotes the ordination of women to the priesthood." With his beautifully blunt clarity, St. Augustine would have rendered that, *Roma locuta est; causa finita est*. That is, "Rome has spoken; the case is closed."

Daniel J. Sheffield
Chairman
Catholics United for the Faith
Sacred Heart of Jesus Chapter
Elmira

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

r of eco-
University
ll-trained
" he said.
rket."
D-member
man joint
al writing
Christian
se in these
gh a series
sentatives
ss and po-
preparing
ment they
ployment
t concrete
er Henri
ops' social
ceived for
ity but it
d.
new state-
s on more
d Father
our coun-
erty, said
cretary of
fairs com-
review of
," he said.
written by
does not
t also pro-
n Catholic
id Father
e Maritain
ese docu-
rld is the
ter on the
itten after
rings with
section of
olitical life.
loring the
d in Latin
d the U.S.
tin Amer-
i.
iny minor-
shows that
on the eco-
documents
s.
of an elite"
is impor-
cle contains
rice.
of church-re-
mity devel-
1 to contact
T
IE
ted
RNDT
IDT
ad
ie)