

# Courier seeks to improve letters page

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Last month when I asked you to comment on the Letters to the Editor section of the *Catholic Courier*, I expected a higher volume of mail than I received. In fact, I received fewer this time than I have received from you when I asked for your comments on other subjects.

I am surprised by that because the subject very often comes up in conversations I have with people about the *Catholic Courier*. Generally speaking, the folks with whom I participate in such conversations complain about that feature of the publication.

Their complaints are: 1) that we keep publishing material from the same people time after time, 2) that the letters are too often negative in tone — indeed, that they include unacceptable, bitter attacks on individuals and 3) the *Catholic Courier* can't stop individuals from writing such letters, but should refuse to print them.

While the letters I received on the topic this month were few, they did strongly confirm the points of view expressed above. Let me illustrate their content with a few excerpts

"...why can't some letters be edited to comply with common decency to our readers."

"...so many letters have been vicious and affronting."

"...there are certain correspondents whose angry letters (with some axes to grind) appear regularly."

"...my real problem is with letters to the



## A LONG THE WAY

editor which attack the Church, priests and even yourself. I think the paper should represent both liberal and conservative elements, but not present a forum for (the) mean spirited..."

If the kinds of questions listed above are always a part of conversations about the letters section, so is the question, "Why don't the people who are basically pleased and happy write more?"

When I ask the question myself, I am inevitably told that those who are discontent about a situation or issue are much more inclined to express their displeasure in writing, than are those who are pleased with the same situation or issue. I am inclined to believe that answer, but it doesn't provide much help in persuading men and women who have positive things to say about our life together to sit down and write about

them.

A married couple wrote to suggest that we, "include a question at the end of the letter section, once a month, asking for reader response in a specific area." I was much interested in that point of view. We had discussed the idea at a recent meeting of the *Catholic Courier* board. All were interested in it but wondered if the usual group of regular correspondents would be the only ones to respond. The discussion led to the idea that we might consider a variation on that theme, viz., that we mail a question of interest to a randomly selected group of readers and ask them to send in their responses for publication.

There has been no decision made about that particular possibility as yet. I mention it simply to illustrate the interest of the *Catholic Courier* board and staff in making our paper a forum for a thoughtful and lively exchange of ideas. We will continue to welcome any ideas you may have that will help us to do that.

In the meantime, let me ask you to consider the possibility of writing a letter to the *Catholic Courier*. One way to improve the quality of letters to our paper is to write quality letters. Salute good work. Offer an honest criticism. Propose an idea. Make a good suggestion. Test an opinion. Ask for feedback to an idea. People will be interested and — who knows — they may offer some interesting responses.

Thanks for your kind attention.

Peace to all.

### Kids' Chronicle Answer Key

1. love 2. peace 3. kindness 4. faithfulness 5. self control
6. joy 7. patience 8. goodness 9. humility

A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be greatly appreciated.

## THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

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**PRAYERS AND SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR PRIESTS**

<p>V. Lord, open our lips. R. And we shall praise Your name. V. O God, come to our aid. R. O Lord, make haste to help us.</p> <p><b>Scripture Reading:</b> One of the following may be used: Matt. 9:35-38    Mark 10:28-30 Luke 5:1-11    Luke 14:25-33 Jn. 1:35-52    Jn. 15:9-17 2 Cor. 5:14-20    Heb. 5:1-10 Gen. 12:14    Exod. 3:1-6:9-12 1 Sam. 3:1-10    Jer. 1:6-8.</p>	<p><b>A Litany of Saints:</b> St. Michael and St. Raphael St. Joseph    St. John Vianney St. Peter and St. Paul    St. Terese of Lisieux St. Patrick    St. Maximilian Kolbe St. Francis    St. Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila St. Dominic St. Catherine of Sienna St. Vincent de Paul St. John Eudes St. Margaret Clitherow</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>R. Pray for our bishops and priests</i></p>
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**MAY, 1994**  
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## 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

# WXXI AUCTION

Back to the Future

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### TELEBARGAINS GALORE!

<b>Thursday - 4/28</b>	<b>Sports</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Friday - 4/29</b>	<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Saturday - 4/30</b>	<b>Kids &amp; Family</b>	<b>2:00 p.m.</b>
	<b>Travel &amp; Leisure</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>

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