

OPINION COMMENTARY

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 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.

Gifts of God obligate us to use good stewardship

To the editors:

From the moment of conception, everything that we are and have — skills, talents, health, job, family, friends, income, faith, everything — are all gifts from God directly or indirectly. The only thing that we can claim as ours alone is sin.

These gifts have been given not only to help us accomplish our special mission but also to enhance the kingdom of God on earth. When our brief sojourn is finished, we must render an accounting of our stewardship. The criteria for that judgment can be found in Matthew 25:31-46. With that in mind, it behooves us to cover all these bases either through personal service and/or by our financial support and prayers for those who do these things.

We can never match God's generosity to us nor ever repay Him for all the countless graces and blessings that He has showered upon us, our loved ones, and the world. We can and should, however, be eternally grateful and express our appreciation by not letting a single day pass without giving Him thanks and praise.

When we were baptized and were thus elevated to a supernatural level of life, we became a member of the team — so to speak — to proclaim the Good News,



to be the presence of Christ in the world, and to do the works that He has called us to do.

We know that God can do all things and does not need anyone or anything to accomplish His purpose. But in His inscrutable wisdom, God invites us to share in His work of loving care and concern for others. So when we are asked to give of our time, talent, or treasure, look upon these requests as opportunities rather than encroachments and if after due prayer for guidance and discernment the Spirit so moves you, respond with a generous and joyful heart.

Jerry Paladino
Rock Stream, N.Y.

Are liturgical changes leading us to lose constancy of the church?

To the editors:

Having been educated through the Catholic school system since Vatican II was adopted by Pope John 23rd, I have been witness to a great deal of change in the Roman Catholic Church, both locally and universally. I have watched as the communion rail disappeared, as altar boys became altar boys and girls, as women began delivering sermons from the pulpit, as liturgical dancers paraded down the aisle, as the processional aisle of the Cathedral was chopped in half, as the baptismal font was put aside in favor of baptisms on the main altar, and where music in the liturgy has come to the point where you begin to wonder whether anyone has noticed that other than the person on the altar conducting and the choir, very few of the congregation are singing, thus taking away the part of the Mass where the congregation would nor-

mally recite a response.

I thought I had witnessed just about everything until I picked up the Liturgy book this week and discovered the word "him" crossed out and replaced with "person." In their zeal to make this sexist change, this "person" inadvertently crossed out the wrong sentence! Instead they crossed out a passage referring to our Lord Jesus Christ as "him," who I'm quite sure we'd all agree is a "him!" My point is quite simple: we're losing the reverence of the Mass. Yes, of course, as we pass through through the journey of life, we encounter many changes. The church was always the constant; when it seemed like the whole world was crashing down, you could always count on the church. How close are we to losing that?

Alan Rector
Flower City Park
Rochester

Radiant pearl of Scripture justifies beliefs

To the editors:

Recently I read an article in which a Catholic theologian was attempting to explain our love and devotion to the Blessed Mother in light of Her seemingly minor role in the Gospels. His defense was that we as Catholics do not feel the need to justify all of our beliefs with Scripture. Can this possibly be true?

I am a Catholic, yet I feel a great need to reconcile my beliefs with God's Holy Word, to find the seeds of those beliefs in the written teachings of Christ and His Apostles.

We seem to have a modern-day version of the Scribes and Pharisees in our biblical scholars and theologians, who sometimes focus more ardently on the context in which the Scriptures were written than on the deep truths con-

tained in the text itself.

Which has more value, an oyster or the pearl therein? God's truth is a pearl of great price, wrapped in the language and syntax of individual men in specific cultural periods, but formed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who transcends time and language.

The meaning of the Scriptures is not made clear by dissection, but by revelation, and the same scriptural truth revealed to Augustine and Thomas Aquinas and all the Saints of the Church is revealed to us — harmonious, unchanging and universal. Surely we must feel a need to justify our beliefs with such a radiant and indestructible foundation?

Sandra Dunn
Mattie Street, Auburn

Asks parishes to say liturgy in support of unborn life

To the editors:

In response to Bishop Matthew H. Clark's invitation to submit ideas through the opinion/letter column, herewith:

(I suggest) a Diocesan wide day of reparation for the annihilated fetus — numbered in the millions.

A day, hopefully annually, when each parish concentrates and consecrates a special and unique Eucharistic liturgy and prayer for the victims of abortion.

The beautiful Mass of the unborn seems not really adequate to express the enormity of the need. The loss of fetus due to unintended illness, miscarriage and accident is benign in relation to the intended, violent and massive carnage of abortion.

Publicly protesting the act of abortion is essential. But left unsaid is the final act — the publicly noticed act of love and affirmation of life by we Catholic Christians. Done in strength of numbers and on the same day, many more Christians will be encouraged to reverence life.

Robert L. McAllister
Hamilton Street, Wayland

Doctor blasts policy at bingo

To the editors:

I am distressed that St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua is allowing people to begin smoking again at bingo. As a physician who spends a great deal of time dealing with the consequences of cigarette smoking — i.e. hypertension, angina, heart attacks, and lung disease — I am outraged that a Church would encourage people to smoke. To play on person's addictions for monetary gain is morally indefensible. Shame on you.

Roger Vince, MD, FACC
Main Street
Canandaigua

EDITORS' NOTE: This is a tough question. Perhaps in subsequent letters, bingo officials at St. Mary's — and other parishes as well — might like to comment on the practical and ethical implications of tolerating players' behavior vs. trying to restrict it.

God's law is eternal

To the editors:

The ad hominem and unjust attack on Michael Gallagher (*Catholic Courier*, May 5: "Skeptics can use assistance, not rejection") deserves a response. Michael Gallagher and his family live their Faith.

(Father) Paul English states "The world has changed." Change has been used as an argument to permit the destruction of the unborn, the elderly and fetal experimentation. But, God does not change. His law is immutable and eternal: "Thou shalt not kill."

Mary E. Buttarazzi and Ronald J. Buttarazzi
Church Street, Fairport

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