

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.

Questions point on death penalty

To the editors:

"Preserving the common good of society requires rendering the aggressor unable to inflict harm. For this reason the traditional teaching of the Church has acknowledged, as well founded, the right and duty of legitimate public authority to punish malefactors by means of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime, not excluding, in cases of extreme gravity, the death penalty."

With this concise clarity the new catechism clearly defines the Church's teaching on capital punishment. The teaching is not new for it has been repeatedly reaffirmed by various popes and councils almost since the time of Christ. Although our present pope and Mother Teresa personally advocated for the reversal of the death penalty for several individuals, their actions were individual decisions, done perhaps with the intent of showing mercy for the condemned, but they did not carry any weight as official church teaching for others to follow.

I am puzzled by a recent (column) in the *Courier* by Sister Pat Schoelles (June 16: "Struggle shows reality, beauty of moral life") that states church teaching was in opposition to the death penalty. Such information placed an undue burden on that unfortunate individual (discussed in the column) and resulted in much consternation and difficulty. Although not the case here, such misinformation could seriously impair one's relationship with the church as so often has happened in similar circumstances.

Having difficulty with church teaching is understandable and to practice patience, assist the troubled and to counsel the doubtful are, as stated in the article, great acts of charity and are commendable but the misrepresentation or misunderstanding of church teaching, particularly by those in positions of au-



thority only serves to confuse the faithful and has the potential of doing much harm.

A great deal of confusion has arisen within the church within the last 25 years concerning various moral issues but their accurate presentation and reaffirmation in the new catechism does much to help us more accurately reflect the teachings of Christ. The new catechism is a must for all who are interested in learning more about their faith.

Michael R. Aiello, M.D., president
The Catholic Physician's Guild

Why are we so 'poorly blessed?'

To the editors:

Your front page spread in the *Catholic Courier* (June 16) on the priest shortage is indeed sad.

While this problem is a reality in this diocese as well as some other places, the shortage is not everywhere as many are lead to believe. I personally keep in contact with three seminaries in the East: two in Connecticut and one in Pennsylvania who have an abundance of vocations to the priesthood. They are the Legionaries of Christ who are soon to open a new formation house near New York because of the need for more space; the Holy Apostles Seminary for mature men formerly in a secular vocation; and the Fraternity of St. Peter, who this year had a hundred applicants but could only accept 60 because of the lack of accommodations. All of these seminaries are 100 percent behind the Holy Father and the Magisterium of the Church. Could that be the key to vocations?

Last week two young men of this area — one I met personally — left for the Le-

gionaries of Christ. These are two that I know of there could be more, so there are generous young men out there, they just are not coming here. The question is, why is the Rochester Diocese so poorly blessed? I think our religious leaders should think about this and research these seminaries to see what they are doing right.

One more question. Since we have ordained deacons, was there not one among them who could have been assigned to St. Gabriel's instead of an unordained person to be pastoral administrator? An ordained deacon could administer at least some of the sacraments. Also, with such a shortage of priests why do they go on Sabbaticals? When I was in Catholic school I never heard of a Sabbatical. And why are priests asked to retire at the age of 70. Today, with good health, 70 is not old.

I think many Catholics would like answers to these questions.

Dorothy Prinzi
Nile Drive, Rochester

Urges speedy action against abortion

To the editors:

Recently, the Synod selected the issue "Consistent Life Ethic" as one of the five priorities to be studied in the parishes. This is good news for all pro-lifers. However, the proposal is for a five year plan of study, and, with this in mind, I wrote Jack Balinsky, diocesan director of Social Ministry, suggesting a shorter, speeded-up plan, this in view of the great number of abortions — 4,400 per month — taking place in our country, and possibly an even greater number with the use of the RU

pill. Mr. Balinsky said the Synod is moving ahead with the Implementation Process and he noted the many pro-life projects the diocese has been active in. We at St. Charles parish have participated in most of these projects.

So we will continue at St. Charles doing what we can to inform and encourage people about the sanctity of life and hope and pray that our efforts will help lessen the number of abortions in our country.

Mary M. Studier
Mosley Road, Rochester

Honor women by appointing one a cardinal

To the editors:

I read with interest the text of the letter reaffirming ban on women priests, (June 9, 1994). "By defending the dignity of women and their vocation, the church has shown honor and gratitude for those women who — faithful to the Gospel — have shared in every age in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God" (*Mulieris Dignitatem*, 27).

Let's digress from the question of priesthood and let's talk about the College of Cardinals. I find it rather curious in this day and age that there is not one female serving Holy Mother the Church in this capacity. One does not have to be ordained to be a cardinal. I would humbly suggest that if the Church is serious about "honor and gratitude" Mother Teresa be appointed a cardinal.

One last caution — *Tempus fugit*.

Marion L. Brown
Irving Road, Rochester

Parish bans smoking

To the editors:

All Saints Academy, on State Street in Corning, will be expanding its Pre-K and Kindergarten to the St. Patrick's School Building on Denison Parkway this Fall. In response the Pastoral Council of St. Patrick's took a hard look at the effects of second-hand smoke and the impact it could have on our youngsters. The annual profit from our Saturday evening Bingo is around \$50,000. After weighing the two issues — our youngsters' health and \$50,000 for the Church — it was decided to ban smoking in the building for ALL occasions, including Bingo, effective July 1, 1994.

When our building opens in September as All Saints Academy on Denison Parkway, students and adults alike will be entering a totally smoke-free environment.

The Pastoral Council of
St. Patrick's Church, Corning