

Catholic Courier1150 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

Business Department

Circulation Manager

Jeanne A. Morin

Office Manager

Mary DiPonzio

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.

Wife seeks to balance assertions of sadness

To the editors:

I am writing this letter in reaction to Father Paul English's letter which appeared in your June 23 issue.

My intent is not to debate the issue of women's ordination. I believe that if it is in God's plan that women be ordained, then it will happen. The Spirit will make it happen — in God's time.

Rather, the purpose of this letter is to bring some balance to Father English's sense of sadness for women whose husbands have been ordained to the diaconate. I don't claim to speak for all of these women, I would just like to share my feelings with Father English and with your readers.

My husband, Ron, was one of the six men ordained to the diaconate on June 11. Together, we made the decision that he would answer God's call to this ministry and together we prepared and prayed for ordination day. I felt many emotions when my husband left my side and walked to Bishop Clark to receive the laying on of hands that day: pride, humility, love, God's presence, and an overall sense of joy. I did not feel anger or resentment or even sadness because I could not be ordained.

In the weeks since ordination, many people have asked me, "So, now that your husband's a deacon, what does that make you?" or "What do you get out of this?" The implication is that I've gone



File photo
Eight acolytes lay prostrate before the altar at Sacred Heart Cathedral during last year's deacon ordinations, with their wives kneeling behind them.

through this with him, but I got "nothing" out of it.

Well, let me answer those questions. Ron's ordination did not make me a deacon or a deaconess or Mrs. Deacon. I am what I was before his ordination — his wife. What I "got out of it" was four and a half years of growth — spiritual and intellectual — exposure to people and experiences that enriched my life, and a closeness with my husband that comes from having shared an intense and personal experience.

My husband, by his ordination answered a call from God. I helped him to do that. During the many years of our marriage, he has helped me to do likewise. The call to ministry comes to us in many ways, but we all received the

same call at baptism — to love and serve God through his people.

Paul, in his first letter to Corinthians, tells us about the many gifts that the Spirit gives. In that same letter, he also tells us that we are all a part of the body of Christ. Each of us has our own gifts and our own purposes as part of that body — all different and all necessary for its wholeness. I believe that I am using those gifts through the ministries I perform daily, so please don't feel sadness for me or resentment or bitterness that I was not "rewarded" with ordination. But, rather, rejoice with me as I find joy and fulfillment in serving the Body of Christ.

Cathy Tocci
Church Street, Fairport

Former insurer resents letter's implication

To the editors:

Father Bausch's letter to the editor (June 30) asserts that my Christian concern for the poor and vulnerable "should lead us to advocate for comprehensive health reform." This clearly implies that if I do not advocate for "comprehensive health reform," I (lack) Christian concern for the poor and vulnerable. I resent his implication.

Nothing has done more to destroy the fabric of the family in our society, eliminate the work ethic or waste more of taxpayers' hard-earned money than government entitlements, which is what "comprehensive health reform" could become. By creating permanent, government-managed entitlements such as welfare and Medicaid under the belief that we are helping the poor and vulnerable, we instead have created a dependent underclass that no longer has the need to provide income or health care for themselves. These entitlements will soon top \$1 trillion, representing 16 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. "Comprehensive health reform" a la Clinton will be no different, and it

will double entitlement spending.

What Father Bausch is advocating is a restrictive system of mandated benefits, price controls — that will lead to Canadian-style rationing — and subsidized coverage that comes out of our taxes and the goods we purchase...

... Universal access to health care exists in Rochester today, just as it does for water, electricity, food or housing. The problem is that a) insurers in many states can impose unfair restrictions on how insurance may or may not be purchased, and that b) in cases when it is available to anyone, it may be unaffordable because people do not have enough money to purchase health insurance or they do not receive it from their employer. Locally, the issue of access to insurance is virtually unrestricted. Moreover, the number of uninsured in relatively small: they represent only 6 percent of our community.

What is needed is not "universal access" — read subsidy — but the availability of affordable health insurance coverage that allows people to purchase it at equitable rates without being perma-

nently excluded for pre-existing conditions and allows people to transfer coverage to other insurers without penalty. In cases where we do subsidize coverage for the poor and vulnerable, we could provide them credits with which to purchase any plan they want — let the consumer choose and let competition among efficient private insurers for these consumers take place.

To think that the government can provide or manage these services more efficiently and effectively than the private sector is absolute folly. Ask anyone who is waiting for Medicare to pay a claim — eight weeks is not uncommon ... Then ask ... those who receive care from their local doctor or hospital and have their claim paid by Blue Cross or Preferred Care.

As Christians, no one can argue that we are all obligated to reach out to the poor and vulnerable. However, we are not obligated to allow them to become permanently dependent on us. To twist Christian morality, as Father Bausch has, into a political rallying cry is irresponsible at least. To twist it into the creation of another entitlement program that will continue to erode that which is good about our culture is worse. To twist it into a condemnation, no matter how slight, of those Christians who believe otherwise is an outrage.

John L. Sobraske
Longview Terrace
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: In a postscript, Mr. Sobraske identified himself as a former product manager for Blue Cross and Blue Shield's ValuMed and Child Health Plus programs, which provide basic health insurance for low-income families.

His letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

Story on deacon in contest spurs call for sermons against drinking

To the editors:

This is in response to the article about the Deacon entering a contest to win a Pub in Ireland (*Catholic Courier* "Summer Guide," May 26: "Deacon travelled to Ireland to compete for a pub").

With the rise of alcoholism in our Nation, I believe we should have more sermons preached in our churches against the overindulgence of alcoholic beverages.

It could help reduce some of the divorces, family strife, teenage delinquency, unplanned pregnancies leading to abortions, and highway accidents.

Then family life would become stronger, which would be the beginning of a new and better Country to raise our children in.

Cari Lang
Leonard Street, Dansville