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Rochester, NY 14624
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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 letters 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.

Pro-lifers must not adopt violence**To the editors:**

"Thou shalt not kill," so states the Scriptures in Exodus 20:31. How can we in the pro-life movement answer in a Biblical way the killings of abortionists by radical anti-abortion activists? Can the pro-life movement justify these actions?

There has been an outcry regarding the shootings of abortionists from the pro-abortion groups such as N.O.W. (National Organization of Women— and NARAL National Abortion Rights Action League). These radical groups seek to lynch all pro-lifers and paint them with the same brush that they use to attack violent splinter groups of the pro-life movement. There has also been attempts by some in the pro-life camp to excuse and justify the killings. Saying, "at least this doctor can no longer ply his grizzly trade." It's to these groups that I would like to pose a question.

Does the ends justify the means? Is it legitimate to take up force to execute doctors who perform abortions? I say no! Because the pro-life movement is engaged in a spiritual battle against the spirit of murder and violence that motivates and operates in every abortion, the temptation we face is to give into the very spirit we wrestle against to accomplish our goal. Jesus warned his disciples of this in Luke 9:33 as they sought to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who vilified and rejected them. Jesus rebuked these disciples. That word rebuke means to strongly silence, to check or correct. Jesus saw that these disciples had begun to take on the same



hateful rejecting spirit by which the Samaritans operated. We in the pro-life movement must also be vigilant not to be deceived and begin to operate motivated by the same spirit that we oppose. Namely the spirit of murder and violence. Jesus said, "be ye wiser as serpents and harmless as doves."

Secondly, the Scriptures teach that the duty of capital punishment is reserved for the state and not for the individual or the church. Those that seek to be judge, jury and executioner overstep the bounds of Scripture and thus fall into sin. Romans 13 states in verse 3:

"for rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil... For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But, if thou do that which is evil be afraid for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Whenever the church or individuals have attempted to usurp this role the excess and devastation has been tragic. Take note of the Catholic Church's inquisition, the excesses of the Church of England during the reign of Henry VIII in the 1600s and the errors of the reformers executing those whose doctrines were not "pure."

Jesus Christ gives to those who pursue pro-life activism the greatest individual example. He who possessed all authority in the world, who had at His command legions of angels to accomplish His will, willingly gave up His life to rescue those who were going to die. He lay down His life peacefully that we might live. So may we continue to do so that the unborn may live and our culture be redeemed.

Rev. Michael S. Warren
Christ Community Church
Coleman Creek Road
Brockport

Ethic proponents espouse leftist agenda**To the editors:**

"Are you guys radical Right or radical Left?" Ms. Carol Crossed quoted a reporter who asked this of Father Brian Hehir when he spoke in Rochester on the topic, *Consistent Life Ethic*. Ms. Crossed tells us that the answer is simply "yes." Rhetorically catchy but disingenuous. The answer is a resounding "Left."

Proponents of CLE wish the church to take a position on the value of life "whether in abortion, war, capital punishment or euthanasia," to quote Ms. Crossed. On the surface, the proposal is a moderate endorsement of the dignity of human life. But there is much more to the politics behind CLE.

In reality, what propels many of CLE's proponents is a highly politicized wish to promote left wing pacifism which would leave the U.S. inadequately defended. Many of today's vocal proponents of

CLE were involved in the '60s peace movements and in lobbying efforts to dismantle the U.S. nuclear arsenal during the '70s and '80s... Had our leaders in government listened to our leading pacifist bishops in the early '80s and dismantled nuclear weapons while the Soviet Union was still an "evil empire," one wonders how many people would still be living under the Stalinist dictatorship.

... The naivete of Ms. Crossed is stunningly revealed when she states "The church's lobbying efforts have done little to alleviate the spread of war and the escalation of capital punishment." Perhaps the church should not expend its energies on lobbying the U.S. and instead lobby the inhumane dictatorships that still exist. I suggest starting with Korea, then we could move on to Iraq and a host of other dangerous dictatorships

around the world that have nuclear capabilities.

As for the second part of Ms. Crossed's quote "The escalation of capital punishment." Escalation? Where? If CLE proponents would like to debate capital punishment legitimately, you'll find no argument here; but let's do it honestly please.

Included in CLE is the desire to include abortion as part of the broader package. Although the wording is vague, I am left with the very uneasy feeling that unless CLE is adopted, local parishes are not compelled to speak out on abortion. My impression is buttressed by the fact that so many local parishes seldom mention the word abortion. Why is this? How many times in the past year has the homily in your parish been on the topic. Once? Less than that?

It is sad to see the politicizing of an issue as important as abortion. But when left wing politics are combined with what has been mainly a conservative issue, the necessity of compromise is unavoidable. When the time comes to decide which candidate to support, too often the compromise is made to support the "pro-choice" candidate. This choice is made even when the "pro-choice" candidate is pro-abortion for the entire nine months, no compromises, no parental notification, abortion on demand and taxpayers should pay for this "health service" type candidate. ...

Many CLE proponents can be counted among those who compromised their pro-life position to vote for (such) politicians. When it comes to a choice between left-wing ideology and espoused positions on the life of the unborn, the politics inherent in the CLE position become all too clear. Clearly the answer to the question is as I stated in the first paragraph, "Left."

Patricia Klass
Mile Post Lane
Pittsford

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

Advocates 'Consistent Jesus Ethic'**To the editors:**

In "Life demands both charity, justice" (*Courier*, Aug. 11), Carol Crossed writes, "... the Church's Consistent Life Ethic ... is both radical Right and radical Left all at once."

I would say that, for the Consistent Life Ethic to produce much spiritual and practical good fruit, it will have to become radical Jesus. This is simply impossible in the context of our Constantinian Church that, even without authoritatively teaching it, has adhered to "just war" theory for so long. How Carol's wonderful work of consistency would flourish if the Church consistently taught Jesus' nonviolence as the norm it was before the advent of just war!

The scandal in the Church is that Christian participation in state sponsored killing — war, militarism and all their attendant evils — seems to have grown exponentially in this last century of the second Christian millennium, simply because of a failure to teach clear-

ly in this area. The scandal is so huge and inconsistent with what Jesus taught and lived that it can only be ignored in the same way a dysfunctional family can ignore a problem like child abuse that is so obvious to outsiders.

The peace and justice voice of a Consistent Jesus Ethic must first challenge those with teaching authority in the Church before we can challenge "legislators and those in power," as Carol suggests.

May the Holy Spirit lead us and our bishops to the splendor of truth revealed by Jesus, the very Truth of God. Strengthen us in His spirit of redemption that we may practice His Way: the nonviolent love of all, especially the unborn and those labeled "enemy" by the nations. Thus may bloodshed and the outcry be banished from your vineyard and your Kingdom come.

Mark Scibilia-Carver
Cold Springs Road
Trumansburg