

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.



Victim urges concern for criminals

To the editors:

I would like to add my two cents to the capital punishment debate. I share Mr. Bart's horror (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 15: "Prison too good for murderers") of convicted murderers who kill again, particularly when this happens on parole. And, I can see that preventing such events would be easier if we simply killed them all first. I do not, however, understand how this constitutes a moral argument, which is what I think we, as Catholic Christians, should be discussing in this forum. Nor do Thomas Aquinas' comments about the "common good" necessarily have a place here. His society was not capable of supporting expensive maximum security prisons. Ours is.

In his letter, Mr. Bart cites both those who say that merely imprisoning murderers "devalues innocent life," as well as those who maintain that capital punishment is an "affront to the human dignity of both those on whom it is inflicted and those in whose name it is employed." These are important issues for a Catholic, but who is right? As the vic-

tim of a particularly heinous and nearly fatal crime, I have struggled deeply with these issues and have concluded that they are both right. And, they are both beside the point.

The fact that my life even has any value or dignity is because God has given it to me. Certainly we must do all we can to uphold this gift, but where the moral imperative of human dignity does not provide clear answers, we must go beyond it for direction. In the case of capital punishment, we have all the direction we need in the example of Jesus' words on the cross. In meditating on these words of Jesus, I have found answers both to the anger I feel toward my own perpetrators — who were never even arrested — as well as to the position I believe I must hold on the capital punishment issue.

Jesus did not say from the cross, "Father, kill them for they have killed me." Nor did He make an issue of either His innocence or His dignity, both of which were infinitely greater than mine and infinitely more offended. What He did

speak about and concern Himself with were the souls of His murderers and the souls of His fellow convicts. This is where I find my answers and where I think the focus of our Christian debate on capital punishment should lie. Murderers are in mortal danger of eternal damnation. Nothing that anyone could ever do to me would make me desire this and, thus, I cannot support any action which would shorten the lifetime of such an individual.

Jesus told us to forgive, to pray for our enemies, and to do good to them. I must follow this example. And, I must ask the State to follow this example. Let us, as Christians, work toward providing criminals with every opportunity to repent. Let us grant them every minute of time which is granted by God. Let us not resent the cost of their upkeep, but offer every prayer and all our good will toward their return to grace and eternal communion with God.

Christine Bravo-Cullen
Lee Road
Dryden

Catechism counters heresy

To the editors:

Regarding the published letter of Bernice Kleinhammer on Sept. 15 ("Education" without values leads to moral confusion): except for the wonderful statement "To educate without a system of values based on truth would be abandoning our youth to moral confusion," I have never read such unadulterated drivel in my 58 years as Roman Catholic, educated in Catholic grade, high and nursing schools!

She refers to "faith as understood by the Holy See," then chastises 1. laypersons, 2. nuns, 3. priests, 4. bishops, 5. cardinals, 6. homosexuals. She refers to the "teachings of the new catechism," then talks about the "Triumph of the Immaculate Heart." I would like to refer to the new catechism, *Liberia Editrice Vaticana* #490 "to become the mother of the Savior. Mary was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role."

#495 "The One Whom she conceived as Man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father's eternal Son" (Theotokos)." Where, pray tell, are

these references to the Triumph of Her Immaculate Heart? Dear Bernice, it's not the Holy Quartet, it's the Holy Trinity, and cardinals, nuns, priests, Bishops and Laypersons will stop that heresy.

Bernice, it is possible for there to be Truth without Love. I've had many professors I studied under or physicians I worked with whom I eminently respected and believed but who were personally repugnant to me.

Bernice, a child can walk who has never crawled and I have a well-coordinated 31-year-old son to prove it.

Homosexuals? Read page 566 and let your Catholic heart embrace tolerance, Bernice.

#2358: "The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity."

As a nurse, I know that.
As a citizen, I know that.
As a Catholic, I know that.

Carol Danks Creswell, RN
Main Street, Bloomfield

Prayer, rosary, needed to help us to obey God

To the editors:

Several years ago, I requested of the Diocese of Rochester, to say the St. Michael Prayer, after all Masses. If we ever needed this prayer, it is now!! Don't you agree? I recall in my younger days, it was said, in my parish church in Pennsylvania, daily!

Pope John Paul II, I'm sure would agree and does ask, this prayer to be said, as the United Nations steps up its worldwide assault on the traditional family and the sanctity of life.

This prayer and the daily recitation of the Rosary, are powerful weapons, and will lead us in the right directions, to obey God's Laws, as we should!

Philomena Drexler
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