

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.



Catechism can help end confusion

To the editors:

Recently I attended the first of a four-part mini-educational series on the new catechism of the Catholic Church. I went not as an educator or coordinator but as a mere parishioner who was interested in learning more about the beliefs and teachings of our beautiful faith and how that can be applied to our life today.

There is much confusion in our Church at this time. We are confronted with theories that are relative, abstract and new age. Also, we are given the philosophy of individual theologians and

educators that do not conform to the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. I believe that this Catechism can help dispel this confusion. This publication was written not only for the bishops, priests, religious and educators but also for the Christian faithful (you and me). It is very easy reading. It is true, logical, well organized and it even briefly summarizes each small section. Although this is not a book to read in one night, it should be read cover to cover to avoid the confusion of reading something out of context. Either a section a night or one per week would suffice. That generally re-

quires 15 minutes of reading leaving time to reflect on its implications before reading the next part.

What does this mean to the average Catholic? It is a wealth of knowledge and riches because it is our faith. Today especially with all the mixed messages we are receiving we need to be strong in our faith. It is our most precious gift. In order to be strong we must first know our faith, pray to accept it and strive to live it. So please Pray, Believe, Read and most importantly try to Live It.

Janice Armstrong
Parnell Drive, Churchville

Death penalty provides more incentive to repent

To the editors:

In her letter "Victim urges concern for criminals," Oct. 6, Christine Bravo-Cullen implied that my letter, (Sept. 15) lacked this concern because of my support for capital punishment.

Her statement that "murderers are in mortal danger of eternal damnation" is certainly true of unrepentant murderers. However, I believe capital punishment is a much greater incentive for repentance than life in prison.

While Jesus told us to forgive our enemies, he didn't require us to expose ourselves to mortal danger.

In wartime, soldiers at times are required to kill to protect their nation from armed aggressors. In our domestic war on crime police have the same responsibility.

Capital punishment is merely a tool that helps fight this war.

In another part of her letter, C. Bravo-Cullen, commented that the con-

cern regarding crime by St. Thomas Aquinas doesn't apply in our time as there were no "expensive maximum security prisons" then.

I find this irrelevant as our maximum security prisons do not insure our safety. We have tons of criminal lawyers exhausting legal loopholes for their clients who weren't around during the time of St. Thomas.

What we need today is swift and fair justice for all people, regardless of their financial position.

The victims of crime should be our first consideration. In the debate over capital punishment and crime in general the safety of the law-abiding has taken a back seat.

We erode that safety by paroling known sex offenders and murderers covertly in neighborhoods that sometimes suffers the consequences.

Robert Bart
Ithaca

Attack on priest was unfounded

To the editors:

I read today with surprise, and then disgust, a letter in your October 13 issue attacking Father Robert McNamara, the distinguished and beloved Church Historian of our Diocese. I have known Father McNamara from my student days. A kinder, gentler man, a more thorough church man, a more loyal alumnus of the North America College,

a more generous and devoted priest could not be found anywhere. His loyalty to Rome could only be challenged by an ignorant and callous critic.

As a lawyer once said to Senator Joseph McCarthy as he made a similar ignorant, callous attack, "Have you at long last, sir, no sense of shame?"

Father Joseph P. McCaffrey
St. Anthony's Church, Elmira

Off-color jokes undercut humor in Nunsense II

To the editors:

Nunsense II was a sad disappointment. In general it was humorous except for a few parts that were totally uncalled for and especially since the performers were women of a religious order.

It isn't necessary to inject off color jokes in order to be amusing as in one instance the nun was referring to men's testicles as having the balls to do something or other.

As one of our readers stated: Yes, the show was light and humorous according to today's worldly standards but certainly not according to a Catholic, Christian perspective. If the church sanctions such a performance it seems as though it is going the way of the world.

And then making fun of the sign of the cross which is very sacred to me. That wasn't necessary.

I have a strong devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary and am sure she is very sad about this show. As she stated in her messages at Medjugorje she asked for prayer, prayer and prayer against the worldly lifestyles that are flooding our lives today.

It's not necessary to tell off color, dirty jokes in order to be amusing.

As a Catholic I felt ashamed if there were any non-Catholics present at the show.

Bill Rottkamp
Thorncliffe Drive
Rochester