

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.

Getting into the holiday spirit



Readers take issue with illustration

To the editors:

The *Courier* is to be commended for the October 13, 1994 feature story, "Spirituality of Men." I have participated in men's groups and retreats for several years and felt the article helped normalize and demystify men's work.

However, I was puzzled by the choice of photos to illustrate the article. The images of a well developed male torso — with head cropped out — clutching a crucifix detracted from the deeper message which was "more than superficial stuff." It also perpetuated the myth of the ideal man-strong, silent and alone, which conflicted with the written portrayal of the vulnerable and spiritual man.

I am all in favor of men taking care of their bodies, but let's hope we've learned something from the women's movement. Photos like this can reduce complex, multi-faceted individuals to physical objects. If the article was about women's spirituality would you have included a picture of a bikini clad woman clutching a rosary?

Joe Gentile
Imperial Circle
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Attempting to illustrate abstract concepts is a dangerous business. In searching for an appropriate illus-

tration for this article, our graphics manager believed that a literal presentation — such as a photo of several men talking about spirituality — would be worthless and lead many readers to skip this worthwhile article.

Thus, she and our photographer created an image that combined the Crucifix as a symbol of spirituality with the clearly masculine symbol of a body builder's torso. Neither she nor anyone else on staff intended the image to have sexual overtones. Would we have

used a woman in a bikini for a story on women's spirituality? Probably not, for two reasons: 1) motherhood, among other images, would more clearly convey the concept of femininity than would a sexy bikini, and 2) feminine imagery of any nature would be largely redundant, since many people already tend to perceive spirituality as "feminine."

Nevertheless, we offer our sincere apologies to anyone who was offended by our admittedly imperfect attempt to illustrate this concept.

Photo was disrespectful to priests

To the editors:

I would like to express my deep disappointment with the editor and staff of the *Catholic Courier*. On October 13th, the *Catholic Courier* featured an article on spirituality and men. The photo spread that accompanied the article was of a sexy, muscular, naked man holding a crucifix. I did not know if the article was promoting spirituality and men, or Sexuality of the Church.

This photo spread is offensive to not only myself, but the Roman Catholic Church. I feel these pictures are cheap and disrespectful to all faithful Catholics, especially our Priests. Priests are the ul-

time image of men in the church, and of men and spirituality. How often do you attend mass and see a holy Priest without his shirt on, or his Roman Collar for that matter?

It appears that the *Catholic Courier* has done a grave injustice to the pure virtues and morals that the Roman Catholic Church was built on. The *Courier* has also stripped the beauty and sacredness from the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The photo spread was tacky and done in poor taste. I could think of several more reverent images to depict spirituality and men.

Joseph Delvecchio, Irondequoit

Wonders why writer wasn't thankful for gift

To the editors:

After reading Lee Strong's article on papal infallibility, I wondered why his approach was anything but that of thanksgiving to God for having blessed the Church with this gift of inerrancy. In addition, his article was misleading and did not give a complete and thorough explanation on the topic.

First of all, the Church teaches that all doctrines of the Catholic faith, including the doctrine of infallibility, have been revealed by God and these revelations ended with the Apostolic Age. The Church is called to develop a deeper understanding of the reasons underlying Her teachings, not to determine them. So the Church cannot change what She has been given by God to protect — i.e. the deposit of faith.

It is the task of the Catholic Magis-

terium to keep pure and intact this doctrine of faith and hence to protect the faithful from the danger of error. In our Church history there have been many times when the Church has had to make a decision which, if wrong, would keep Her from carrying out the mission of Jesus. In the early Church, for example, the Catholic belief that Jesus is God was strongly challenged by some people who considered themselves to be "theological experts." Obviously, a wrong decision on this matter by the Church would have changed the Christian religion.

To defend erroneous information such as that presented by Mr. Strong, the Church put out a papal encyclical titled, "In Defense of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church," dated June 24, 1973. It clearly states that the objects of Catholic faith which are its dogmas are and always have

been the "unalterable" norm for faith.

In reviewing other such papal statements and Councils on this topic, Magisterium inerrancy can be summed up as follows: 1). The Church has taught that there are many occasions when the ordinary Magisterium is infallible. 2). The Church has not said whether or not all statements of the ordinary Magisterium are infallible. 3). The Church has said every Catholic has an obligation to assent to all the teachings of the ordinary Magisterium which is based on the teaching that Jesus is with His Church not only on "extra-ordinary occasions," — i.e. when the pope speaks ex cathedra — but also in her "ordinary" teaching.

If you assume that a binding doctrinal decision of the ordinary Magisterium can be erroneous, you then must explain why Our Lord would require Catholics to assent to such a statement — for the Church teaches both that there is such a requirement and that the source of this requirement is Christ Himself — while still allowing His Church to be in error on the subject.

Finally, it is very interesting to note that a check of actual erroneous doctrines to date reveal that only one case in 2,000 years is even close to being an erroneous teaching. Most objectors hold up Galileo as their example, however, this does not stand up under close examination.

Laurie Bowen
Lewis Street
Vestal

Don't misinform kids about authors of letter

To the editors:

Regarding (the) Kids' Chronicle of Oct. 13, 1994: Joe Sarnicola paraphrases the Letter to the Hebrews and then asks, "Why did Paul write this letter?" The paraphrase is good, but why does Sarnicola say Paul wrote this letter when virtually all biblical scholars believe he did not? Is this a trivial criticism? Perhaps, but some of these "kids" may one day ask: "what else have they told us that isn't true." I think we can do better as we

work toward our synod goal of lifelong education.

Casey Lopata
Linden Street, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: We certainly sympathize with the author's desire for accuracy regarding the authorship of various biblical writings. But we do not believe the Kids' Chronicle is the place to discuss — especially in the detail that would be necessary to explain various views on the matter — whether Paul did or did not write this or that epistle.