

OPINION COMMENTARY

Catholic Courier

1150 Buffalo Road
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340

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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.

Catholics must unite with Spirit and pope

To the editors:

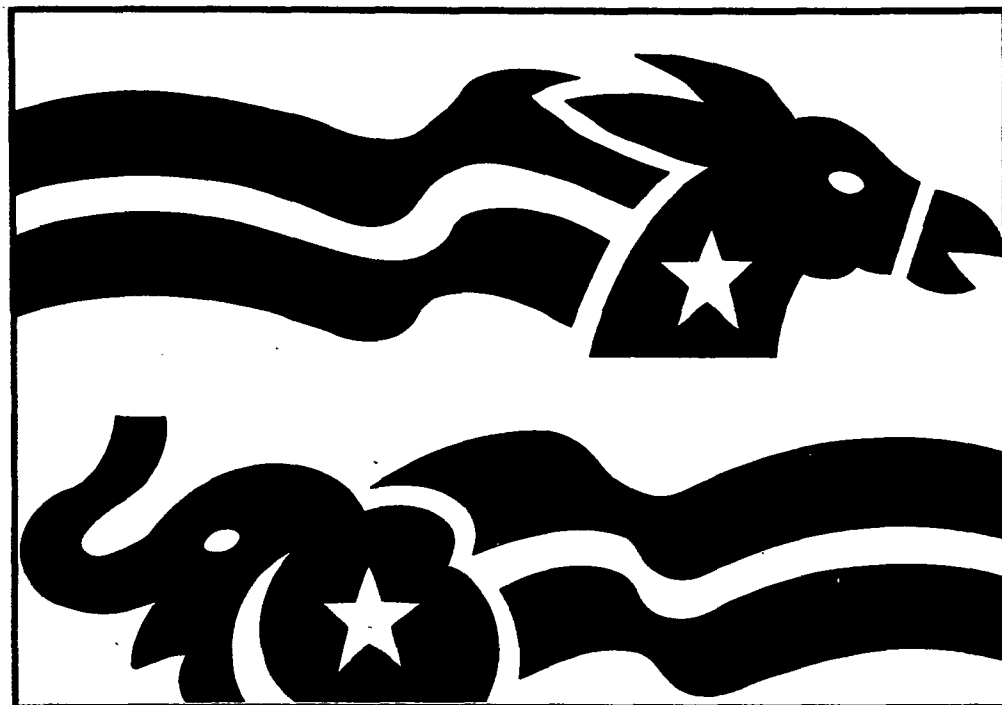
Earlier this year, His Holy Father Pope John Paul II in his address to Catholic bishops encouraged a return to the basic elements of the faith. On one level, this might call to mind what could very aptly be expressed in any catechism. However, more so than ever before does this statement take on a special meaning. The Church has always been in the ever difficult position of trying to stand between the sacred and the secular. It is prosaic but still undeniable to say that over the last 30 years the disparity between these two has been ever more intensified. The sense of the sacred has been lost and the notions of obedience and discipline are becoming increasingly counter-cultural. It is therefore ever more important today in order to avoid the ever abiding temptation to define it's internal norms in the context of the popular culture that the Church and it's leaders reaffirm it's essential character, the forces that nourish it and the forces that threaten it.

One of the issues we feel provides a threat to the Church today is an understanding of what constitutes proper liberalism. It should be a role of the Church to try to understand the potential of man and provide direction under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to how that potential can be discharged for the good of all. This requires a sophisticated understanding of what constitutes contemporary human achievement, and the wisdom to visualize how that can be creatively applied to the modern situation. Liberalism as it is here defined can rightly be called progressive. However liberalism today has a destructive facet against which the Church needs to be ever vigilant. The hallmark of this form of thinking is essentially one where human freedom is expanded at the expense of discipline, responsibility, and proper obedience. The central importance of the traditions of discipline and obedience in the Church reflect the strength and vigor of the Spirit in it's ecumenical life. Therefore, it will always remain a legitimate question in regards to any issue where these notions seem compromised, what are these considered changes really saying as to the underlying spiritual integrity of the Church today?

The Church as an institutional body must be ever aware that increasingly it stands not only in distinction, but in contradistinction to the cultural beliefs that surround it. It should therefore legitimately be suspicious of proposed sweeping changes that occur in this day and age in the face of past centuries of unmitigated tradition, especially when those changes can be seen as an attenuation of the basis disciplines that have traditionally been a sign of it's health.

Today the ideologic plurality both of Church members and its leaders are being ever more drawn into direct conflict. In order for these future dialogues to be fruitful, there must be a renewed appreciation of the Spirit for which the Church has always stood and has always stood for it. May all catholic people live in unity with this Spirit and with Pope John Paul, let us pray to the Lord.

Michael Sheehan
Brattle Road, Syracuse
and **Anthony Barbetta**
Creekside Circle
Penfield



Election coverage biased?

To the editors:

I am upset over the *Catholic Courier's* policy of accepting paid political advertisements. Since the majority of the candidates who advertised in the November 3rd issue were Republican, Conservative, or Right to Life, the *Catholic Courier* has made a silent endorsement of a partisan agenda. This position was reinforced by the feature story on the religious right.

Since the *Catholic Courier* is a diocesan newspaper, I can understand criticism of pro-choice candidates, but why is the *Catholic Courier* silent when candidates support the death penalty, oppose a ban on assault weapons, or bash welfare recipients? If one supports the consistent life ethic, then the death penalty denies the right to life of death-row inmates, assault weapons threaten the right to life of all citizens, and cutting off welfare benefits endangers the right to life of children living in poverty. For the Right to Life Party to support a pro-death penalty candidate such as Herb London is pure hypocrisy.

While the Democratic and Liberal parties are certainly not without fault, I feel that their positions are closer to Catholic social teachings than the opposite side of the political fence. It saddens me that most progressive candidates, with the notable exception of John LaFalce, are not able to embrace the anti-abortion stand of the consistent life ethic.

The election coverage of the *Catholic Courier* sorely needed balance. Although the sidebar on Governor Casey was ap-

propriate, why wasn't there an election analysis from a peace and justice viewpoint, such as a profile on Common Ground or the Seamless Garment Network? Or how about a neutral voter guide covering a range of issues instead of only abortion rights? As far as I can tell, God is non-partisan, and loves everyone regardless of their position on the political spectrum.

Richard Poydock
Rustic Street
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: The *Catholic Courier's* advertising director contacted the Board of Elections in each of the 12 diocesan counties to obtain listings of all candidates for office in those counties. In addition, he obtained similar lists from all state and local party offices. Our office mailed a promotional flyer to every candidate appearing on one of these lists. More than 250 candidates were contacted by mail, and follow-up phone calls were made to most.

Internal Revenue Service regulations require that any non-profit publication accepting political advertisements accept all such advertisements. Those same regulations prohibit us from making endorsements of any kind. We cannot - and did not - reject or discourage advertisements from pro-abortion candidates, nor did we make a special effort to solicit anti-abortion candidates. It is not surprising, however, that both groups of candidates chose to spend their campaign dollars with media whose readerships/viewerships the candidates perceived as most closely aligned with their own views.

Judicial system is running amok

To the editors:

Once again we have witnessed the "Judicial System" procedures favoring the criminals. Recently in Denver, Colorado, U.S. District Judge, Edward Nottingham, ruled to allow a "Federal prisoner" - Inmate as today's standards - to worship "SATAN."

The inmate will "worship" SATAN in his cell, and it includes: candle holders, candles, incense, a gong, a black robe, a chalice, and a short wooden staff.

Wow! Will his honor loan his robe too, for the ritual? "A Federal Institution, cannot stop inmate, Robert J. Howard, to practice satanism, stated Judge Nottingham, it is his "Constitutional Right."

The "Rights" of the "First Amendment" have been over extended and at times even abused. With his decision, Judge Nottingham, extended another privilege in favor to those who are incarcerated for punishment.

On the outside, the "God" fearing and law abiding citizens, instead have being deprived to use prayers in public schools, or even in public events.

Religious servants, teachers, pupils and administrators have had to restrain themselves to be careful to not use the word "God" in their classrooms; even to not

include "May God Bless You" in their speech.

What an awful sad situation in this decision, it shows disrespect to the word of "God." I really wonder if a jurist would have allowed a "Christian" to place a cross on the wall of his cell?

The Judicial system, continues to fail because it is failing itself. Allowing such a "satanic" ritual will encourage similar actions by others, on the inside or outside. No wonder "SATAN" continues to gain ground! The decision of Judge Nottingham, is an injustice to the law abiding and religious people.

Those who serve on the "Judicial system" level, Judges, administrators, lawmakers, etc., etc., should personally spend some time - incognito - in the various "correctional facilities" to really see for themselves of the many special privileges and choices that are offered to the "residents."

I conclude with some thoughts that my father Joseph Saltarello, (deceased) wrote; "Without faith in God, humanity is lost in its path and it will encounter the worst in the civilization to come. It will always lead us to evil and/or self destruction."

Paolo Saltarello

Barber Street, Auburn