

# 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.

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## Weren't prepared to let go of friend

### To the editors:

After much encouragement from my husband I decided to write this letter as a tribute to a man who has played such a special part in my family's life. I am sure he has also had a lasting impact on many of your readers too.

Our paths first crossed when he came to Blessed Sacrament as our Pastor in 1980. With my husband being President of the Parish Council at that time they spent endless hours together and the two began a long-lasting friendship. We were so fortunate that friendship grew to encompass our whole family — and he became part of it. He has always been a role model and an inspiration to all of us. I can remember sitting in church on Sunday mornings and practically hanging on his every word — he always had a way of reaching into my heart with his homilies and making God so real to me. How fortunate we have been for our children to have come to know him as they have too — with a great deal of respect and reverence for him — and yet, a warmth and love as for a very dear friend. We felt very privileged when he agreed to be Godfather to our third child in 1989. What a joy it has been to watch them "grow" together over the last five years — how much he has shared on himself with our son — moments I will never forget.

The Scripture from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 expresses so well the way he



has lived his life. Through all he has done for others, and through his priesthood, he is the epitome of servant and leader. During his years at Blessed Sacrament he started the shelter for the homeless. My husband and I remember how humbling it was to work beside him and witness how gently he interacted with those less fortunate than us.

A vibrant man who has always been so full of life and eager to share it with others. And now it seems so quickly, because of a debilitating disease, that life (has been) drained from him. It is hard for us to understand. It's a time in our life that we ask God... Why? We can find no rhyme or reason — at least not now. We are not ready to say goodbye — we are not ready to let go. He has been such a wonderful blessing in our lives and it has been a privilege to call him friend: Father Anthony Valente. To my husband, Bill and I, reverently and respectfully, "Tony."

You have touched more lives than you will ever know. God bless you with His peace.

**Mr. and Mrs. William Wynne**  
Brookside Drive, Goshen, N.Y.  
EDITORS' NOTE: This letter was written prior to Father Valente's death.

## Priest needs 'broader vision'

### To the editors:

In regard to Father R. Collins Jan. 5 letter, I wish to respond to his statement regarding his inability to feel compassion for the aborted baby because "now they are face to face with God."

There is broader vision than picturing these little ones happy in heaven "face to face with God." It is none other than reflecting on what does God feel when He comes face to face with the life that He created being thrown back in His face. Does He say, "your parents were poor or they weren't ready, or thank you, you saved a person with Parkinson's Disease or oh well, you would have been abused, or oops, you were one to many, you needed to be sacrificed?" Does He say, "oh it doesn't matter because now you are here, excuse me, my mistake?"

Father Bob also fails to understand

when he argues the point that the wrongness of abortion can diminish greatly depending on circumstances. Let him explain that to a woman who is suffering post abortion syndrome. He might even go so far as to argue that she wouldn't be feeling guilt if it weren't for the pro-life fanatics.

A woman who has had an abortion doesn't want to hear excuses for what she has done. She doesn't want to diminish something so tragic with comforting niceties, she wants forgiveness and healing. Who can help her if no one understands? She knows what she has done more so than the deluded do-gooders. ... What are we afraid of?

**Mary Burke**  
Bent Oak Road, Rochester  
EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

## Pro-choice dialogue constitutes negotiation

### To the editors:

Neither virginity nor principle can long prevail once negotiations begin. "Dialogue" can be substituted for "negotiations."

Father Collins uses the word "wrongness" for guilt and murder. He reduces the severity of the misdeed to one of economics. ... Father Collins "sees hope in the willingness of some bishops to listen to the voices of 'pro-life and 'pro-choice' and to encourage dialogue between them."

When bishops will not agree on matters of morality then perhaps the One-

church IS in the foreseeable future. Protestantizing the faith will do away with the Douay and usher in the King James version. I remind Father Collins it was dialogue/discussion and betrayal within the church that led to the Easter Schism.

**BEWARE!!!** The abortionists intend to lessen the impact of words such as: babies, murder, war, slaughter, killing, butchery, etc., by: dialogue, discussion, agreement, and/or outright media blitz.

**Adam Yokovich**  
Basket Road, Webster  
EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

## Saddened by remarks on abortion

### To the editors:

Father Robert Collins' letter of October 13 troubled and saddened me. However, his letter of January 5, 1995 was shocking and frightening. He seem to encourage a semi-acceptance of abortion — infants are not human if they cannot survive on their own outside the womb ("viability"). He also stated that the "wrongness" of abortion would depend on the social condition and purpose of the mother, e.g. if the mother has an abortion because of threats made by her husband as opposed to the socialite whose pregnancy would interfere with a ski trip. Finally, he does not have any compassion for the infants who are being aborted in large number daily, because he asserts, "they are now with God."

Our second child was premature. He would not have survived without life support in his early weeks of life. He is a beautiful young man who was every bit as human then, as he is now. How could we dare determine when human life begins, other than at the moment of conception.

The Conference of Bishops have once again reaffirmed their strong opposition to the death penalty. Their reason — simple — "The sanctity of human life much supersede all other circumstances." Imposing death on any human being for any reason is morally wrong. The mother, fearful of reprisal from her husband, should be provided with a number of different alternatives — death to her unborn child should never be one of the solutions, nor could the "wrongness" of this be justified.

Father Collins finds it difficult to have compassion for the unborn because they now see God. However, the tragedy of their premature death, that was not brought about by our Creator, does merit our mourning and sorrow. Indeed, we mourn the many martyrs, victims of rape and murder, six million Jews who wrongfully died 50 years ago, etc. — they, too are with the Lord. Who among us, while reflecting on the passion and death of Jesus, does not feel deep sadness and sorrow for the pain He suffered, even though now He sits in Perfect Majesty above us all?

God created us in His own image and likeness. He is the author of all human life. He, alone has the authority to end life. We, as His children must love, nurture and protect His precious gift. There can be no exceptions, if we believe in the sanctity of human life.

**Rita B. Sartori**  
W. Clinton St. Elmira

## Aborted child might have improved world

### To the editors:

Some comments of Father Robert Collins' letter of Jan. 5 regarding the morality of abortion:

The woman seeking an abortion because of threats by husband does not seem to me to be guilty of the sin of abortion. She does have the possibility of getting some protection and help from a family center or a parish.

Dialog of pro life people with pro-aborts is not possible because the pro-aborts do not admit to the humanity of the unborn child.

If Father Collins finds it difficult to feel compassion for the aborted baby, let him think of the possibility of that child perhaps being a great force for good in this sad world of ours — if he had been allowed to live.

**Mary M. Studier**  
Mosley Road, Rochester