

OPINION COMMENTARY

Catholic Courier

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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.

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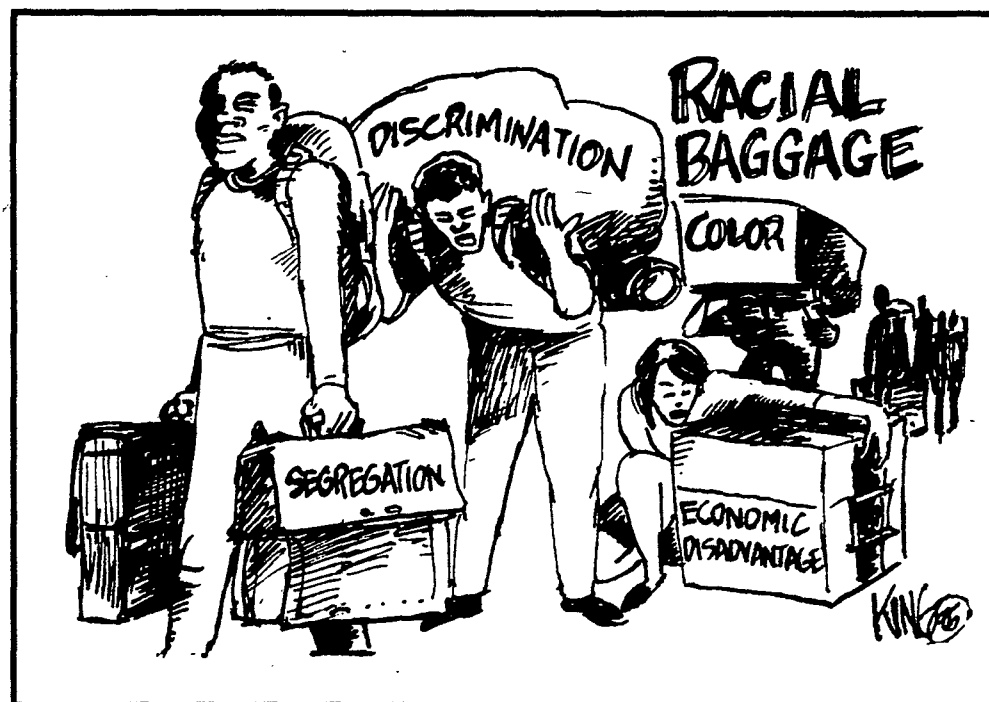
Saddened by divisive statements

To the editors:

How saddened, and at the same time challenged, I am to read (a letter) like Ms. Povero's in ... the *Catholic Courier* of Feb. 9 ("Leave the One, True Church alone")...

... Ms. Povero's words sadden me, for several reasons. They are words of division, and I suspect they are caused by a lack of understanding and education — of church history, of Scripture, of the roots of our faith. Words such as hers, regardless of their intent, cause hurt and exclusion, and so I believe, must be responded to. We belong to a community that endorses and encourages education and I would hope that in her quest for the "one true church," she avails herself of the wealth of information that has been published about Vatican II regarding the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Celebration of the Eucharist. They are one in the same, but one involves an "unworthy" audience observing a priest's actions, while the other is a worshipping body of redeemed believers participating with the celebrant in the Sacrament ...

... Ms. Povero's words hurt because I am a "convert" — although I am not fond of that label; I chose to be baptized a Christian and, although being a member of the Roman Catholic tradition greatly enhances my faith and ability to serve God, I don't know if I would have come to the close, personal relationship I have with God had I been born into Catholicism. There is much doctrine and dogma that differs between Protestantism and Catholicism, but the great truths of God and of his love and salvation are shared among all of Christendom. I



would hope that in my lifetime, the slings and arrows Catholics and Protestants use against each other will stop. Protestants do not love God less. God is not a Roman Catholic; we have much to share with each other and the value of that needs to be elevated and respected and extolled. New Age and Freemasonry are diametrically opposed, and neither has anything to do with Vatican II or the liturgical changes that have blossomed out of it since the '60s.

As a child, I learned that I don't have to agree with everything a teacher tells me, or with my parents' opinions, or my friend's biases in order to respect those people or have loving relationships with them. I've learned as an adult that life and faith are fluid by their very nature; like water, they stagnate without movement. Minds and hearts need to be open to new ideas or to a revitalization of old ones. Discernment, the ability through prayer and discussion and education and soul-searching to decide what is right, is the obligation of every member of the Body of Christ. It should never be feared or sullied by political labels. Mindless

obedience is a poor substitute for sincere devotion and love. The "one true church" seeks to nurture the growth of informed, adult, participatory faith in order to promote the Kingdom. Closed minds and hearts, name calling and finger pointing, labeling and exclusion are not gifts of God; rather, they are the fruits of ignorance and intolerance.

As a delegate to the Diocesan General Synod of 1993, I was privileged to witness first hand how beautifully the Holy Spirit manages to guide and direct a very large and enormously diverse group of people — their commonality being their faith in God and love for the Body of Christ. We came away knowing that one of the biggest challenges facing our community is life long Christian formation; we as Catholic Christians need to learn the art of discernment, which will enable us to grow in our faith and allow us to make informed, responsible choices. We obviously have much work to do.

**Lisa Marcelletti
Daniel Drive, Gates**

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

Urges writer to consider adult education

To the editors:

Good grief! I'm not about to join the "Unitarian Universalist Queen of Ecumenicism (sic) Church!" Never heard of it! I'm a "card carrying" Catholic, have a baptismal certificate to prove it, and have no intention of leaving the church I love.

The letter from Lucille Povero attests to what our Diocesan Synod chose as number one priority: Life Long Faith Formation. I strongly urge that your correspondent enroll in adult education programs where she can study church history and gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of what is taking place in the church as a result of Vatican II. If she would like to attend St. Bernard's Institute, there are scholarship provisions for those who need financial help.

The Church is a living organism and, as such, must change and grow. Not change simply for change's sake, but if we do not change and grow, we will stagnate and die. The Spirit of God moves with the church so there is no need to be afraid.

Of course a priest is a priest, but the people — and the priest — celebrate the Eucharist. What a wonderful word, "Celebrate!" We are not spectators. We are engaged in what is taking place on the altar. We are happy to be present when our Heavenly Father, through the workings of the Holy Spirit, changes the bread and wine into the Body of Blood of Christ, and we partake of that mystery. The priest "presides" as we celebrate together. The Eucharistic prayers are sublime. Listen closely to them.

In the concluding rite, the usual words are "The Mass is ended. Go in grace to love and serve the Lord." To love and serve. Too often the "and serve" is forgotten. Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me, Peter?" And Peter answered

"Yes." "Then feed my sheep; tend my flock." Those in social ministry take these words to heart. I'm puzzled, therefore, by your writer's reference to "goo-goo socialists," and calling them Hypocrites. The people I know who are working in social ministry are marvelously dedicated people, working in the three areas known as "priestly" (prayer), "pastoral" (outreach programs of all kinds such as working with the poor and marginalized, those addicted, young women who have opted to have their babies instead of abortion, anti-violence programs etc.) and "prophetic" (advocacy in all areas of eco-

nomie and social justice.)

Finally, Ms. Povero said there was no mention of the birth of Jesus in the Christmas Eve homily at her church. I can't comment on that because I was not present. In my church we commemorated Jesus' coming into the world as Our Savior and, with it, the promise of Resurrection of the second coming.

Ms. Povero is troubled and needs our prayers. I wish her a mind open to the beautiful things that are happening in the church — and Peace.

**Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle, Rochester**

Rejoices in catholicity of Roman church

To the editors:

I read with interest Lucille Povero's letter in the Feb. 9 *Catholic Courier*. She seems to be upset about changes in the Church which have brought in "New Age," "Protestant," and "Masonic" elements. I think a bit of history might help her.

"Presider" and "celebrant" are terms found in the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church to describe the person in charge of the Liturgy. Each of the Eucharistic Prayers (is) based on early Church models. Bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. It doesn't matter which technical philosophical term one uses to describe it. The words of Consecration are not uniform in the New Testament; why should they be uniform now? Why should the rich mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ be restricted to the word "Mass?"

I do not know any "goo goo socialists." I do know many sincere people who listen to the teaching authority of the Church and use their God-given reason to

make responsible moral choices based on these teachings, the opinions of responsible theologians, the advice of good Catholic friends and their own prayer life. If this be smorgasbord, fill my plate!

As to homilies, I know that most priests prepare them diligently, striving to take God's Word and apply it to the needs and realities of their congregation. Perhaps Ms. Povero may wish to join the group of her fellow parishioners who assist their pastor in making his homily relevant.

I too was baptized a Roman Catholic and I was ordained in 1966 — before the "Anglican rite," whatever that is. I rejoice in the changes in the Church, the changes in the Liturgy, the new emphasis on the Church as "People of God." I do not intend to find another church. I rejoice that the Roman Catholic Church is big enough for Ms. Povero and myself.

**Father Robert L. Collins
St. Thomas More Church,
Rochester**