

OPINION COMMENTARY

Catholic Courier

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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.

CFC won't win recruits by ignoring current aid

To the editors:

Your lead article concerning refugee resettlement aid (March 9) was of particular interest to many of us at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Mendon. Mr. Delaney's observation, "I can't even remember the last parish that was involved," leaves us perplexed.

We sponsored, under the auspices of his CFC program, and are still very involved with a Haitian family of four who arrived in Jan., 1994. Spearheaded by the parish's Social Ministry Committee members and generously supported by the parish in general, our involvement has, by anyone's standards, been significant. When we learned of our family's impending arrival we found and secured a city apartment for them while concomitantly conducting an extensive drive to collect furniture, household effects, and clothing. Caring folks affiliated with St. Catherine's donated beds, chests, a couch and loveseat, a television, bedding, dishes, clothing, etc. What few necessities we didn't receive we bought for them. Their refrigerator was stocked when they arrived.

Upon their arrival at the airport on the coldest day of the year, they emerged from the plane with airline blankets wrapped around themselves for warmth! These were quickly replaced with the heavy jackets in our arms.

Since that frigid night 14 months ago we have facilitated the whole family's enrollment in school, transported them to numerous medical appointments, helped the father find a job and taken them grocery shopping on a weekly basis as well as to countless other varied activities. All these efforts have been directed at facilitating their assimilation into our culture.

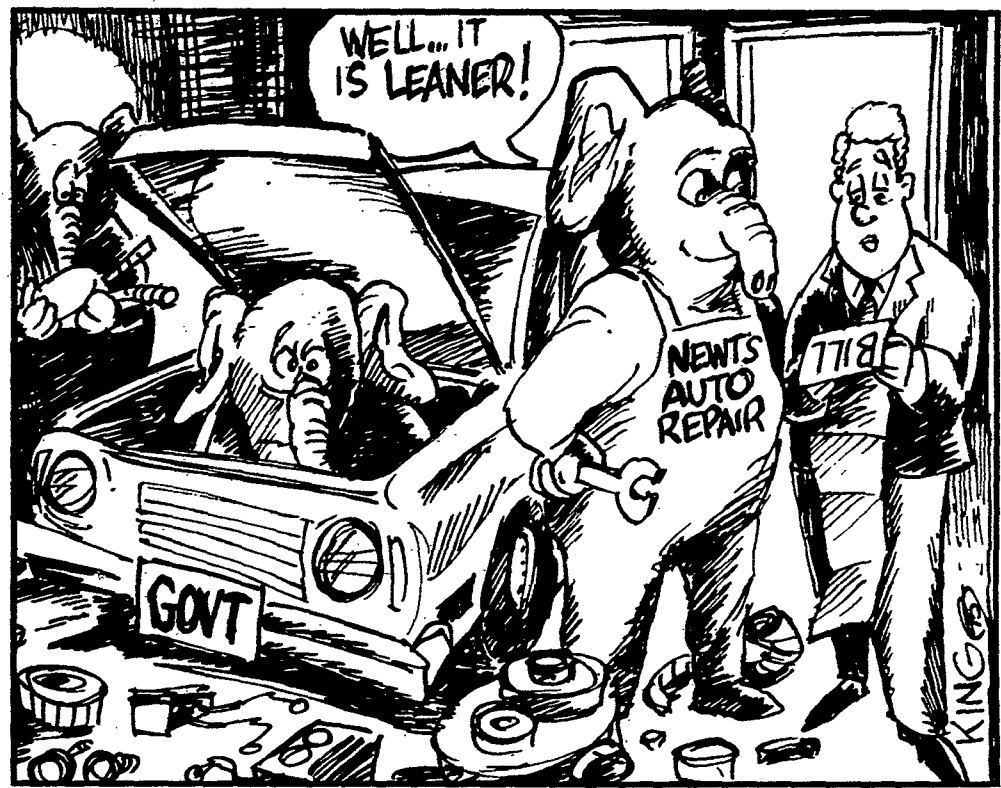
We befriended them under the CFC umbrella program. We struggle with their Creole language juxtaposed to our rusty French, augmented by a lot of mime, laughter and goodwill. We have done this because we believe in the program, in them, and in their right to have a decent chance to build a better life. Our family's situation in their native land was intolerable. Belonging to the opposition political party made life in Haiti unbearable for them.

Additionally, on a more historical note, St. Catherine's has been involved in the CFC resettlement program practically since its inception. It may no longer be "trendy," to use Mr. Delaney's word; but nonetheless we've been involved over the years. A Laotian family, with whom contact is still maintained, were sponsored first. In the late 1980s we sponsored an Amerasian family of nine! Marion and Bob Tucker, longtime parishioners at St. Catherine's, have been centrally involved in all these efforts since the very beginning.

It is regrettable that at this time there apparently is a lack of widespread support for this kind of parish outreach. We empathize with the Refugee Resettlement Program manager's difficulty locating sufficient numbers of Catholics to commit to this effort. His outreach to the community for ecumenical support is laudable. Failure to recognize parishes that are involved will, however, only serve to further lessen commitments to this effort.

Please do not attempt to disavow the sincere, ongoing, dedicated, supportive efforts of many, many Catholic parishioners who are involved.

Joan Bouthillier
Monroe Street, Honeoye Falls



'Irresponsible' story should have corrected subject's errant views

To the editors:

It is my opinion that the *Catholic Courier's* reporting of a "Catholic" woman's views on the Holocaust (March 23) was irresponsible... (T)he "Catholic woman" and her views were made to appear rather benign. The editors may have felt that it would be sufficient to let the woman speak for herself, but unfortunately, in the article she comes across as being a reasonable person with — perhaps, to those whose thinking leans in the same direction — a legitimate point of view.

The writer of the article does deserve points for allowing Linda Saiger to explain the Jewish Community's current "policy in making" for responding to Ernst Zundel and his followers. However, except for correcting the record about the Pope's mother not being Jewish, the writer did little to present a Catholic counter point of view — and what I hope is now the official Catholic position on these issues!

It was hinted that Deacon McNulty may be honoring the wishes of Jewish leaders by waiting until their policy is formulated before commenting on the Zundel movement. If this is true, then his reticence on the Zundel matter might be understandable. However, when a "Catholic woman" is given such a wide open platform from which to present her erroneous beliefs, Church officials have a

duty to swiftly and forcefully denounce her statements, lest some readers get the idea that this might be a legitimate Catholic point of view. I would like to have seen a stronger counter response presented, if not within the body of the article, then in an accompanying editorial piece in the same issue of the *Catholic Courier*.

Some Catholics do not like to believe or admit that embers of anti-Semitism — an unfortunate legacy of our Medieval past — still smolder in our midst. But I believe that we have a duty to correct, and if necessary, renounce any fellow Catholic whom we find adding tinder to, and trying to reignite the awful fire that led to the Holocaust.

Virginia M. Clark

Red Spruce Lane, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Several weeks prior to the March 23 article, we published a letter to the editor in which the "Catholic woman" in question expressed her views about religious practice in the Catholic Church ("Leave the one true church alone"). Subsequently, we also published several letters criticizing her. Those criticisms then provoked letters of defense from a handful of readers, some of whom have withdrawn their letters since publication of the March 23 story. Journalistic standards preclude the expression of reporters' or editors' opinions within news articles, and we currently do not publish editorials.

Attack on Polish bishops rates 'F' in history

To the editors:

The Rev. McBrien outdid himself in his column of Thursday March 9, for ignorance and acerbity. Either he has been comfortably abed for the past 50 years, or he received an F in European History prior to penning his acid attack on the Polish bishops.

Perhaps — since this historical fact is constantly overlooked — he should be reminded that it was Germany which overran all Europe in 1938-39 and decimated Poland and the Polish people — aided very willingly by Russia and Italy. Thousands of brave Polish people managed to escape — through horrendous difficulties — to Britain, where they were reformed into their military units and fought valiantly for their freedom and that, ultimately, of Americans who wanted only to stay out of this frightful slaughter. Those who remained behind in Poland, under the conqueror's heel, were every bit as much in danger of their lives as their Jewish brethren, most of whom did not present themselves for military service to the country which had given them sanctuary for centuries, when other nations had expelled them. Even so, many Polish families further

imperilled their lives by giving them shelter.

The reward for their constancy was to have their country handed over to Communism for 50 more years of misery, with the U.S. as the chief architect of the plan, out of deference to our gallant "allies" the Soviet Union.

Now the Rev. McBrien would cast doubts on the integrity of the Polish bishops while lauding the Germans. This is to laugh. The Germans owe it to all the peoples they murdered to accept the blame for the horrors with which we grew up.

I am an Englishwoman and have lived with my Polish husband for 43 years. He was a prisoner of war in Germany for 5-1/2 years and his oldest brother was killed shortly after Germany invaded Poland. I am still looking for some American official to apologize for selling Poland down the drain.

Did not the Rev. McBrien ever hear of St. Maximilian Kolbe? I would respectfully suggest that he study the history of World War II very carefully before he writes — and you print — another such scurrilous article.

Joyce Szwagiel
Drummond Street, Auburn