

# 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.

## Don't do wrong to make right

To the editors:

The United Way drive is on again. It brings to mind our church bulletin of May 2, 1993, which was used to promote contributions to the United Way. In reference to the fact that the United Way includes Planned Parenthood as one of their option agencies, protesting parishioners were told in this bulletin that there is always the problem of "cutting off our nose to spite our face." This clearly makes it a monetary issue versus a moral one. I ask you, what position should the church take — monetary or moral?

Moreover, Thomistic Philosophy is very clear in the position that "you can't do wrong that good may come of it." To my way of thinking, it is immoral for religious leaders to directly solicit contributions to an organization that helps fund abortions, even though that same organization supports agencies which do real good. For them to do so indirectly is intolerable, to say the least, even though part of the money is used for good purposes.

While the United Way is basically a good organization, it is tainted by the inclusion of Planned Parenthood, which, in 1992 alone, received \$450,000 from the United Way drive. Including Planned Parenthood as a donor option has helped them achieve their goal of opening an abortion clinic in Rochester. Without their inclusion, a large portion of that \$450,000 would have gone to worthwhile charities.

To help destroy a life in the womb, which GOD has created, cannot be justified FOR ANY REASON, and certainly should NOT be promoted by church leaders. It is also a proven fact that many aborted babies DO INDEED feel the pain of abortion, just as if they were newborn, but I doubt if many of us would approve watching a newborn suffer.

It is time for religious leaders to look at this issue from a MORAL point of view since clearly now they look at the MONETARY gain for Catholic Charities. Whatever happened to the thinking that God will provide? Apparently, today's faith is not strong enough to sustain this thinking. In this respect, I am writing this since I am confident that not only our parish, but many parishes in the Diocese, will be promoting the United Way again. Furthermore, our Bishop should get off the United Way Board because all he does as a member is to give credence to the United Way's support of Planned Parenthood.

Please consider giving your contribution DIRECTLY to your favorite charity and NOT through a United Way agency where, although indirectly, part of it will be used for abortions.

**Florence Goodwin**  
Laredo Drive, Rochester

## Boston editor stakes claim on area native hailed in St. Patrick's Day feature article

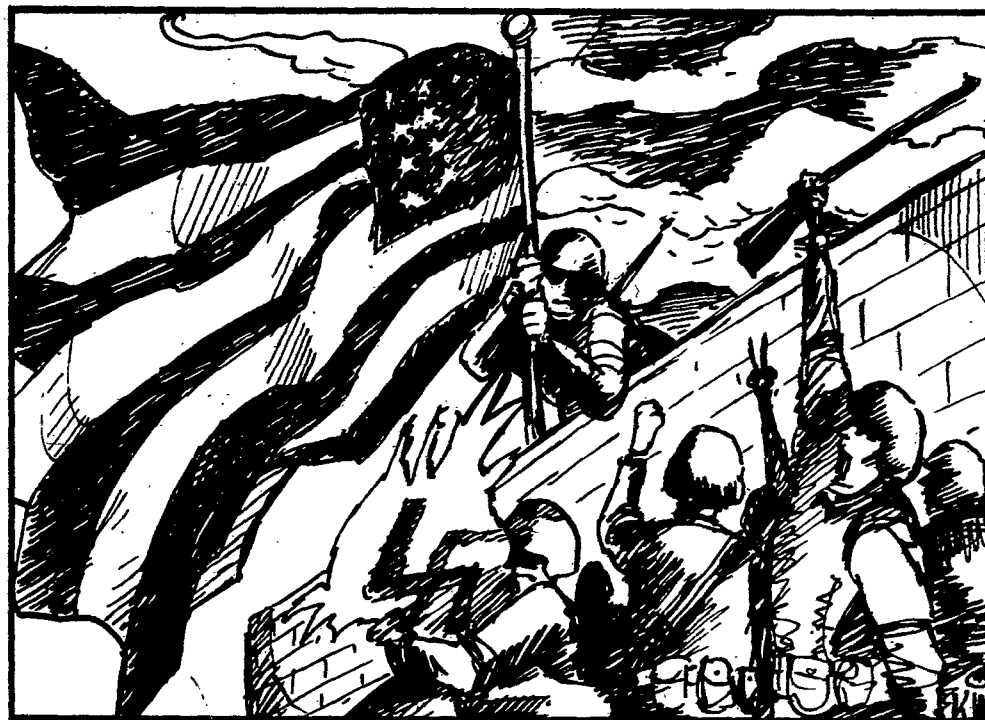
To the editors:

As a faithful reader of the *Catholic Courier*, I write to congratulate Father Robert McNamara for his article entitled "Toasting Irish Women" (March 16).

Of particular interest to this Bostonian was his praise of Katherine Conway, the Rochester native who was my predecessor as editor of *The Pilot*, back at the turn of the century.

Her impact on Boston and the Archdiocese was sizable.

As a colleague of John Boyle O'Reilly,



## Seek removal of columnist

To the editors:

We would like to protest the continued inclusion of Rev. Richard P. McBrien's column, entitled, "Essays in Theology," in the *Catholic Courier*. It is an insult to the intelligence of the readers.

On March 16, McBrien criticized the Bishops of New York State for allegedly not opposing the death penalty. This is the third time in recent years that we have read a column of his that we knew was just plain wrong. It makes us skeptical of his opinions in general.

On March 23, he condemned the church for not opposing a proposed shift in the allocation and administration of social welfare dollars. This is a political issue, not a moral or religious one. There is nothing in Catholic teaching that makes federal administration of social welfare dollars a moral imperative. Moreover, his assumption that state and local governments are run by self-centered, money grubbing ignoramuses is profoundly of-

fensive. There is nothing about Washington, D.C., that makes a politician holier or wiser than his or her state counterparts.

Having read McBrien's column faithfully for years, we have lost patience with his inaccurate and vindictive diatribes. We are tired of watching him abuse his privileged position as a priest, theologian, and columnist to harp on his pet political peeves. Oh, sure, he quotes church teaching when it supports his political agenda, but have you noticed how blithely he ignores church teaching whenever it opposes one of his "politically correct" positions?

We have come to the conclusion that Father McBrien is not a liberal Catholic, but a Catholic Liberal. Perhaps his column should be renamed, "Essays in Liberalism," and run in a more appropriate organ, such as *The New York Times*. We see no place for it in the *Catholic Courier*.

**Christine and David Bravo-Cullen**  
Dryden

## Rethinking attitude about priests

To the editors:

I would like to clarify a couple of things in a recent letter to the editor that I wrote (*Catholic Courier*, March 2: "Applauds effort on misconduct"). Father John Hayes of the Corning Cluster, among others, got the impression from reading my letter that I was sexually abused by a priest. I was not. I was sexually abused by a public school teacher. Father Hayes was very helpful to me in coming to terms with being sexually abused. I will be forever grateful for his help.

In a letter from Father Hayes to me he points out that if a priest does something good the response is "Isn't Father wonderful," but if a priest does something bad the response is "all priests are terrible." After thinking about his letter for a few days, I have come to believe that I too had this "all priests are terrible" attitude. I know there are a lot of good priests out there — Father Hayes for one — and I am sorry for linking them up with priests who have sexually abused

others. I hope that Bishop Clark continues to follow the policy he has made concerning charges of sexual abuse of children by priests.

Thank you for giving me a chance to clarify a couple of things from my last letter.

**Richard J. Kuehner**  
Horseheads

## Pro-life efforts can't end with signatures

To the editors:

Thanks to Father Bausch and Mr. Balinsky for their informative letter regarding the Diocese efforts against abortions and the death penalty. I urge all of the readers to pray for all of those involved in this effort.

However, on the Parish level, it seems that the only thing we do is sign the petition cards every once in awhile, a fruitless task considering what the legislators have done to put a stop to abortions and passing laws making the death penalty legal. Once the petition cards are signed, the matters are forgotten and nothing is said from the pulpit. Sometimes I think that the word abortion is a no-no word. Just as important, we must let those people involved in abortions know that there is forgiveness, healing and reconciliation available to them through the church.

When we consider that over a million unborn children are put to death each year, something more than signing petitions has to be done. For example, the Diocese could organize prayer services to be held outside abortion clinics, or at least help the Parishes organize them.

**Edward F. Lada**  
East Street, Pittsford

**Rev. Peter Conley, editor**  
*The Pilot*  
Boston

**EDITORS' NOTE:** The *Pilot* is the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Boston.