

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.

Urges reading church apologetics

To the editors:

At a time when our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, seems to be a lonely voice speaking out against the "culture of death" in our society, each of us must join him to support and explain these teachings — and other Catholic teachings — to our non-Catholic brothers.

The Catholic Encyclopedia defines Apologetics as the "Theological discipline concerned with the defense of or proofs for the Faith. Apologetics attempts a cogent explanation of the Faith both to eliminate hostility against it and to elicit understanding and even acceptance in the listener."

When we discuss our Faith with others, we must not belittle them or their beliefs but instead, present a convincing explanation of our beliefs with a charitable Christian attitude. We must also not begin with the most complicated aspects of our beliefs. Non-Catholics would generally have to accept the teaching authority given to the Church before they could understand and accept teachings like the Immaculate Conception of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Non-Catholic Christians generally believe that the Bible alone is the source of all truth while Catholics have Church teaching and sacred tradition as well. Therefore, the first topic for discussion should probably be "How do we know the Bible is truly inspired by God?"

Their response will probably be that the Bible itself says that it is inspired. In 2 Timothy 3:16, we see that scripture does indeed state that all scripture is inspired by God. What does all scripture mean? There were many scriptures written before and after the life of Christ, and even after 2nd Timothy was written, but not all of them are considered inspired and not all of them are included in the Catholic Bible. But the Bible says that all scripture is inspired by God! How can there be scriptures written that are not accepted as inspired by God if the Bible says that all scripture is inspired by God? Is the Bible wrong? If it is, then it can't be inspired by God! Where does the Bible list all of the inspired books that are to be included?

These types of questions lead you to only one possible conclusion. The early Church had the authority from God (Je-

sus) through the Holy Spirit to discern which books were divinely inspired and which ones were not! Once this premise is accepted you will have your common ground, i.e., the teaching authority of the Church, on which to build your future discussions. The next step would be to discuss with them when, where and how the Church received its authority and

then to ask them when, where and how they believe that the Church lost this authority.

For a more detailed discussion of Catholic Apologetics you should read *Catholicism and Fundamentalism* by Karl Keating, Ignatius Press (800)651-1531.

Michael A. Gallagher
West Church Street, Fairport



Roe daughter should give thanks her mother didn't choose abortion

To the editors:

Recently, approximately 600 people turned out at the Rochester Institute of Technology to hear a debate between Sarah Weddington, the lawyer who won *Roe vs. Wade*, and Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative author and columnist. Weddington, who was 26 when she won the *Roe vs. Wade* case before the U.S. Supreme Court which legalized abortion in the United States, encouraged the students to continue to fight for all people to be equal.

Susan B. Anthony, a Rochester human-

rights advocate who won the women's right to vote and fought against slavery, opposed a woman's right to abortion. Ms. Weddington's own mother was pro-life because there always has been the option of back-alley abortion throughout history, but Ms. Weddington's mother chose to give life to her daughter, Sarah.

Sarah Weddington should thank her mother for making the right decision, that being, for choosing life.

Dianna Richmond Ives
Simpson Road, Rochester

Hierarchical authority abides in service

To the editors:

After reading Jan Frederick's Letter to the Editor in the April 13 issue of the *Courier*, titled: "Don't call submission into doubt," I was left feeling very confused by her remarks, not by Father Hart's.

Questions came to mind such as: If each and every Christian Catholic is a disciple of Jesus through baptism, why is there a need to postulate dependency on a hierarchical clergy for the responsibility and accountability of each person's faith?

Since Jesus has been recorded in the synoptic scriptures as warning: all of us

not to imitate the way the rulers of the world operate and treat their people ("It is not to be so with you" Mark 10:42, Matthew 20:24-28, Luke 22:24-27.) why does the hierarchical clergy continue to ignore such a weighty justice issue and continue to focus on lesser ones?

The early Christian communities who recorded the synoptics must have believed it highly important enough to include this warning and subsequent view of Jesus on authority as compassionate and loving service, not oppressive power and punitive vengeance. Why do we continue to operate through an authority

structure modeled on the Roman style or on any style that fashions an institution in which the views of one person or a clique determine policy and implement it with the attitude that implies, "You will do as I say," insisting on its own authority, not necessarily that of compassionate and loving service.

The power of the resurrection manifested to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning needs no oppressive power and allows no vengeance. Any institution that insists on its own authority when what is needed is compassionate and loving service, has no authority at all. But it may take time for them to discover this. Jesus Christ is the head of his Church, with or without a pope or physical head, and always will be. And He is the same today, as He was yesterday and will be tomorrow.

Authority is the gift of compassionate loving service in the church which does not include silencing those who think differently or refusing to listen to those of the opposite gender. If their messages are not of God, they will self-destruct; but if in fact they do come from God you will be unable to destroy them. Take care not to find yourselves fighting against God.

Patti Federowicz
Clover Road, Apalachin

Pentecost offers opportunity to consider how we fail to heed calling of Holy Spirit

To the editors:

In our parish we are blest to have our pastor, Father David Reid, SSCC, lead a Bible study every Thursday evening after the 7 p.m. Mass.

This week the discussion led to a confusing issue. The question was asked, "Where was the Holy Spirit?" Father David answered with, "The Holy Spirit was sitting in a corner." I want to think about that!

As we approach another Pentecost

Sunday in the midst of many controversial issues, isn't it appropriate to invite Holy Spirit out of the corner. How are we pushing Him there? What steps can we take in our personal and collective lives to invite Him out of the corner right into the issue at hand?

I invite all to join in asking these questions.

Dorothy Frederick
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