

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.

More reactions to now-closed film

To the editors:

I have watched with keen interest the developments of the past few weeks surrounding the movie, "Priest." I do not understand why some people feel the church should be untouched by the media. I am shocked that people actually believe an idea is wrong because it conflicts with their view. The Little is a public theater and should be allowed to show any movie they, and the laws of this state allow.

People are equally in their rights to picket but is the church such a fragile institution that we need to protect it from any blows? Do we really have the right to use our personal beliefs to try and control which movies are to be released and which are to be censored; especially without even seeing the movie in question? I am reminded of what Jesus said to His Apostles when He sent them out. He said that if a town did not accept the gospel they should leave, "and shake its dust from your feet." I do not see where He says, picket the town. I also think of the old song which says, "They will know we are Christians by our love." I have never heard, they will know we are Christians by the size of our picket sign...

... I am in the pre-theology process for this diocese. If all goes as planned I will be studying in major seminary in the fall with the hopes of being ordained in a few years. I am most upset by the view that this movie will adversely effect vocations. I agree with the survey noted in your cover article, (which indicates) ... that the media portray the church poorly.

A good example is a recent article (in Gannett Rochester Newspapers) of April 3 and 4. The article was a basic portrait of fellow seminarian Peter DeBellis... It also included references to priests who have been in the media because of their sexual activities. It was not made clear why (the newspapers) were juxtapositioning these two themes. One of the articles was run under headline "Giving up the Good Life for the Godly Life." The other had the sidebar heading, "Coping." ... If you leave the "Good" life ... it seems to be at least hinting that where you are going is something less than "Good." Also, "Coping" contains some degree of success but it does not seem full of being happy and content.

I have received some great support through my process of becoming a seminarian but the most prevalent responses have fallen into two categories. People either feel that I have taken on a huge Herculean task or they offer me alternatives so I do not "throw my life away." ... I believe people hold skewed views of the priesthood ... (and religious life). I do not believe that God is calling significantly smaller numbers of men - and women - to His service. There are less people listening because of the view congregations seem to have of the lifestyle.

People see priesthood as a huge step to be taken only by superhumans with superior powers. I look at it as men following their baptismal call to serve God

and their communities as best as they can with the skills they have. People see priesthood exacting a huge toll on the life of a person. I left a career and a lifestyle, not for something less but for something more. God has made incredible promises to those trust and give their lives to Him... I am confident in His eternal promises also but I do not count anything as lost. I have gained the world, to paraphrase St. Paul.

It is the job of the whole community of believers to look at their feelings on this matter and see what they have done to help vocations. When was the last time priesthood or religious was sug-

gested to a young bright high school senior thinking of their future? The problem with vocations is not based in the media nor in movies like "Priest." The problem is in our own congregations. It is not just up to the priests and religious. The history of the church shows that priests were prayerfully called forth by the community to serve... (Fictional films) should not effect reality if we make reality clear. I'll let my life speak for my views not my picket sign.

Patrick J. VanDurme

Gregory Street, Rochester

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



Linus Roache in Antonia Bird's 'Priest.'

Miramax Films

Send a message to Disney

To the editors:

During this year the Knights of Columbus have been emphasizing its respect for and affirmation of the priesthood under the theme "In Solidarity With Our Priests." In light of this I encourage members and families to express their views about "Priest" to the Walt Disney Company, 500 S. Buena Vista, Burbank, Calif. 91521.

The Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus said the 1.5 million member organization is deeply dismayed and highly insulted by the film "Priest." The film presents a distorted, negative and

fundamentally unfair picture of Catholic priests. Virgil C. Dechant, Supreme Knight, said the Knights had sold its 50,000 shares in the Walt Disney Company, owner of the film's distributor Miramax, and has canceled plans for a June meeting of K of C state deputies in Disney World. Similar action regarding Disney Products is encouraged unless the film is removed from theaters.

**R. David Carhart, PR Chairman
New York State Council K of C**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Showings of "Priest" at The Little Theatre had concluded by May 25.

Priest's column keeps readers thinking

To the editors:

As a long time fan of Rev. Fr. Richard McBrien, I think "Encyclical calls for reevaluation on issues" (May 11) validates my belief that McBrien is good for us. If you reread his column, any week, you'll find he is stating over and over that the reader needs to rethink our choices.

Many times our personal experience

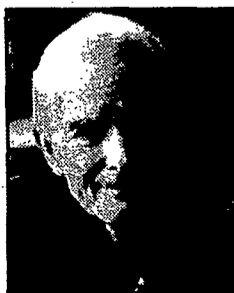
allows us to read into his articles what we'd like to believe. In support of him I find many times he gives us food for thought. And we should be more thorough reading his explanations. His sources are better, more world wide. Keep him, he's helping us think.

**Claire Slack
Buffalo Street
Canandaigua**

Allocate pro-life efforts proportionate to number of deaths

To the editors:

As a pro-life activist, I was disturbed by Father Greeley's comment in the May 4 *Catholic Courier*, "I will not take seriously any longer Catholic pro-life people who aren't out demonstrating against the death penalty."



Father Greeley

I am against the death penalty, not only in agreement with the Pope that in these times there is almost no reason for it, but also because of inequities in our judicial system. But, those facing the death penalty have had their day in court.

Right now, I have qualms about protesting the death penalty for the perpetrators of the Oklahoma bombing. I never have doubts about protesting the killing of innocent babies.

There are 4,000 unborn babies killed

daily in this country. How many alleged criminals were executed last year? If I allocate my protesting efforts in proportion to the number of deaths, a few seconds would suffice to meet Father Greeley's challenge.

I will not take seriously any longer Catholic consistent ethic, seamless garment people who aren't out demonstrating against abortion.

**Elizabeth Shipley
Mumford Street
Seneca Falls**