

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.

Divisions in cluster upset late priest

To the editors:

The recent articles (and letters) about Father David Mura in the *Courier* have been beautiful testaments to a beautiful man. I didn't know him as long as I would have like to. I belong to Holy Apostles Church and when Dave became our pastor, a new door to my faith opened up. I started to understand what had been taught to me all my life.

Father Dave and I didn't always see eye to eye, but I loved him for the things he did for me and our parish. He brought a new life to what can seem an awful neighborhood. I never personally told him how I felt or even said thank you. I knew I meant to.

During the process of clustering Holy Apostles with St. Anthony's, it seemed Father Dave became irritable all the time. I often said I loved him as a priest, but as a human being we were two conflicting personalities. After his return from surgery, he gave me a big hug and an even bigger hug. Right then I realized he WAS only human and he was under so much stress with two parishes and that is what made him seem irritable. He tried so hard to please both parishes — what an impossible task!

Before his death he mentioned how other priests had told him of unresolved conflicts in clusters after years of being together! I wanted to stand up and ask, why? Why should there be a conflict? Why are people coming to church to find faults in the way some worship? Why are they criticizing others? I never got to ask those questions.

Now every Sunday that I go to church I ask myself, why. I feel like an outsider in my "own house." The last time I felt welcomed was Father Dave's funeral. I know he wouldn't want it that way, but I don't know where to turn now that he's gone. It seems impossible in my cluster knowing we aren't a true faith community.

My question now is how does someone find faith when what is being taught is "love thy neighbor," but what is being practiced is "new neighbors are trying to take

over, so let's argue." Church is about worshipping God in song, motion, laughter, and sometimes tears. It isn't about who gets their own way. Clustering should make our church "family" bigger not divide it. The more we divide today the more we lose tomorrow. I only hope I find something to help my faith. I'd love to be a Clown for Christ and touch someone's life forever, just like Father Dave did for me.

Lisbeth L. Burke
Calihan Park, Rochester

DeSales grads dedicate ceremony in memory of Father David Mura

To the editors:

I'm really not sure how to put into words the appreciation and love we have for Father Dave, but I have tried my best to capture the highlights of our class retreats that we shared with him.

He coordinated and ran all four of our class retreats, memories to last forever — our snowball fight with him; Beth's enlightening accident; and, on a more serious note one of the most touching experiences, meeting Anita, someone who was HIV positive that taught us to appreciate life. Feeling the sadness at our senior retreat because she could not join us as she had promised, because God felt she had suffered enough.

We shared laughter and tears with Father Dave. We, the students of DeSales, seemed to be the most important people in his life besides God. He helped us with

any of our problems we had, he answered ALL of our questions, and he let us be kids when the time was appropriate and then even his inner child would come out at these times.

I wish he could be here with us to celebrate the greatest day of most of our lives so far — the end of the beginning, so to speak, to share with us our happiness, yet much to our surprise God wanted him to come home to Heaven to be with Him. I'm sure he's watching us on this day along with all of the loved ones we've lost. So Father Dave, if you are listening we love you and in memory of you we, the graduating class of 1995 dedicate our graduation to you.

Rosemary Guerri
DeSales High School
1995 Graduating Class
Geneva, NY



Recalls lifetime encounters with 'retiring' general mgr.

To the editors:

It seems like yesterday that as a young school boy growing up in the Cathedral Parish, (he) and the late Bishop McCafferty would be on the left and right of Bishop Sheen and then Hogan at the numerous liturgies of the Catholic Church. There (he was) at every occasion. The happy ones as well as the sad.

We moved on, from Sacred Heart School to Aquinas Institute, but that didn't stop (him). We'd assemble in the auditorium for a student body Mass and there (he was) again. Senior year came and finally graduation day, my name was called and I walked across the stage and

there (he was) with a big smile, a firm handshake and my diploma. He could of let go of it a little easier!

In recent years in (his) position as General Manager of the *Catholic Courier* (he) and (his) staff have been most kind in allowing me to express my views via the Opinions/Commentary page.

So Bishop Hickey as you prepare to retire for the third time, I say thanks and may the good Lord bless you with health, happiness and many more years.

Alan Rector
Flower City Park
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bishop Dennis W. Hickey formally steps down as general manager on June 30, but he has promised to maintain his association with the paper, and we plan to hold him to it! See next week's edition for more on Bishop Hickey's retirement.

Conservative agrees with 'liberal' stance concerning celibacy

To the editors:

I'm a conservative Catholic regarding almost any issue you'd care to name, including that of women in the priesthood.

However, Father McBrien's column of May 25 raises one of the very few issues in which I find common ground with church liberals — that of mandatory celibacy.

I won't belabor the fact that this requirement has no Scriptural foundations; I won't write paragraphs on its political roots in the 12th century, or the fact that it was a very human solution to problems that needed to be addressed with spiritual vision.

I will point to the fruits of this policy, not only in pastoral limitations imposed by a declining priesthood, but also the scandal of sexual abuse among misfits who've use their priestly office as cover for this sins.

The holy gift of celibacy is God-giver and precious, and certainly those who live this gift are filled with special graces by Our Lord. But I need look no further than my 17-year-old son to know that not all who desire the priesthood are called to be celibate. He would enter seminary in a heartbeat if he were able to also marry and raise a family, and I seriously doubt he's unique in this respect.

Father McBrien links this issue to that of male exclusivity, which to me seem: like comparing apples to oranges. From the very foundation of the Church by Jesus Christ, the priesthood has been male. Those who theorize that Christ was merely accommodating the social climate he lived in by choosing 12 male as Apostles forget that Jesus was not by any standard a social conformist. His reasons may not be apparent, but rest assured they were formed in Spirit and in truth, not out of a perceived need to accommodate the social mores of the time

Sandra Dum
Mattie Street, Auburn