

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.



Movement could renew the church

To the editors:

This summer my wife and I attended the 13th annual Catholic Charismatic Conference sponsored by the Diocese of Scranton.

It has been more than a decade since I have been an active Charismatic Catholic. During the late '70s I was caught up in this renewal which was instrumental in committing my life to the Lord. Most importantly, I developed a personal relationship with Jesus that included the cultivation of a prayer time and a desire to delve into the Scriptures. The sensation of "welling up" with the Holy Spirit was manifested by the gifts of healing, prophecy, and praying in tongues.

During the ensuing years I joyfully experienced and practiced the principles learned from Engaged/Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, parish retreats, and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. I desired and participated more actively in the traditional aspects of our Catholic faith — Mass, liturgical seasons, sacraments, and praying the rosary. As I be-

came involved in parish life, I have experienced a sense of community with a small group of committed Catholics. Certainly, there is a rich treasure of spiritual blessings within the Church.

As my love for Catholicism has blossomed, so has my heart ached for the Church. A well-known Charismatic leader has stated that the Church contains a large population of "cultural Catholics" — those who attend but are not renewed in Spirit. At the conference a speaker remarked that the Catholic Church is a sleeping Giant!

What can be done to awaken this Giant and unleash all its potential? Once awakened by the fire of the Holy Spirit, this Giant can be fanned into a huge flame of love, unity, renewal, and beauty — the Bride that Jesus is seeking.

Attending the conference reawakened me to the blessings that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal can offer the Church. Endorsed by Rome, it is a movement that is conservative in theology yet liberal in expression — a combination which often makes it misunderstood by

the people.

The three-day weekend was complete with the celebration of daily Mass, Eucharistic adoration, personal confession by area priests, and praying of the rosary. The general sessions were chock full of solid teachings on Scripture. There were messages of Mary, the Holy Spirit's spouse, and her role in the Second Advent, as well as support for the Pope in his exhortation to a new evangelization and ecumenical unity with other Christian brothers and sisters. And, of course, there were songs of worship and praise, prophecy, praying in tongues, clapping of hands, and dancing in the aisles. As my wife said, it was an adult version of Vacation Bible School, as our three sons just experienced.

Another famous Charismatic leader once challenged the crowd: "Have you fallen in love with Jesus Christ?" When we do, the Spirit of Love will fill our hearts with a New Pentecost, and we, as Church, will renew the face of the earth!

Michael R. Mazzochetti
Pinewood Knoll, Rochester

Agrees with bishops on standing at Mass

To the editors:

The American Bishops discussed an important issue during their June meeting in Chicago. Cardinal Bernardin, although not present, had submitted a proposal that there be a change in American Liturgical Law, to allow pastors or bishops to permit standing, as an optional posture during the Eucharistic Prayer.

The topic caused a lively discussion. Backers argued that standing was a common ancient practice and is considered preferable by liturgical experts. But a very significant number of bishops felt otherwise and opposed the proposal. They argued that giving bishops and pastors this option would cause great confusion and division in the Church. "This practice would vary from diocese to diocese and from parish to parish," they declared, "People wouldn't know what to expect or do in Church. It would be burdensome for them."

I think the bishops were right, for I've noticed confusion in our area when people attend various parishes for daily Mass. Some stand, some kneel, others look around trying to decide what to do. And some change their behavior in the same church, depending on the priest! The problem is, the people across this country are caught in the middle. They know that standing is an act of respect,

but sense that kneeling is a better way to show adoration. Many feel a strong obligation to comply with official Liturgical Laws, but at the same time desire to please their pastors.

Cardinal Law was right when he said, "A layperson should be able to walk into a Catholic Church anywhere in this country and know that, from after the singing of the Sanctus until after the Great Amen, the posture is kneeling."

After a lengthy discussion, the bishops could clearly see that there was strong opposition to a change that would allow standing during the Eucharistic Prayer, so the proposal was withdrawn. This left the 1969 American Bishop's Liturgical Laws unchanged. These Laws state that, in America, from the end of the Sanctus until the conclusion of the Great Amen of the Eucharistic Prayer, and from the end of the Lamb of God until Holy Communion time, the entire congregation is to kneel.

In June, the mind and will of the American Bishops was made clear: Kneeling is the proper posture for the entire Eucharistic prayer. It is obvious that no bishop or priest has the authority to alter Liturgical Rules enacted by the Bishop's Conference, or Cardinal Bernardin would not have needed to make a proposal seeking permission, for

the option to stand. Let's hope that pastors throughout our country, who have mistakenly taught their people to stand, will now courageously comply with official Liturgical Documents. Hopefully they will reinstruct their people to kneel, so that in America, we can once again be united during the most sacred part of the Mass.

Janet Schwenkler
West Church Street
Elmira

Praises columnist for ministry of Word

To the editors:

What an eloquent column Father Shamon wrote in the August 3 edition of the *Catholic Courier*.

Many would not have been able to come to "life in the valley" if we hadn't attended Sunday Mass. I know I wouldn't have. These past few years I've been fortunate to attend three weekday Masses as well as Sunday. I thank God.

Your column each week is very important, Father Shamon. I hope you write many more.

Rena B. Camblin
Meadow Drive, Palmyra