

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.

Readers respond to 'bomb' article

To the editors:

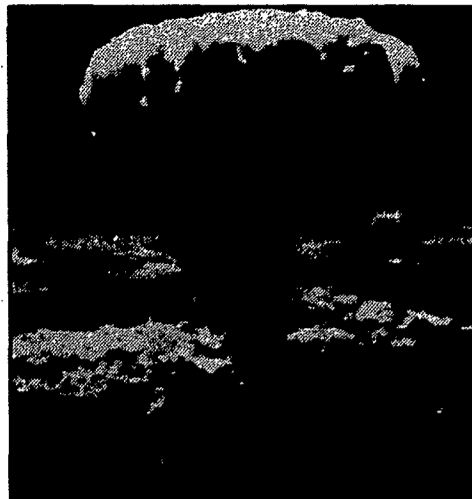
In reading your article on "THE BOMB" (Aug. 3), I keep thinking about the message that was given at Fatima, Portugal, by Our Blessed Mother about war. Fatima, as many readers know, is now a famous place of pilgrimage like Lourdes, France.

At Fatima the Mother of Our Lord Jesus appeared to three children taking care of sheep from May 13 monthly to October 13, 1917. Thousands of people gathered there at that time to witness miracles, especially the great miracle of the sun on Oct. 13, 1917. Mary gave messages for peace and prophecies of future events. Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled. Some of the messages given by Our Blessed Mother:

"Say the Rosary every day in order to obtain peace for the world."

"I am the Lady of the Rosary. I wish for a chapel to be built on this spot. Continue to say the Rosary every day. The war will now soon end and the soldiers will return to their homes. Mankind must not offend God Our Lord any more, for He is already too much offended."

"If people do not cease offending God, another and more terrible war will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI."



These are just some of the messages given at Fatima — remember this was in 1917!

In the book "Fatima, Russia and Pope John Paul II" by Timothy Tindal-Robertson available from Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, Mass., the author brings together many documents and facts. On May 13, 1982, Pope John Paul went to Fatima — it was the first anniversary of the attempted assassination of him. He came to thank Our Lady for saving his life and he made an Act of Consecration. In his homily he said:

"The immaculate heart of Mary, opened with the words 'Woman, behold your Son,' is spiritually united with the heart of her Son opened by the soldier's spear... Consecrating the world to immaculate heart of Mary means returning beneath the Cross of the Son. It means consecrating this world to the pierced heart of the savior, bringing it back to the very source of its redemption... The appeal of the Lady of the Message of Fatima is so deeply rooted in the Gospel and the whole of Tradition that the Church feels that that the message imposes a commitment on her... Today John Paul II ... reads it again with trepidation in his heart, because he sees how many people and societies — how many Christians — have gone in the opposite direction to the one indicated in the message of Fatima..."

I believe our families, our parishes, our Diocese should take a good look at Our Blessed Mother's plan to avoid WAR and bring peace.

Marian Buchheit
County Line Road, Webster

EDITORS' NOTE: Ms. Buchheit excerpted the quotation from Pope John Paul II from paragraphs 8 through 10 of the pope's May 13, 1982, Fatima message. The full text is contained in *Origins*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 20-21.

Story showed church view on nuclear war

To the editors:

David J. Dwyer (Aug. 17 "Has Courier joined ranks of A-bomb revisionists?") asks if the *Catholic Courier* has joined the ranks of those "who have revised the history of the end of World War II." What he describes as the "revisionist" interpretation of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been official Roman Catholic teaching for the last 50 years. The Catholic Bishops of the world at the Second Vatican Council wrote:

"Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 80, quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2314).

All the Popes since 1945 have taught the immorality of the use of nuclear weapons. Pope Paul VI referred to the bombing of Hiroshima as "butchery of untold magnitude" (*Message for World Day of Peace*, 1976). Speaking in Hiroshima, Pope John Paul II said, "At Hiroshima, the facts speak for themselves, in a way that is dramatic, unforgettable and unique. In the face of an unforgettable tragedy, which touches us all as

human beings, how can we fail to express our brotherhood and our deep sympathy at the frightful wound inflicted on the cities of Japan that bear the names of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?"

"That wound affected the whole of the human family. Hiroshima and Nagasaki: few events have had such an effect on man's conscience."

In address at the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima, he compared the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

(Both papal addresses at Hiroshima are excerpted in "Peace and Disarmament: Documents of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.")

Even if one chooses to dissent from papal and conciliar teaching, one should not be surprised at seeing official Roman Catholic teaching on the front page of a Catholic newspaper.

Father Gary Tyman
Newman Community
University of Rochester

What is Christian response to war's insanity?

To the editors:

In the August 3 issue of the *Catholic Courier* the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was discussed. My viewpoint is that the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor — predominantly a military base — was and remains an act of insanity. The Pearl Harbor incident began World War II for the U.S.A. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cities — both predominantly civilian, non-combatants — was and remains an act of insanity. World War II began with an act

of insanity and ended with acts of insanity. Total disregard of human life!

We are free to interpret the value of these acts but they all are opposed to the Way, the Truth and the life of Jesus Christ. We still have our choice, which way, which truth, which life. Presently the U.S.A. is ready, willing and able to repeat. Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What is our response?

Deacon Eugene C. Fuerst
Simpson Road
Rochester

Asks newspaper to refrain from publishing all political ads

To the editors:

Last November, the *Catholic Courier* published a letter that I wrote concerning the fairness of publishing paid political advertisements. The (editors') response provided a reasonable explanation of the *Catholic Courier's* policy but did not address its silent endorsement of a political agenda. This year, before election season begins, I am urging you to not accept any paid political advertising. Whenever a large majority of advertisements are from one political party or coalition, an uncritical reader may infer that the publisher supports that viewpoint.

I feel that it is important for people of faith to make their voices heard in the political process. Voting and calling or writing elected representatives are useful methods of shaping public policy and should be encouraged. It is wrong, however, to assume that one political party or viewpoint has a monopoly on the truth.

For a truly conscientious Catholic, voting is often a dilemma because very few candidates are consistently pro-life. Often a "pro-life" candidate also favors the death penalty, receives campaign contributions from the gun lobby, and supports economic policies that polarize the rich and the poor. On the other hand, a "pro-choice" candidate may be a strong advocate for other social issues that the Catholic Church promotes. Many voters "hold their nose and pull the lever" for candidates they feel are the "lesser of two evils" or worse, stay home from the polls altogether.

This fall, I hope that the *Catholic Courier* will avoid partisan politics by reconsidering its advertising policy. Remember that not all Catholics support the views of the "religious right." Our political system usually requires bipartisan cooperation to pass legislation; likewise, progressive and conservative Christians need to avoid the rhetoric of the culture war and focus on our com-

mon values in order to reach agreement.

The *Catholic Courier* is usually fair and balanced, given the restrictions of a diocesan newspaper. I enjoy the diversity of opinions from your readers, whether conservative or liberal. Please try to maintain this balance during the election season.

Richard Poydock
Rustic Street, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Barring unforeseen action by our board of directors, we will not change our advertising policy at this time. Candidates of all political parties and ideologies will have equal opportunity to advertise in the *Catholic Courier* this fall. We cannot predict which politicians and political groups will choose to avail themselves of this opportunity. We must emphasize, however, that our publication of an advertisement — political or otherwise — should never be interpreted as the newspaper's endorsement of the product, service or individual promoted by the ad.