

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.



Suggests improvements for parish 'crying room'

To the editors:

When my husband and I decided to take a leave of absence from our parish and look for another to worship, it was not for typical reasons. We left because of our children. Our time during Mass was spent chasing our two toddlers. We barely heard the readings and hid in the confessional during the homily. After one hour, we were exhausted and irritable. The ironic part is no one else seemed to be bothered. The truth was, they bothered us!

We wanted to worship as a family and not split up to attend separate Masses. We are a family and want to stay that way. So, after eliminating parishes that had no accommodations for children, we shortened our list to four and spent time visiting them. One offered babysitting during Mass and although appealing it did not allow us to worship as a family. We picked the second.

About 15 years ago, I became familiar with the crying room. An announcement was made before Mass in regards to the room, "and if your child becomes disruptive during Mass, please remove them to the CRYING ROOM in the back". A sentence the community seemed to applaud.

Have you ever spent time in one of these places? They range from child friendly to the child hands-off room. The crying room, stigmatized from the beginning by its name, has a two-fold purpose, a confessional and crying room.

Some rooms have more features than others but they basically all lack the same things. First of all, the name favors the

negative. I suggest calling it a family room and advocate families to worship there together. Secondly, the picture window starts about three feet off the floor. The window could be a foot and a half lower to allow everyone to participate in the Mass. This could eliminate children climbing to look out. Finally, the room should be user-friendly for children. I recently visited a parish where a sign hung inside their crying room that read, "Please no food or drinks, other than water in a baby bottle."

Family rooms could be furnished for families with hooks for diaper bags and coats and a durable rug to withstand spills and crawlers. There could be raised door handles and light switches, plugs in the electrical sockets and not be a catch-all for card tables and other items that can fall over onto small children.

We hear over and over again that today's children are our future and how important spirituality is to their moral upbringing. As a parent of very active children, I had found it a real challenge to attend Mass and share anything since I heard very little. Now, we attend as a family. When we enter the church, we go immediately to the "family room" and get settled in. We bring toys, juice and pretzels. We actually hear the readings and the homily as our children play quietly. Sometimes they aren't so quiet, but that's OK. An hour is a long time to be in one room with no view.

Connie S. O'Brien
Westfield Street
Rochester

Poverty is no excuse for failure to dress appropriately for Mass

To the editors:

Let me begin by saying that I have no intention of carrying on any dialogue with people who feel any type of apparel is appropriate for the Sacrifice of the Mass. Instead, I would just like to refer them to The Catechism of the Catholic Church, which says, "Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment when Christ becomes our guest" (n. 1387).

I would also refer them to *The Wanderer*, (Aug. 17). Further, I do not subscribe to Ms. DeLille's concept (see letter "Spirit, not clothing, make the worshiper," Aug. 17) that people are so poor they do not have proper attire for Mass. Just look at the respect the poor people of Central and South American display. Also, Ms. DeLille, or anyone else, doesn't have to

tell me about stretching a dollar. I reared three children in the sixties, and I did just that when my husband was not making a good salary, and yet our children were appropriately dressed for Mass.

Do those same people she refers to go to work and school in shorts all year? Do they not have at least one appropriate outfit to wear? If not, anyone in such dire straits need only go to a Salvation Army store to obtain clothing at a very reasonable price. Or, I am sure, their Church would be happy to assist them during their financial difficulties.

And if the Lord is looking at our spirit, He must see that the spirit of some people is indeed lacking in respect for His sacrifice.

Florence Goodwin
Laredo Drive
Rochester

Article left Lyons out

To the editors:

In your Aug. 10 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, I think a correction is in order concerning the (article) "Parish combines fun, support" by Lee Strong.

Palmyra is at the beginning, although throughout the article you're referring to Lyons (St. Michael's). I do want to add our cluster parish, St. Anne's, Palmyra, and St. Gregory's, Marian, do have pupils who attend St. Michael's in Newark as well as St. Francis deSales in Geneva.

Last fall the parents of these students put on an Italian Wine and Dine Dinner. They worked very hard to raise funds to help support St. Michael's. I thoroughly enjoyed it, many others did too. I hope it will be repeated this fall.

Just thought you should have written Lyons instead of Palmyra.

Rena B. Camblin
Meadow Drive, Palmyra

Many jobs use fingerprinting

To the editors:

If these good sisters (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 3: "Sisters arrested at welfare office") researched some they would find many people are finger printed because of jobs they have. Some are finger printed periodically because of their business policy. I didn't know finger prints might change, but they have their reasons.

So what is the big deal about finger imaging of the welfare recipients? When you are giving taxpayers' monies to anyone a finger image shouldn't be a problem — unless there is a problem! This procedure is mainly for eliminating fraud in the system, probably never all the fraud but it has to start somewhere.

Listen up sisters! I recall Jesus saying render unto Caesar what is Caesar. I believe this belongs to Caesar!

Marion E. Scowcroft
Bradford Road, Pittsford

Watchdogs could stimulate bigotry

To the editors:

An observation: The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 17: "Watchdog group is taking up arms against the sea of anti-Catholicism") may be developing a policy to stimulate its membership to become more bigoted than the bigots.

Within our church the winds of change are blowing. History supports realistic dialogue as a route to truth.

Joe Leahy
Valois, New York

Appreciated column about St. Augustine

To the editors:

I wish to express my gratitude to you and Father Richard P. McBrien for a beautiful article on St. Augustine, (Aug. 10). Outstanding! Nice job, Father McBrien. This was indeed an Essay on Theology!

Donald Patrick Dunn
Chateaufort Drive, Webster