

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.

Excess 'eau'
drove trio
from pews

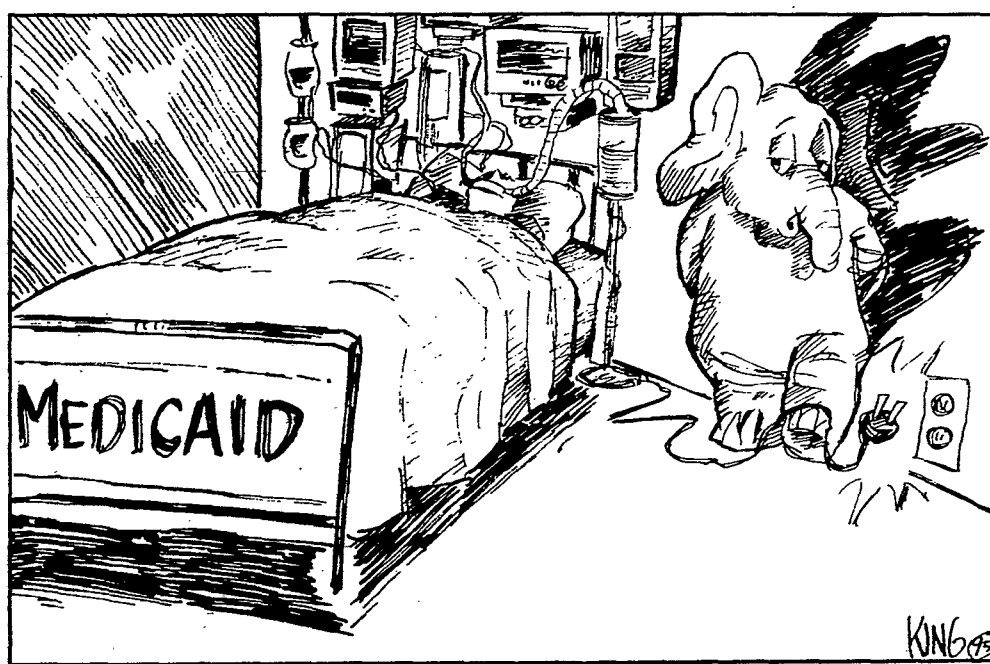
To the editors:

My daughter, niece and I had to leave church before Mass was over last night because someone sat near us with enough perfume on to deodorize a landfill. We tried moving down further in the pew, but because of the air flow in the church, it only became worse and more intense.

My daughter has allergies and after being assaulted with this odor, began to have a hard time breathing. My niece said her head was pounding. My eyes started to burn and my stomach started to flip, and all the indications of a major stomach eruption were present.

We slipped out of church at a time I thought would not be disruptive, but people looked at us making our exit wondering why we were leaving before the Consecration. I explained to the girls in the car that we would have to make another trip to church on Sunday to fulfill our Sunday obligation.

This was not the first time that we have



left church sickened by the smell of Eau de Overdose, but it was the first time we left before Mass was over. Why are we so sensitive about issues like smoking or all the other things that infringe upon people's space, but ignore this issue that affects so many people? We are assaulted in malls, grocery stores and in restaurants by these folks who haven't learned that a little bit goes a long way when it comes to the issue of perfume pollution.

When I went to a pastor a few years ago, he laughed off my concerns and told

me to lighten up or move to another pew. It's not funny when you spend Sunday with a perfume induced migraine or have to watch a child struggle to breath just because you went to church.

So to all you perfume dousers, think before you spray. Is advertising for Chanel or Estee worth making someone sick? Your prayers will get to heaven just as fast without all the cologne that is knocking out your fellow parishioners.

Mary Ellen Frisch
Gillette Road, Spencerport

Legalism is product of limiting God's love

To the editors:

I'd like to thank Sister Patricia Schoelles for her wonderful column on the centrality of Jesus Christ to our faith. She captured so well the flavor of Christ's ministry and teachings.

I feel a little presumptuous adding anything to her words, but in discussing the confining bonds of legalism, she forgot to mention it's antidote — an understanding of Christ's grace.

I think one of the most difficult struggles in a Christian's life is learning to accept His grace as limitless, and learning how thoroughly dependent we are on the power of the Holy Spirit to transform us in His image.

If we look at our relationship with God as a spiritual contract, then our part of the bargain is an increasingly deeper surrender to His will, and a willingness to pour out His love through our works. He supplies everything else — His grace to forgive all our sins, the strength and power of His Holy Spirit to change our very desires and impulses, and His love to heal through layers of anger, pain, humiliation and guilt.

I don't think our propensity toward legalism stems so much from a desire for simplicity as it does from an inability to grasp just how free we are in His grace, and how surely the Holy Spirit will continue the transforming work He begins

in us.

I know what Sister Patricia is saying, that many people would rather practice a surface religion than submit to the total commitment of a living faith, but even the most committed Christians sometimes struggle with legalism.

We are taught that you don't get something for nothing, that love depends on our behavior, and that broken relationships are difficult and sometimes impossible to restore. In light of these, God's free gifts, unconditional love and constant desire for reconciliation, seem too good to be true.

Sandra Dunn
Auburn

Church should not take position on unproven plan

To the editors:

In an article entitled: "Church, politicians grapple over issue," (Aug. 31), Cardinal Roger M. Mahony "defended affirmative action programs that give preference to women and minorities that make up for years of discrimination."

Supporting Cardinal Mahony, Rick Mockler, director of Catholic Charities of California, added that Catholics need to be educated about the Church's position.

At this point, I think it is premature to state the Church's position, as it is unproven that affirmative action programs accomplish their purpose.

Black columnist Thomas Sowell, for example, stated that affirmative action

mainly benefited people in the groups targeted who were already better off. Poorer members of the same group received little or no help.

Also according to Sowell, affirmative action has led to increased polarization between minorities and non-minorities.

Another critic of affirmative action is Michael Meyers who is the executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition. Mr. Meyers who is also a black columnist writes that: "Americans white and non-white are maddened by the crudeness of qualifying and classifying people for scarce governmental benefits on the basis of a few drops of blood or by skin color."

Meyers seems to hit on a solution when he states that race and gender could be used as a "tipping factor in making choices among similarly qualified applicants." This to me makes a lot more sense than quotas and set asides that discriminate and engender hostility and segregation.

Our universities are a good example of affirmative action gone astray resulting in segregated sections of the campus.

The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 prohibited discrimination. Inasmuch as affirmative action programs discriminate they should be phased out.

Robert Bart
Ithaca

What are readers' views on propositions regarding homosexuality?

To the editors:

We all have friends who belong to this group. We may have family members who belong to this group. This group includes men and women from all walks of life, belonging to every ethnic group, engaged in a variety of vocations and professions. This group is much misunderstood, often persecuted, looked upon with revulsion by some, barely tolerated by others. I refer to the group called "homosexuals."

Traditional Catholic moral theology has three major propositions about homosexuals:

1) The homosexual condition, and subsequently all homosexual activity, is

contrary to the will of God.

2) Granted that the homosexual condition is contrary to the will of God, the presence of the homosexual in the human community is a menace to that community, and especially a threat to the values of the family.

3) The love which unites two homosexuals in a sexual union is a sinful love which separates them from the love of God and places them in danger of eternal damnation.

In recent years, however, many Roman Catholic priests and lay people engaged in pastoral counseling have become aware that conversion of a homosexual to a heterosexual orientation or the total ab-

stinence of a homosexual from all sexual expression are no longer practical pastoral aims in a majority of the cases with which they deal.

The Christian Right continues to uphold the three propositions mentioned above. The Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church has rejected the first two propositions, but continues to uphold the third. Some Catholic moral theologians would reject the third proposition as well. I tend to agree with them. What do your readers think?

Father Robert L. Collins
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