

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.



Priests' differences lie in the way they live life

To the editors:

In regard to the Astrid H. Smallenburg letter to the editor on "Priests should be viewed differently," I recently read the article by Father Edward Palumbos and found Astrid had missed the point that Father Ed was trying to express.

Each day our Priests are involved with the people of the Church, and with the people of the Church, we help the less fortunate through our special programs. For instance, we feed the hungry and we clothe the people who have little. During Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter holidays the people that are less fortunate are receiving gifts and meals to help them enjoy their holidays from our family Christmas tree. Catholic Charities is a wonderful organization in helping all our sisters and brothers in Christ. These are just to mention a few. We have retreats, which are made possible through the teachings of our Priests and are often run by our Parish people. All the programs in the Parish are supported by our Priests, who represent Christ. We are guided by our Parish Priests through

their teachings. Together we pass these teachings on to our Parish Community.

When the Lord spent his days on earth, he was with the Apostles and many people who wanted to be with him and listen to his word. He was Christ the Son of God but had the feelings, emotions and strengths just like us. He wore no collar, he was with the fisherman at sea and he had dinner with Saints and Sinners alike. He showed his love everywhere he went and didn't appear special. He was special in his teachings and the way he lived his life on earth.

As for how our Priests dress or what they may have, it's not what they wear that makes them Christ like, it's how closely their actions fit the person they're representing: Jesus Christ. It's on the inside not the outside. Yes, when we are all brought together, Priests are just like us. They're the Shepherds, we are the sheep and how we live our lives sets the example of Christ-like behavior.

Patty Genco
Desmond Road
Rochester

Standing is the universal posture

To the editors:

This letter is in response to Janet Schwenkler's letter in the Aug. 3 edition of the *Courier* regarding standing at Mass during the Eucharistic Prayer. I would like to suggest that Ms. Schwenkler and those who fuss about this are either: 1) Purposely withholding some of the truth; 2) Woefully ignorant; or 3) Just plain mean spirited.

First of all, the Roman Missal for the universal Church clearly indicates that the posture for the Eucharistic Prayer is STANDING. KNEELING IS AN AMERICAN ADAPTATION for which national Bishops' Conferences must get permission. If they truly want a universal posture, it should be the one called for in the

Roman Missal.

The issue should be decided by what clearly expresses our attitude during that time of the Mass, not by what they did 50 years ago or even 2000 years ago. After all, at the Last Supper they RECLINED. At the foot of the Cross, they STOOD. Everybody can pull some reference out to suit their own whim. The fact is, when the community gathers for any of its prayer or liturgy, there is a time for every posture: Kneeling, Standing, Sitting. Is it penance and atonement? Is it reflection and listening? Hopefully, Ms. Schwenkler and others will be able to figure it out.

Michelena Fata
Charing Road
Rochester

Letter proves that dissenters stick together

To the editors:

Monsignor Shannon's exalted eulogy of Yves Congar (letter, Aug. 4) is quite apropos and not altogether unexpected.

The adage, "Birds of a feather flock together," is applicable to Liberals and Modernists in death as it is in life. They invariably and inflexibly praise one another's works and endeavors to near exhaustion, but reserve indignant contempt to those who uphold true Catholic doctrine. Hence the reason for the letter of Monsignor Shannon.

Congar, Shannon and other "spirits of error" will never be accepted by authentic Roman Catholics no matter how few

in numbers they are. The Remnant Faithful will endure if only as a remnant.

If any curious reader wishes to know where to find the evidence for this view of these henchmen of the Faith, he has only to read the great encyclical of Pope St. Pius X *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. It is the only reading necessary to understand the "ravings" of these people who for some inexplicable reason think that they are Catholic. For anyone who reads this encyclical it will become immediately clear that they most certainly are not.

Richard V. Hussar
Jordan Avenue
Rochester

Modesty key to Mass attire

To the editors:

Three cheers for Florence Goodwin (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 14: "Poverty is no excuse for failure to dress appropriately for Mass").

I myself, live in what many might consider an affluent parish and I have seen apparel that ranges from black leather mini-skirts, to halter dresses, cut-off jean shorts, to T-shirts with less than, shall we say, charitable points of view, splashed across the front and back. And while I admittedly own all of the above mentioned articles of clothing — perhaps with the exception of the T-shirts! — I would hardly consider them appropriate for Mass!

At 34, I am still a jeans and sweatshirt kind of gal, and while we all like to be comfortable, I would as soon wear my sweats to church as I would my pajamas to the store in the morning for milk.

Ms. Goodwin is right. Poverty is not the issue. We were poor growing up and I can guarantee you, my mother never let a Sunday go by that we were not "dressed" for Mass.

No, clothes do not the man make, to be certain. But a spirit of modesty, respect, and reverence, in the way in which we dress — especially for the Sacrifice of the Mass — surely must count for something too, even today.

Brenda Garman
Watson Road, Fairport

Look inside, not at others' clothing

To the editors:

I'm intrigued by the exchange of letters on what to or not to wear to Mass. To me, this is far more a question of what we are like inside, rather than what we wear.

After all, no one is born in a three piece suit or an evening gown — God has seen us all naked; in fact, He made us that way. Any clothing beyond that which is needed to protect us from the weather is worn solely for the purpose of impressing others, be it with our fashion sense, our "looks," or even our piety.

I think we should come dressed so that we can participate comfortably and enthusiastically in the Mass — as one previous letter writer quoted the Catechism, "...to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment..." For different people, that will mean different things. In spite of the fact that God has seen us all naked, few of us would be comfortable attending Mass that way. Some of us are more comfortable "dressed up;" but for others, being dressed up makes us uncomfortable.

Perhaps all of us would be better advised to pay more attention to what's in our own hearts, and much less attention to what's on our neighbors' bodies when we attend Mass.

Ted Bertot
South Goodman Street, Rochester

Correction

A paragraph was accidentally garbled in the Aug. 17 letter "Spirit, not clothing, make the worshiper." The paragraph should have said:

"Has it occurred to anyone that struggling families don't have the money for nice new clothes? Food and shelter take precedence. It would be a shame if people missed Mass because of a 'dress code.' This is a totally human concern and should not take precedence over the real reason we are there — to worship, to pray and thank the Lord for his blessings. He doesn't see our clothes, but our spirit."

We regret the error.