

# OPINIONS

## 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.

## Gift could have strings, 2 priests fear

### To the editors:

News of the \$25 million gift of the Wegman family to six city parochial schools has been well publicized in the media. The generosity of such a gift is overwhelming. This donation brings a welcome relief for those who have been struggling for years to keep some Catholic schools open for city children. We rejoice with them and join them in thanking the Wegmans. We do, however have a concern about the way in which the money will be given. It will come directly from the Wegman family over a 10-year period. This creates a relationship — indeed, even a dependence — between the Church and the Wegmans and, by implication Wegman Corporation. Some would see no problem with this, since being linked with such a wealthy and prestigious family and corporation could continue to economically support the ministry of the Church. The prophets of the Old Testament, however, consistently voiced God's warning to the people of God to avoid alliances with foreign nations, lest the integrity of their identity be compromised. We need to ask if such a danger exists in the present situation. Does an ostensible dependence between our Diocese and a multi-million-dollar corporation put in jeopardy our mission to proclaim the kingdom in the society in which we live? Wegmans has a fine record in some areas of their business. Notably their charitable contributions to good causes. Some, however have questioned the justice of other aspects of their business practices:

- ruthless competition which has driven most of their competitors out of business or out of the city;
- closing stores in the city on which those who have no transportation depend;
- blocking employees' right to unionize.

The question we must answer is not whether Wegmans is a good or bad corporation, but will our need from their family's money compromise our ability to stand with those calling their company to corporate responsibility if and when we decide it is right to do so. Asking that the money be put in an unencumbered trust fund or some other arrangement to avoid this danger should be considered.

**Father Laurence Tracy, parochial vicar  
Community of Hope  
and Father Neil Miller, pastor  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church**



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
**Robert Wegman laughs with his wife Peggy during an Aug. 22 press conference at Holy Rosary School announcing their \$25 million gift.**

## Personal donation secures future of Catholic schools

### To the editors:

The 1989 System Framework Plan for Monroe County Catholic schools challenged the Catholic community to work, plan and sacrifice together to preserve and strengthen all schools, particularly those in Rochester's inner city. A key component of the Framework Plan was the need to identify and involve benefactors who shared the Diocese's educational mission and philosophy. Without such support it was apparent that several schools, particularly those serving the inner-city poor, would be doomed to closure.

The recent gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wegman for the support of students attending six inner-city Catholic schools provides unprecedented stability and reflects their support of our efforts and direction. The pledge of \$25 million will be paid over the next 10 years as the funds are needed. As their public comments indicate, the donation was a personal gift of the Wegmans, not a contribution of Wegmans Corporation. It stems from their own experiences in Catholic schools as well as their well documented concern for the quality of education in Rochester. Their generosity toward the six schools serving an inner-city population contributes to the stability of our entire system. We welcome their participation, and will continue to actively seek the involvement of others in our efforts to secure Catholic schools into the next century.

Catholic schools across the country are looking to sophisticated development strategies to secure needed revenues for

the years ahead. Development is the process of building strong relationships with individuals and organizations around a shared mission. These relationships result in a broader base of support, increased "ownership" from constituents, greater credibility for our system, and an even firmer commitment to our vision of a successful future. Successful development is the result of a powerful mission statement that is not compromised by the need for financial support. Financial support flows naturally from a benefactor's belief in the organization and its work.

As we begin the 1995-96 school year, we see many signs of success in our Catholic school system, including the second increase in K-8 enrollment since the late '60s, two consecutive years with a balanced budget for Monroe County schools, and the recent expansion at Siena Catholic Academy to accommodate the junior high enrollment demand in the southeast region. The Wegman gift, as well as those of many other benefactors, represents a strong vote of confidence in our school system and the Diocese of Rochester's strong commitment to the future of Catholic schools.

We are grateful for the support of thousands of Catholics and non-Catholics who contribute their time, talents and treasure to the support of Catholic schools. It is that support and commitment that will see our schools thrive in the years ahead.

**Timothy W. Dwyer  
Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Rochester**

## 'Excommunication' of two theologians is calumny

### To the editors:

I struggled with my decision to write this letter. My conflict has to do with dignifying — and thereby perpetuating — the evil that one person has done to another, an evil Catholic moral teaching calls "calumny." Imagine the effrontery of someone who claims to speak as an "authentic Roman Catholic" (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 28, "Letter proves that dissenters stick together") excommunicating Yves Cardinal Congar and Monsignor William Shannon.

The writer does go on to state that the group to which he belongs is few in numbers, a "remnant." I feel sadness more than anger, though, because this individual is so isolated in his misery. Still, personal suffering notwithstanding, our brother was wrong to the point of posterousness to excommunicate the late Yves Congar, particularly in the light of

his recent elevation to Cardinal. Further, he is in grave error declaring that Monsignor Shannon reserves "indignant contempt" for anyone! Generations of his students, colleagues and friends — and even his opponents on various theological debates — will happily attest to his consummate and faithful love for God and the Church, "warts and all."

Those who would expel anyone from the People of God do us all a disservice, rending the Body of Christ. Please, remember the meaning of the words of John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, "may they all be one." Let this be our constant endeavor.

**Father Paul F. English, CSB  
Fairport Road, East Rochester**

## Remarks about monsignor unkind, unjust

### To the editors:

Please allow me to express my distress regarding the unkind, even unjust remarks made by Richard V. Husser about Monsignor William Shannon. (9-28-95)

Theological debate is one thing. However even in debate Monsignor Shannon's attitude toward all is one of gentle humility. Moreover Monsignor

Shannon has spent himself generously and tirelessly in over 50 years of faithful service to our Diocesan Church.

Hundreds of people have grown in their faith commitment through his words and examples. All of us breathe a prayer of gratitude to God for the gift that this Christlike man continues to be.

**Dorothy J. Barbehenn  
Bonnie Brae Avenue, Rochester**