## 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.

# Enjoy Halloween in original spirit

**UPINIONS** 

#### To the editors:

When I say "Halloween" to you, odds are you think of witches, ghosts, goblins, devils, and, of course, candy. However, it may surprise you to know that Halloween - for all its ghastly and evil images - has its foundation in a Church feast.

You see, historically, the Mass that was said on All Saints Day was called the ALLHALLOWMAS. Thus, the evening before All Saints Day - or ALL-HAL-LOWS as it was called - became known as ALL-HALLOWS-EVE, or HAL-LOWE'EN. All Saints Day (Nov. 1) is the day on which we, as Catholics, remember all the Christian Saints. All Souls Day (Nov. 2) is the day we especially offer prayers for all the Faithful Departed the Souls in Purgatory - who are the soon-to-be-saints.

The Trick-or-Treating you do on Halloween has evolved from the English custom of "begging for soul cakes." Soul cakes were a form of shortbread or

## Science disputes ability to 'choose' To the editors:

Father Collins of St. Thomas More Church in Rochester raises provocative questions in the September 21 issue of the Courier regarding homosexuals. He notes that the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church has rejected the proposition that the homosexual

condition is against the will of God and also has rejected the proposition that. homosexuality is a menace to the community. But the Magisterium he writes,

contends that homosexual love between individuals places them in danger of eternal damnation. How can that be if homosexuality is not against. the will of God? It would seem that the church and all others would be wise to debate the



doughnuts. You see, in return for a soul cake the beggar would promise to pray for the dead of the household.

Also, during the Middle Ages the townsfolk would perform pageants or

question of whether or not homosexuality is inherited. The scientific community appears to be leaning toward the theory that homosexuality is something that happens to people at birth and is not a matter of choice.

Studies on animal life bolsters this theory. Kinsey and associates and other researchers have determined that. homosexuality in animals is widely prevalent, both in the barnyard and the wild. These behaviors were observed and documented in animals ranging from rats to cattle, to monkeys. Female homosexual behavior is common in monkeys and other primates. But if such behavior is a matter of choice should we not rethink the generally held idea that only man is capable of

> Ray Laws **Hillside** Avenue

> > Rochester

# Morality is constant amid changes

reasoning:

#### To the editors:

In response to the question Father Collins posed to us readers regarding the three major propositions about homosexuals (Sept. 21) let me first state that all homosexual behavior is sinful because it goes against the natural law of God. Times may change, but right and wrong do not, for correct morality is based on God and His law, and we are all bound to obey the law of God or suffer the consequences. Homosexual activity is a mortal sin. The mortal sinner who refuses to renounce his sin must battle continuously against his conscience and must continually tell himself that something is all right which is in fact a mortal sin. Therefore, those who practice homosexual activities fight against and contest what the Catholic Church teaches and what people generally acknowledge, even if only to themselves, to be correct moral behavior. If we do not hear and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church, we are refusing to hear and accept Christ.

Just because it may be difficult for a homosexual to convert to a heterosexual orientation or to abstain from homosexual activities, does not mean the Catholic Church should waffle and now consider homosexuality normal behavior like secular society has.

We all struggle with sin and must continually work to overcome our sinfulness and seek the mercy and love of Jesus through the sacrament of reconciliation. The homosexual must remember that he is a child of God and therefore God wants him to be saved and live forever with Him in heaven. You cannot be saved if you do not accept the Word of God. Yes, it is hard to change your lifestyle, but remember we all have crosses to bear in this life and Jesus will help us if we are sincere.

short plays to remind everyone of the punishment or reward received upon judgment at death. It is believed this is where the custom of masquerading on Halloween began, and for a very long time the tradition was to dress as a Saint - not only in remembrance of the Saint, but as a profession of your aspiration for after your death.

So remember, Halloween is not a night when the devil and his evil reigns - as today's society and Satan would have you believe. It is, in fact, a holy time of remembrance and prayer for the dead. A time of meditation on our life and our after life. So when you go "begging" this All-Hallows-Eve, say a short prayer for the departed of each household that gives you a modern "soul cake" - after all that is the true tradition of the night you are celebrating!

Happy Halloween!

Jeffrey Furmaga Edgemont Road, Rochester

# Catechism, not opinions set teachings

#### To the editors:

It seems to me that Father Robert Collins' letter in the September 21 issue of the Courier is misdirected. He asks what the readers think. Why does he not refer the question to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and to the Scriptures.

In the Catechism paragraphs 2357, 2358, and 2359 deal with homosexuality and homosexual acts.

As to homosexual persons the Catechism states "They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.'

Homosexual acts can under no circumstances be approved according to the Catechism. Further it states that homosexual persons are called to chastity.

Now, if Father Collins and his so-called Catholic moral theologians with whom he agrees don't accept the teaching of the Catholic Church perhaps they should not pass themselves off as Catholic.

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Let us all pray as a community that all those who struggle with overcoming their homosexual activity may do so and accept the love of Christ in their heart.

**Robert S. Jones** Norway Drive, Rochester

ple to whom he was proclaiming the good news what they thought or what they wanted to hear. He called them to repentance; he called them to holiness; he called them to perfection.

We are called to the same things and if we strive for them we'll be less concerned with ourselves. We will be more willing to follow Jesus and less apt to be led astray by false teachers calling themselves Catholic theologians.

> Michael T. Brady **Princess Drive** Rochester

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Historical, modern activists fight abortion's injustice

#### To the editors:

There have been many individuals throughout history who have devoted their lives to make this world a better place in which to live. One such person was Susan B. Anthony. She, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and several others, in 1863 worked on seeing the eventual emancipation of slaves, and also won women the right to vote. She also did not believe that women had the right to take the life of their unborn child through abortion. Susan B. always gave credit to everyone who helped in the furthering of changing social injustices and said with everyone's dedication in making such changes, "failure is impossible."

Another such person who has devoted his life to seeing an end to abortion is Dr. Bernard Nathanson. I first heard him speak at a "Crisis Pregnancy Center" breakfast where he told his story of his

conversion to the anti-abortion movement after himself performing thousands of abortions. He talked about how "the hand of God" put him between a door in order to block a woman from having an abortion.

One day we will see the end of abortion because with God on our side "failure is impossible."

#### Dianna Richmond Ives Simpson Road, Rochester