

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.

Priest's poll another far-fetched idea

To the editors:

Of late, the *Catholic Courier* has printed some far-fetched ideas coming from the pen of Father Robert L. Collins, but his latest one really takes the cake. I refer to his letter which appeared in the Sept. 21 issue, and in which he addresses the three "major propositions" which he says are found in Catholic moral theology concerning homosexuals. Of the three, he says, the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church has rejected the first two, but not the third. I would like to comment on his statements.

First, I think his statement in the first proposition is confusing to the readers

when he says that the Magisterium has rejected the following statement: "The homosexual condition, and subsequently all homosexual activity, is contrary to the will of God." I am sure that the Magisterium does not condemn the homosexual's condition, but certainly, it does condemn all subsequent homosexual activity.

Secondly, Father Collins notes that the Magisterium has not rejected the third proposition, which concerns "the love which unites two homosexuals in a sexual union" and which is "a sinful love which separates them from the love of God..." Furthermore, he says that some

Catholic moral theologians would reject this as well, and that he tends to agree with them. Then he asks, "What do your readers think?"

Come on, folks! Since when do we take a public opinion poll on whether or not immoral actions are sinful? To date, this ranks high on the list of ridiculous statements that have come from the pen of a priest. However, should I be astonished? Not really, especially when I read some of the columns which are published in our diocesan newspaper. Nothing really astonishes me, anymore.

George A. Goodwin Jr.
Laredo Drive, Rochester

In accepting human value, don't ignore sinful actions

To the editors:

The Oct. 12 letter from the Lopatas Church Teaching on homosexuality (*Catholic Courier*: "Church teaching often misunderstood due to omissions") is used, I believe, as a justification for a current Diocesan Synod related teaching process that is aimed at gaining an understanding of homosexuality as a valid "family" value.

The letter cites the Catechism of the Catholic Church to provide authority to a view that, if one can justify homosexual behavior as a valid "permanent association between two homosexual persons, who feel incapable of enduring a solitary life devoid of sexual expression," then it could be viewed as a valid reason for absolving the homosexual couple from all past, present, and future responsibility for objectively immoral acts when they express themselves sexually.

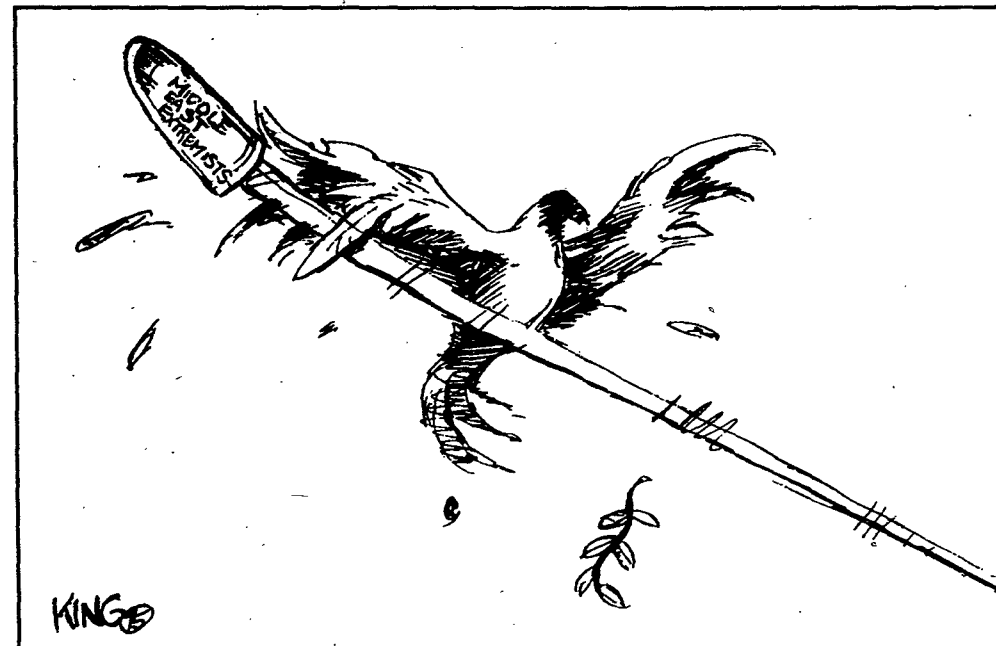
The propositions they cite from the Catechism are used to explain Church teaching on individuals for whom the capacity for both being responsible for their immoral acts, and having a penitent remorse is not present, and therefore the promise to end the occasion to sin cannot be expected.

The application of this reasoning might apply to some homosexuals, but it is misleading to argue that it should be broadly applied, since there is usually a knowledge of wrong doing, and little expressed need for forgiveness — only a desire for acceptance. The sad thing is that in the rush to provide pastoral "care" for these persons, the need to minister to the needs of their souls, and provide them with the promises of God's wonderful hope and graces is sometimes lost.

I do agree with the Lopatas' view that the Church's teachings on homosexuality are often misunderstood by people advocating both sides of the issue. I strongly believe that the "positive" side of our wonderful Church is frequently misinterpreted and misrepresented in trying to accommodate tough problems, rather than making known Christ's desire for repentance and sacrifice to gain salvation.

In trying to accept the homosexual as a person of worth in God's eyes, we are all too often ignoring the evil of the homosexual behaviors that separate them from the love of God. God wants all of us with Him, we need to profess our desire for Him by dealing with our human condition toward independence and rebellion, which can separate us from Him.

S. David Coriale
Conifer Cove Lane, Webster



Priest reacts to 'poll' results

To the editors:

I am heartened to read the thoughtful responses to my letter of September 21. I would like to share with your readers some further observations.

With Richard D. Stoffel, I rejoice that some homosexuals have found peace through pastoral counseling. I am saddened, however, that such counseling is necessary. If parents accepted their homosexual children with unconditional love, if siblings and peers accepted homosexuals as different but good, if every church opened its doors to homosexuals with the same love that Jesus had for all people, then homosexuals would not feel pressured to seek counseling to change their orientation.

I am most grateful to Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata for emphasizing the Church's positive teaching about homosexuals. Too often people seek out church documents — and Scripture, too, for that matter — to support their opinions and views and ignore the portions of church documents and Scripture with which they disagree. The Church's teaching on homosexuality requires thought-

ful, prayerful reading with an open mind.

I ask Catherine Lennox: "If priests can live together in community, if sisters can live together in community, why can't homosexuals live together in community?" There is an assumption that when an unmarried man and an unmarried woman live together, they are "living in sin." Maybe, maybe not. There is an assumption that when two gay men or two lesbians are living together, they are engaging in disordered and unnatural actions. Perhaps, perhaps not. Assumptions and generalizations can do great harm in this world. The truth comes through prayerful dialogue with individuals and pastoral counseling to evaluate circumstances and motives.

With Professor Novak, I pray that the Church may grow in its toleration of its homosexual members and allow the growing body of evidence regarding the genetic origin of homosexuality to influence its teaching.

Rev. Robert L. Collins
St. Thomas More Church
East Avenue
Rochester

Catholics can't disagree with pope?

To the editors:

2000 years ago Christ set up His Church. His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. We should all know what Church bears all of these marks in our world and always has, the Roman Catholic Church. We all must realize the true Church, the pope and the bishops in union with him, speaks for Jesus, God the Son, in our secular society. If the pope says abortion is wrong that is Christ telling us right from wrong. The pope teaches us TRUTH. I wish I could say the same of all bishops, but we can only get complete truth from bishops united with the pope and some are not. Why do so many Catholics say "we can disagree with the pope and still be good Catholics"? It is wrong to say that. Jesus made Peter head of the Church on earth. He speaks infallibly on matters of faith and morals.

You are not a Catholic if you don't go by those teachings. We must stand up for TRUTH. There is only ONE TRUTH and that comes from Rome and that comes from the Holy Spirit who leads the Church into all truth. We must always beware of heresies, immorality, and garbage everywhere, even from groups and people, even priests who claim to be Catholic. We are absolutely wrong if we say we can be good Catholics and disagree with the pope. That is what Mary has been communicating and what Christ tells us through His ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC CHURCH and that is TRUE.

Michael Schillace
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Auburn

EDITORS' NOTE: In a postscript, the author noted that he is 14.