

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 letter writers' opinions.

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.



Work in system, but maintain clarity

To the editors:

Sister Patricia Schoelles is certainly correct in saying that we must be aware of our particular cultural and political environment in expressing our moral convictions (*Catholic Courier*, Oct. 19).

The organization Birthright comes to mind as a good example of how this done. The people of Birthright — in a nonjudgmental way — offer compassion and material help to pregnant women to assist them in carrying their children to term. As an organizational “good neighbor,” the Birthright groups comply fully with the laws of the countries and communities in which they serve, but, at the same time, they are not at all ambiguous about the morality of abortion.

When Sister Schoelles says that “We need to engage in a complex political process that requires compromise and a recognition of moral ambiguity,” she means, I take it, that we have to recognize that not everyone will agree with our stand on moral issues, and we have to work peacefully and lawfully within our respective communities, sensitive to the rights of others, in pressing for any changes we think necessary.

There is a danger, however, that some may take the phrase “moral ambiguity”

to mean that we cannot speak with certainty about the morality of an act. But the Church does just that! Some acts, the Church tells us, are acts that are “per se and in themselves, independently of circumstances ... always seriously wrong” — abortion is one such act. These acts are called “intrinsically evil” and while “a good intention or particular circumstances can diminish their evil ... they remain ‘irremediably’ evil acts” (“Veritatis Splendor,” 80-81).

Splendor,” 80-81).

With this clear teaching before us, we should recognize moral evil when it arises in our midst and we should speak out in an appropriate manner — charitably and lawfully, of course — “with uncompromising moral certainty about these issues” — Sister Schoelles’ caution to the contrary notwithstanding.

Joseph O’Donnell
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We must work to change the world

To the editors:

In her October 19 article, “Being a U.S. Catholic has ‘uniqueness,’” Patricia Schoelles, SSJ, seems to say that clear cut moral positions lack compassion.

Stating that moral pluralism is part of the democratic way of life we are told to deal with it while searching for our place in this culture.

No small task, as we as Catholics cannot compromise on moral principals. The church, of course, is not a democratic institution and moral positions are not decided by majority vote.

In addition, compassion demands we tell our fellow human beings what is

morally — not politically — correct to spare them suffering in this life and more importantly in the next.

For example, are we afraid to tell others that same sex activity and sex outside marriage is sinful?

Other cultures might see things differently, but we cannot compromise and ignore Church teaching.

As we grope in the darkness of a paganistic culture we must not allow our light to be extinguished.

After all, we are not only trying to change the world, we are also trying not to let the world change us.

Robert Bart, Ithaca

Seek martyrdom for Irish famine victims

To the editors:

These are the 150th memorial years commemorating “The Great Irish Hunger” imposed on the Irish people by the English Government. Many of our family ancestors stood by their Catholic Faith and suffered starvation and death.

They died in Ireland, and on the coffin ships, trying to get away from the conditions which brought about the starvation and diseases causing death to millions in Ireland. They died in Grosse Isle, Canada and in America at entry ports as a direct result of diseases caused by the Hunger in Ireland.

Now would be a proper time for the

Catholic Church to officially recognize these “Irish Hunger Martyrs” for their death and suffering; and also for their devotion to the Catholic Faith. Many of them were offered food if they would change their religion and they refused to accept the food and died for their faith. Beatification would sanctify and dignify their sacrifices.

Section 2473 of the new Catechism of the Catholic Church states; “Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the Faith; it means bearing witness even unto death”. Section 2474 refers to those who persevered to the end as acts of martyrs.

We ask that the leaders of the Church appeal to Rome to consider and process the cause of “The Irish Hunger Martyrs.” They died because of their Faith in many parts of the world and on the oceans.

They were victims of the famine; they should not become victims again by not receiving the recognition they deserve for their sacrifices. As their descendants, we have an obligation to speak up for their beatification. All Irish groups should help bring about the recognition they so richly deserve.

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Bombing’s horror would have paled against deaths

To the editors:

Judgements on the use of A-bombs to bring World War II to a rapid conclusion must be made in context with the facts of that time not by Monday morning quarterbacks who now — by ignoring those facts — deliberately or not, distort and revise history.

The decision to use the atomic bombs was based on the well-founded belief that their use would save hundreds of thousand of American casualties. U.S. military experts estimated that we would suffer an estimated 750,000 casualties in a conventional invasion of the Japanese home islands.

The Japanese Army had complete control of their country and were preparing the people to defend their homeland to the death in the certain belief that heaven lay beyond the veil for those who died for the Emperor. Our military experts estimated that the Japanese could suffer as many as 2 million casualties in resisting a conventional invasion and pacification.

The war in the Pacific was started by Japan as a war of conquest. The ruthlessness of Japanese aggression in conducting their war is a matter of record — and of memory in the survivors. The rape of Nanking and the Bataan death march easily come to mind but there were other

— you might call them ancillary — victims of the Japanese aggression...

The atomic bombings were horrific events but would have been overshadowed by the results of not dropping them.

Those of us with strong faith convictions must continue to pray each day for World Peace — just as we did during World War II. Sadly, we’ve come a long way from bows and arrows and the next war to end all wars may cost the world its civilization.

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