

# 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.

## Abuse victim pleased by statement

### To the editors:

I would like to make a few comments about a wire story from Jerry Filteau of the Catholic News Service on U.S. Bishops issuing a statement on child sexual abuse.

It is with great relief to see the U.S. Catholic Church taking concrete steps to address issues of childhood sexual abuse, especially when the perpetrator is a priest. As one who suffered childhood sexual abuse at the hands of a public school teacher this statement seems a long time in coming. But as the old saying goes "Better late than never."

Most childhood sexual abuse is done by a person who is in some type of an authority role over the child. This person builds up a trust and violates that trust in one of the most sickest and cruelest ways possible. Many people still believe in the "little old man in the raincoat" stereotype. Strangers who abuse children account for less than 10 percent of reported cases.

Childhood sexual abuse changes a person forever. He/She will never be the same person he/she would of been had they not been abused. Some of the effects of being abused are lack of trust in others, lack of respect for authority figures, the inability to find and stay in a healthy relationship, and a generalized view of seeing the glass as half empty rather than half full.

But there is good news. Today more than ever there are people, groups, and agencies that are trained to help people recover from their abuse. Getting better is a very hard, but rewarding process. It takes a lot of emotional and physical energy out of your body. When I was finally able to forgive my abuser I was able to make even more strides in my recovery. Hanging on to the hate and anger is very draining for oneself, those who live with you, and those who know you.

Over the course of the last three to five years as the Catholic Church has made strides in addressing the issue of perpetrator priests — from denial and cover-up to accepting that it is a problem to helping the victims — I have come to have forgiveness to the church. For a long time my only tie to the church was this weekly newspaper and conversations with my uncle, a retired priest.

I believe institutions who have high moral standards and values should be held up to those standards and values. Years ago the church did not hold priests accountable. Now time, insight, and pressure from the public has changed the church's position. It is very encouraging to see.

I pray that people who have been victims of childhood sexual abuse seek help; good help is out there. There are many support groups, especially for women. I have co-founded a group for men in the Elmira-Corning area. Going through the healing process is very tough, but is really worth it. Today I no longer see myself as a victim, but rather a survivor.

**Richard J. Kuehner**  
Van Orden Street, Horseheads

## Interfaith cemeteries show God's intentions

### To the editors:

Regarding cemeteries: All the earth, land and seas are holy "consecrated" by the very fact that God, our Creator, created them. What an inspiration it is to see men/women of all nationalities, faiths and races gathered together, lying at peace with one another, as true brothers and sisters, as our Father created us to be. If in death, why not in life?

Let us get back to basics: God's vision, not man's division. "Dust thou art, to dust..."

**Georgette M. Murphy**  
Cortland Street, Geneva



## Pastors do not have right to change language of Mass

### To the editor:

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states that the regulation of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Apostolic See. Aside from some limited regulatory permission granted to legitimate territories of bishops, no other person, not even a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority. Hence, the insertion of feminist language renderings — also known as "inclusive language" — into Scripture readings and other such manipulations of the Mass are gross violations of the laws of the Church. This intrusion into the sacred liturgy manifests itself in varying proportions throughout the diocese of Rochester.

The pastor of one local parish is so "sensitive" to feminist concerns that he refuses to call God "Father" as required in the eucharistic prayers of the Mass. Imagine being more sensitive than Jesus who taught us to call the first person of the Holy Trinity "Father," "Abba."

At many parishes, freelancing revisionists truncate all male pronouns from the Scripture readings. This censoring often extends to the words of Jesus, particularly when He refers to the Holy Spirit as "He" or "Him." Imagine a human creature correcting the Word of God.

Recently, the TGA Bulletin issue #2 insert to parish bulletins informs: 'parishes will be surveyed next spring regarding how they use inclusive language in Scripture, bulletins, with staff, and throughout parish life. It should be noted that the use of so-called inclusive language does not have the support of the Holy See. As this pertains to the liturgy, it is simply prohibited.'

In all of this, have we forgotten that our primary obligation is to worship God? It may be useful to consider that maybe this constant clamoring for feminist language, etc., is nothing more than an exaggerated expression of self-love, something contrary to the Gospel message.

**Barbara S. Snyder**  
Burwell Road, Rochester

## Suggests asking group members to give up one of two positions

### To the editors:

In his apostolic letter "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis," Pope John II reaffirmed the constant Apostolic Tradition, received from Christ Jesus, that priestly ordination is reserved to men alone. The pope confirmed that this is "a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself," and that "this judgment is to be definitely held by all the Church's faithful."

On Nov. 10-12, Arlington, Virginia, (was) the site of the 1995 Women's Ordination Conference, a national collection of feminists and others who reject the position of the Catholic Church. As conference promotional materials proclaim: "We will not be silenced! We will gather as a community of struggle in an unjust church and world."

The diocese of Rochester will be inordinately represented at this conference with formal presentations scheduled to include: Sister Nancy DeRycke; Sister Joan Sobala; Ms. Deni Mack; Ms. Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt; and Father Charles Curran. This list is particularly remarkable for the women who are employed by the diocese in positions of religious education and parish administration.

The awkward strain between personal convictions and the responsibility for faithful catechesis in the parishes is obvious. It would not be unreasonable then to request from all of these church employees the surrender of one of their positions, personal or vocational. The Catholic Courier, for its part, has the journalistic and community obligation to cover this conference.

**Randolph Smith**  
Rochester

*EDITORS' NOTE: Typically our staff is not able to cover events outside our diocesan boundaries, so we rely on Catholic News Service reporting when available.*

## Thankful for columnist's gift

### To the editors:

When I pray for the Priests each day, I thank God for giving Father Albert Shannon the gift to write such a beautiful spiritual column.

I clip them out and save them and read them again later. I also admire Father's "true" love of the Rosary and our Holy Mother Mary.

**Martha Van Savage**  
Jemison Road, Rochester