

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.

SSJs in Brazil send thanks, list of efforts

To the editors:

To our dear friends and benefactors of the Rochester Diocese we send our greetings and sincerest wishes and prayers that Christmas be filled with Life and Good News for you and your families.

As we near the end of 1995, we pause and reflect on what we 14 Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester are accomplishing in Brazil. We are scattered in three states and five cities. The spectrum of our ministries is varied and involves us in evangelization in its broadest sense.

We are called to preparation of the laity so that they can assume the sacramental preparation of Brazil's children, youth and adults; accompanying parents for Baptismal preparation; and preparing lay teams to celebrate the weekend liturgies. In the 15 communities where we minister, only one has a resident priest.

This preparation includes:

- formation of the neighborhood groups which meet to reflect on the Gospel and how it calls them to action;
- our work in defense of human rights and our membership in community health and education councils;

- our coordination of and involvement in various programs — literacy for adults, agrarian reform and alternative farming methods, children's health and rights, women's rights (courses and help for pregnant women);
- membership in committees which defend the rights of the indigenous populations;

- our sister health agents are involved in hospital care and administration, and care giving in a health post.

Earlier this year, Pope John Paul II invited us all to proclaim the "Gospel of Life." We believe that all our ministries are directly related to the defense and quality of life. We know, with deep certainty, that without the generosity of you, our faithful diocesan family, and God's grace and blessing, very little of this would be possible.

We unite our prayers to yours at this time of joy, wonder, challenge, that for all people Christmas and 1996 may truly be "Life and Good News!"

Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester serving in Brazil: Barbara Orczyk, Catherine Foss, Christel Burgmeier, Dolores Turner, Ellen Kuhl, Ireny da Silva, Janet Connorton, Jean Bellini, Joana Mendes, Katherine Popowich, Marlana Roeger, Maria José Monteiro, Maureen Finn and Suzanne Wills

EDITORS' NOTE: Although we received this letter prior to Christmas, a backlog of letters prevented us from publishing it earlier.



Center can educate youths about freedoms of chastity

To the editors:

Our young people are constantly being exposed to horribly violent and immoral images and ideas through music, filthy movies and videos, magazines and also sex education programs that do not teach a moral and Christian way to live.

Young people need a proper understanding of their own sexuality and the power they have for cooperating with God in bringing forth new human life. They need to be made aware of the consequences of using their sexuality in irresponsible and destructive ways. By choosing chastity, teens protect themselves from pregnancy, disease and even death. They also strengthen their mental, social and spiritual health.

I wish to notify readers that there is a program for youth that goes into schools, churches and community organizations

to promote the freedoms that the virtue of chastity provides. This program is one service of the PROBLEM PREGNANCY HELP CENTER, INC., located at 3252 Lake Ave., Rochester, a grassroots Catholic lay ministry offering alternatives to abortion. Mrs. Pat Baloga is the Coordinator for the Chastity Program and has given many presentations since 1992.

Also, for the first time, in the spring of 1996, the PROBLEM PREGNANCY HELP CENTER will be a United Way Donor Choice Agency... If anyone would like more information about the Problem Pregnancy Help Center Chastity Education program, please phone the Center at (716) 865-0360.

Marian Buchheit
County Line Road
Webster

It is time to focus on basic values

To the editors:

The Pope's infallible statement on the sacramental priesthood prompts us to take stock of our essential values:

Now is the time to uphold the sacrificial beauty of priestly life with clarity and compassion.

Now is the time to encourage seminarians to value their stated purpose for there are thousands who hunger for the messages of men expressing the evangelical counsels of chastity, obedience and poverty.

Now is the time to open up the minds of our youngsters to consider entering the consecrated state with its unified expression of the theological virtues of faith hope and charity.

Now is the time, more than ever to uphold the dignity, worth and indispensability of women in our society.

Now is the time to affirm the absolute necessity of strong fathers in the domestic church; to assert that men are not better, nor women lesser — they are simply different in their complementarity.

Now is the time to recognize the function of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith whose purpose is to make known such significant pronouncements.

Now is the time to spiritually strengthen Pope John Paul II, the unifier of Catholicism, the successor of the Chair of Peter, the voice of the servant of the servants of God, through prayer, work and sacrifice.

Now is the time: this is the propitious moment of grace. We can choose to go forward in charity, or remain mired in intransigence.

Jan Fredericks
Birr Street, Rochester

Disappointed newspaper did not cover event for gay ministers

To the editors:

I am disappointed in that you did not include in the Courier coverage of a November 16 event that honored four leaders of The Interfaith Advocates for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people. Members of this group have as their goal:

"To recognize and respect the inherent worth and dignity of all people, regardless of sexual orientation.

"To welcome people of all sexual orientations as equals in our faith communities.

"To share information, on a regular basis, for support, affirmation, and inspiration as we work to effect the necessary changes toward creating a more just environment."

Those honored at the November 16 dinner were Rabbi Judea B. Miller (posthumously); Rev. Canon Walter Lee Szymanski the Episcopal diocese; Vir-

ginia West Davidson, a Presbyterian; and Sister Catherine Heverin, SSJ. Among the accolades for Sister Kay was reference to her "loving pastoral presence."

The matter of differences in sexual orientation seems to create great discomfort for some. It need not be. We need a greater awareness, deeper un-

derstanding, and inclusion of others who may be different from us, regardless of color, ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, economic or social status. Our baptismal call is to love unconditionally, as God loves us.

Grace Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester

Disagrees with terminology columnist used

To the editors:

In Father McBrien's column of November 30, 1995, he wrote that "the Eucharist is a communal meal (and a sacrifice, to be sure)..." I strongly disagree with his terminology and emphasis.

To those of us, who as converts were seeking to have 'our cups filled,' the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ —

the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. While we do worship and share as a community, first and foremost we worship and thank and praise our Lord Jesus Christ who instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection.

Edith Arganbright
Harvington Drive
Rochester