

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.

None has monopoly on Spirit

To the editors:

The media misleads us by using headlines such as: "Vatican Says the Ban on Women Priests Is 'Infallible' Doctrine" (*The New York Times*). That statement is not true.

Roman Catholic doctrine can be defined as infallible upon certain conditions: 1) By the Pope speaking *ex cathedra*; or 2) when the Pope, in consultation with the bishops of the world, speaks on a particular matter. The Congregation (for the Doctrine) of the Faith, headed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, is not the office to declare a matter as belonging to the deposit of faith.

There are many ways the church teaches and learns: through the prophetic voice of a Mother Teresa, through the magisterium of the Pope, through the local bishop in his diocese, through the teaching of the National Conference of bishops, and through the living experience of men and women.

Today there is legitimate pluralism in Roman Catholic theology; a diversity of theories as applied to particular concrete problems, for example, "Just War" theories.

Three groups "do theology": 1) The people who experience God in their lives; 2) The magisterium of the bishops by reason of their office as they listen, weigh questions, then approve and teach the whole community; 3) The theologians who reflect on those questions and articulate them. One learns from reflecting on the experience of the whole Christian community and from dialogue with colleagues.

The institutional church should speak on moral issues. The institutional church should recognize the roles of different magisterium. The institutional church needs to integrate the faithful with their contemporary experience. The Spirit is the primary guide and teacher and is open to ALL in the church. There is no monopoly of the Spirit.

Helen Q. Williams
Highland Heights
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: We doubt that *The New York Times* needs our defense, but the headline "Vatican Says the Ban on Women Priests Is 'Infallible' Doctrine" was entirely factual; that is exactly what the CDF said. One can hardly expect the Times to take a position on the declaration's theological correctness.



Sowing dissent for years has brought harvest of disunity

To the editors:

The headline in the Rochester papers decried "Vatican closes door on a dream" and "Bishop Clark believes papal decision against female priests could drive women out of the Catholic Church." A quote from Bishop Clark stated that he accepted the teaching that only men can become priests "with respect and reverence." The news article, however played back the years of "tension" between Bishop Clark and the Pope on the "role" of women in the Church. There were comments from several women of the Diocese who felt a call to ordination for women. One spoke to a "contradiction" with previous statements and that she believes that there has been historical precedence. They, and others have been given reason for hope by support and encouragement from our local hierarchy. There were statements from two well-known Diocesan priests who criticized the "process," as one put it, not the way the church should operate, and a suggestion that the announcement needed study to determine its implications.

This is the distinct air of dissent that runs through the Diocese at all levels. We have lived with this "tension" between Bishop and the Pope, we continue to experience the Diocesan emphasis on a social ministry and social justice, we are confronted with inclusive language and political correctness invading the sanctuary and see little concern for liturgical freewheeling as it grows within the Diocese, and we have had a wonderful Synod process that is being exploited, and implemented in an uninspiring way promoting less than true Catholic values.

When dissent is tolerated and even promoted within the Diocese, it should

not be a surprise that disunity is growing among us. Our Bishop has the responsibility to lead this Diocese and teach us the Truths of the Church. This is a truly awesome responsibility. God's Truth is not now, nor will it ever be based on opinion polls of what we prefer, and it is surely not based on any human vision of what the truth is. God asks us to surrender our very humanity to Him, and be obedient to His Word. ...

It is a sad commentary on the current state of affairs in our Church that we feel a need to question what we are asked to accept and believe. We are participating in the call from Vatican II to reform our Church, and paradoxically, we no longer feel the comfort that our leaders are following the lead of the Pope and the Magisterium when they guide us. We are told that "We are the Church," and see it interpreted in ways that minimize the very core of our beliefs. Can we explain the lack of vocations to the priesthood, and religious life as a change in values in "our" church? Many of us ask the question "why has this begun in my lifetime?"

We are reaping what we have allowed to be sown, and we need only to look inwardly and pray purposefully that we, and the hierarchy, accept and teach the Truth. We must pray for all of our Church leaders, that those who have left the Truth for whatever reason will return to It. They all know what is right, and they can get back to where they need to be, with our prayers and God's persuasive help.

S. David Coriale
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EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

Missionary priest longs for era of collegiality

To the editors:

I received my Medicare card this year, so I claim the right to reminisce about "the good old days" of the Catholic Church. In 1963 the pastor of the parish where I was stationed went to Rome as special assistant to Bishop Lawrence Casey of Rochester, a Council Father. This pastor, Monsignor Bill Naughton let continue his subscription to *The New York Times*. The priests in the rectory, Elmer Schmidt, Bill Holberton and I looked forward each day to the exciting news from Vatican Council II. With great enthusiasm we embraced the teaching of all the bishops of the world, ratified by the Pope, that we are the Church, and the

bishops of the world share collegially with the Pope the privilege and responsibility of serving all Catholics so that we will bring the good news of Jesus to the modern world.

Alas, those good old days were numbered. "Bounce" Naughton said on his return, "Elmer, Ted, Bill, it will take a hundred years for this to be realized." But within 30 short years, we seem to be forced to return to the concept that the Pope and Curial Congregations rule the Church, and somewhat heavy-handedly, at that. It causes sorrow enough that even the bishops of Europe and America, influential and generous as they are, are not being consulted about the rights and

responsibilities of all Catholics. It causes even more heartache in poor Africa that the well articulated proposals of the bishops of Africa were not acknowledged fully when the Pope came to Cameroon, South Africa and Kenya in September of this year.

The 1960s and 1970s were good days, indeed. And there is real hope for us all that the bishops of Europe, America, Africa and the rest of the world will not let their memory disappear like a blissful dream.

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