

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.



Don't undercut Gospels

To the editors:

Once again I would like to thank Sister Patricia Schoelles, this time for her untiring championing of lay spirituality.

There are times when I am truly infuriated at the assertions of the experts, Biblical scholars, and scribes. Their intellectual arrogance and egotistical motives dilute and undermine the power and strength of the Christian faith.

A case in point. After Judas' betrayal and subsequent death, a replacement had to be found. It was of the utmost importance this be a man who had been with the apostles from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, an eyewitness to His teachings and the events that surrounded them.

Does it seem at all likely that God would allow the Gospels, which He knew would be the foundational documents of His Church, to be written by other than eyewitnesses? Yet modern scribes assert that the Gospels were not eyewitness accounts, that Matthew and Luke were derived from Mark, that at least parts of John were written by someone else. Their reasoning? Why, the same accounts and sometimes the same words were used from one Gospel to the next; the styles

were not consistent; there was a "highly-developed theology," particularly in John, that didn't mesh with what an eyewitness account "should" be, etc. etc.

I would suggest that such would be exactly the case were the Gospels being inspired by the Holy Spirit.

By stripping the Gospels of eyewitness status, these scribes compromise their authenticity, the truth of what they contain. So compromised, it becomes much easier for an insidious process of sterile intellectualization to take root, in which miracles become literary devices and absolute standards become hyperbole used to make a point.

I am a poet. I know full well when I am writing under my own steam and when I'm being led by the Holy Spirit. His words are not words I ordinarily use, His wisdom is one I do not possess, and the flow of His inspiration is like an effortless stream of light that bubbles out of me of its own accord. This is what the eyewitness writers of the Gospels experienced, and to assert this divine and inspired process was anything less borders on blasphemy.

**Sandra Dunn
Mattie Street, Auburn**

Parish efforts helped many

To the editors:

I read the article about parishes' giving trees with a great deal of interest (*Catholic Courier*, Dec. 21: "Parishes' giving trees branch out to the needy"). For so many years now, Church of the Transfiguration in Pittsford — through their giving tree — has been helping countless numbers of needy in the same way.

It is my privilege to have firsthand knowledge of the importance of giving trees. I am Assistant Director of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and a member of Transfiguration. This year I submitted the names of 65 CASA children in foster care and family members, along with what they wanted for Christmas. I had the opportunity to play Santa by delivering most of the gifts.

Let me share with you some things I

heard and saw. I saw the big smile on Nicole's face when she got her Easy Bake Oven. I heard the gleeful explanation when Rae got some math books — yes, math books. I saw the young mother try on the purple sweater and say, "It fits; it's so new." I got the many hugs and heard the thanks. Transfiguration parishioners touched the hearts of our CASA children and families — as well as hundreds of other children and families — here and in Maine and Kentucky. Numerous food baskets were also distributed.

I am sure there are many other churches and individuals — across the diocese — who have reached out to help those in need. God bless all of them!

**Pat Slimmer
Barker Road
Pittsford**

If you suspect abuse, get involved

To the editors:

"Understaffed," "not enough money." This grammar is spoken all too freely. It is a "quote," that has become too broad of an excuse.

Child abuse, or adult abuse has no relation to money.

One has yet to observe, in our society, where paper money or copper coins, can replace the God given human mind — or ears to hear, or eyes to see.

We are overwhelmed with excuses, for the tragedy going on around us, whether it be in a nursing home, the apartment complex, or the house next door.

Us Christian people know better.

If you have a caring heart, a situation does not seem right to you, dial 911, plus a follow-up, make sure your concern has been observed.

The sometime sad thing of our society, no one wants to be involved, Why? If it was you, wouldn't you want a human soul, looking out for you?

Have we, as people of God, become so insensitive to other humans, we are only aware of me-me-me? Let's go outside ourselves.

**B. Livernash
Amsden Drive, Rochester**

Paper right to skip story

To the editors:

Grace Carnes, in her Jan. 4 letter to the *Catholic Courier* ("Disappointed newspaper did not cover event for gay ministers"), lamented the lack of coverage for an event that honored four leaders of the interfaith advocates for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people last November 16.

Ending her letter with "Our baptismal call is to love unconditionally, as God loves us," Grace Carnes should know that while God loves us he wants us to "Go and sin no more."

By identifying ourselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual we announce that we are having and intending to have unlawful sexual encounters.

Also if these sinful lifestyles were to be publicized in a Catholic newspaper the editors would indeed be remiss in their moral duty to point the way to eternal salvation.

Gay, lesbian or bisexual lifestyles are certainly such lifestyles.

Robert Bart, Ithaca

EDITORS' NOTE: While we did not choose to cover the event in question, we disagree that our editors would have been "remiss in their moral duty" if they had decided otherwise. Covering an event honoring individuals for ministry to homosexuals does not constitute promoting immorality.

Aid does exist

To the editors:

In the *Catholic Courier's* edition of Dec. 7, a front-page article ("Charities, donors sense pressure of government cuts"), is quoting Captain John Wettlaufer, Salvation Army's Elmira Citadel saying "There aren't that many dollars out there in the first place, and the government is looking for the private sector to pick up the load." He is referring, of course, to the difficulty of obtaining donations even though the demand of poverty is growing.

Relevant to the situation the national income of all of the U.S.A. is \$7 trillion, ... 1 percent, even one-tenth of 1 percent of the \$7 trillion would provide billions for the Salvation Army's needs with some left over. The U.S.A. has 50 percent of the world's wealth and its population is only 5 to 6 percent of the world's population. Who was (it) that said "Those who have much, much is expected." Which is another way of saying don't give of your surplus but give of your substance.

Captain John, there really are many, many dollars out there.

**Eugene C. Fuerst
Simpson Road, Rochester**

Agrees with MVP award

To the editors:

Regarding the article in the Jan. 18 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, "Genesee Hospital honors chaplain," I heartily concur. What a wonderful person Father Norton is, deserving of the award, Most Valuable Partner.

During my husband's brother's confinement at the Genesee Hospital we were privileged to meet Father Norton. His words to the family were, sincere, comforting and consoling.

Also I remember the 15-minute radio program, "Good Morning God" Sundays. He alternated with Sister Joan Sobala. What a marvelous, captivating voice Father Norton possesses.

I'm really happy to have met Father Norton.

**Rena B. Camblin
Meadow Drive, Palmyra**