

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.

Social costs offset short-term gains

When Sister Catherine McAuley — the subject of this week's front page story — was a child, her father regularly brought poor children home for food, aid and religious instruction. As an adult, Sister McAuley imitated the lessons she had learned at home, using her inheritance to help poor people she encountered in the streets of Dublin.

In her day, the Mercy foundress was criticized because she allowed some people to take advantage of her charity. Her response? "It is better to relieve a hundred impostors ... than to suffer one truly deserving person to be sent away empty."

Today, in Albany and around the nation, politicians are touting welfare-reform plans that seem destined to send some people away in just that condition.

In New York, for example, the Pataki administration is pushing a welfare-reform plan that includes cutting the state's basic welfare grant by about 25 percent; a "family cap" that would deny increased benefits to mothers who have children while on public assistance; and time limits on how long people may receive benefits.

Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany denounced these proposals during testimony before state legislators in Albany Jan. 22. Representing the New York State Catholic Conference, he acknowledged that the welfare system needs to be reformed. But he also noted that "the overriding goal of our state's welfare reforms must be to encourage work and reduce dependency, not merely to cut state spending and balance the budget."

Those sentiments were echoed Feb. 27, when representatives from dioceses across the state — including the Rochester



Diocese — visited legislative offices in Albany to speak out on such issues as school choice and parental notification for minors seeking abortions. The representatives also demanded that welfare proposals "provide employment opportunities, decent wages and a safety net," and that essential services to the poor and ill be preserved in the state budget.

Among concerns voiced by Bishop Hubbard, diocesan representatives and church officials across the nation are that some welfare-reform proposals be-

ing considered by Congress and the state would increase the number of abortions, and force poor mothers to choose between feeding their children or paying the rent.

The church would be called upon to help take up the slack. Indeed, the church currently operates the largest non-governmental network of support services for the disadvantaged through its hospitals, Catholic Charities and other agencies.

But that network is already stretched thin. While suggesting that the "private sector" can fill the void, many supporters of budget-balancing reforms ignore the fact that a substantial portion of funding for church-run support agencies comes from government sources. Those funds are now on the chopping block as part of cost-cutting measures.

Welfare reform is needed, and it will not be easy. But the inhumane social consequences of wholesale cutting will far outweigh any short-term gains from balanced budgets.

In the long run, we will be called upon to account for how we dealt with each "truly deserving person." Or, as someone once put it, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Prayer program needs help

To the editors:

I am writing to you to advise our readers in the Diocese of the possibility of a loss of one of our ministries. On the last Thursday of each month the Courier prints the MPRP (Monthly Prayer Request for Priests).

Perhaps people do not realize that this is a privately funded ministry, administered each month by Mary M. Reilich who volunteers her time and effort to publish this service. The cost is about \$250.00 a month. It is financed solely by voluntary contributions. There is a possibility that the ministry will be discontinued for lack of funds since one of the most generous volunteers may not be able to contribute any longer.

I personally use this and announce at the daily Masses the name of the priest being prayed for that day, asking the congregation to remember him in their prayers and Mass. Most people have responded very positively. We priests certainly need the prayers; it is obviously good for future vocations; it makes people aware of the numerous priests, both active and retired, and their ministries to the people of the Diocese of Rochester — even the ones serving outside the Diocese; it includes the religious priests working in the Diocese and certainly is a boost to the morale of people and priests alike.

It seems to me that it would be a great ministry. I seek donors from among our readers; if 300 people could contribute \$10 a year the Prayer Ministry can continue. As is printed each month in the notice: Your continued financial support and prayers are critical for the ongoing publication of this monthly service. Please send your donation to: MPRP, 70 Green Knolls Dr., Apt. A, Rochester, NY 14620-4746.

Sincere thanks to all those who have and will continue to support this ministry and most of all thanks to all who have prayed for us priests over the years.

Father Paul J. Freemesser
St. Alphonsus Church, Auburn

THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

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Please send your donations to:
MPRP, 70 Green Knolls Dr., Apt. A, Rochester, NY 14620-4746.

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Eternal Father, I offer You the Precious Blood of Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in satisfaction for my sins and for the release of the priest most afflicted in Paraguay.

Oh, Holy Soul, obtain for me the intention I so earnestly ask if it be the Holy Will of God. (Say 15 times for 30 days after Mass and Communion on three consecutive Sundays.)

My Lord and God, through the intercession of Mary and all the angels, do not allow priests to die today without Your love. Your grace and Your unfathomable mercy.

Amen.

MARCH, 1996
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 Deacon George W. Burdette	4 James A. Peltier, SJ	5 Thomas C. Fleming	6 Francis J. Cummings	7 Paul O'Connell, CSC	8 Anthony G. Cullen, CSC	9 Thomas J. Smith, CSC
10 John A. Hagan	11 Donald J. Murphy	12 Neil R. Miller	13 Joseph J. O'Connell, CSC	14 Gerald R. Kelly, CSC	15 Paul J. Hagan, CSC	16 Lawrence P. Brennan, SJ
17 Joseph J. O'Connell, CSC	18 Stephen J. O'Connell, CSC	19 Richard A. Sweeney	20 Francis J. Cummings	21 David P. Blane	22 George T. L. O'Connell, CSC	23 Robert G. Smith
24 Richard G. Sweeney	25 Stephen J. O'Connell, CSC	26 Francis J. Cummings	27 Joseph J. O'Connell, CSC	28 Paul O'Connell, CSC	29 Anthony G. Cullen, CSC	30 Thomas J. Smith, CSC

Perplexed by essay about groups

To the editors:

Would W.G. Beeneey please translate what he wrote on Feb. 29 under the headline "Evangelism thwarted by family feuds"? When I read it, and then re-read it several times, I shook my head and muttered, "Huh?"

Who are these "legions" of deplorably ignorant illiterate, vindictive people who "make sizable donations" to the church to become "the recipients of a temporal indulgence," and what makes their be-

havior so repulsive? And, if they are ignorant and illiterate, how must they go about gaining the "Reason and Faith" to which the writer alludes?

What does Mr. Beeneey mean by "small groups," or "family groups" and, later, as "Christian Communities?"

Is it possible that these "groups" do have Reason and Faith and it is Mr. Beeneey who does not understand? If he is referring to "Small Christian Communities," the fourth goal of our Diocesan Synod, I respectfully suggest that he seek more information about this form of faith sharing. He can call Claude Lester at the Pastoral Center, (716) 328-3219, ext. 339.

It bothers me that any Christian would call another person "ignorant," "illiterate," "vindictive," or whatever. It is positively un-Christian! I think that all of us try to do our best with the gifts God has given to us, with the help of His grace. Further, as I have written so often, the church is not going to fall apart! God does not write in straight lines. The Holy Spirit blows hither and yon but never deserts us.

Cheer up, my friend!

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle, Rochester

Saddened by attempts to crush fragile peace

To the editors:

It is with great sadness that I read of the bombings of a city bus in Jerusalem this weekend. It was difficult enough last weekend with three separate events of violence in Israel, this week only adds more horror and compounds the relationships toward peace that have been struggling to be built over the past few years. The dove of peace is a fragile animal that will not come to rest in the face of such violence. I join with those who mourn for their dead and injured. Their pain cannot be relieved by mere words.

Many people, on all sides in the Middle East, have earnestly worked for a permanent peace that is equitable to all. It is unfortunate that a small number of people can be so motivated to try to destroy that which so many have striven for. It is the continuing prayer of this office that all people of peace will join to continue working for a just end and peaceful settlement.

Deacon Brian J. McNulty
Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs
Diocese of Rochester