

# 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, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for verification purposes.

## You, too, can pay tribute in 'Opus'

### To the editors:

This morning I was reflecting on a recent visit our Folk Group made to the Sisters of St. Joseph's (St. Joseph Convent) Infirmary. Our caravan led us to Pittsford, where we shared our music ministry. We played to a gathering in honor of a member of our parish family who has taken up residence in this unique and supportive community. During the performance, I was unable to maintain my usual concentration on our music director. My attention was repeatedly drawn into the eyes of the assembled residents. At first theirs seemed a reaction to the universality of music and the message of God's joy and care that permeated our selections. Feet tapped, hands moved with the rhythm of the music, lips measured out recollections of hymns learned long ago — and sought to find the words of new lyrics surely unknown before that moment. Yes, the music filled the air; but there was something else happening that afternoon, and the music was only the medium.

In the recently released film "Mr. Holland's Opus," moviegoers have been touched by this simple story of a teacher who devoted his life to the students under his care. His self-sacrifice, commitment and stubborn insistence on the righteousness of real education are rewarded in a glorious, albeit implausible, symphonic and symbolic tribute. Could this ever happen in real life? Could it happen in our community? Our Children's Choir joined us for this afternoon visit, and immediately gravitated to a room full of "grandmothers," who reacted as any former teacher would — with smiles and questions and stories. Some of our choir



Photo credit  
"Mr. Holland's Opus" tells of a teacher and father who set aside his own dreams.

members recognized former teachers from years ago. For a moment, there was a connection between past and future — between years of sacrifice and the glorious development of a Christian soul. The student from years past had grown into a mother and a teacher in her own right — complete with her own children and a new generation to teach and challenge.

Mr. Holland's Opus could happen here, in this very Diocese. Perhaps not in the glamorized finale of modern cinema, but in countless moments of brief visits and reconnections with the past. Do you remember a special teacher from your youth? Perhaps you recall a Sister or Priest who seemed "ancient" when you were in school, but in retrospect was only 20 or 30 years your senior? I ask that you

consider looking up someone who influenced your life. Seek them out, whether in the infirmaries of the Sisters of St. Joseph or the Sisters of Mercy — or wherever the Lord has called them to reside. You may think that they couldn't possibly remember you, although they probably will. It really doesn't matter. What does matter is that they will know that you remember, that you cared enough to take time from your busy life, and that they somehow made a difference in the world. Your visit or card of thanks will be sure to warm their heart and yours. You can play this music in the Opus even if you can't sing a note, for they will hear the music as it comes from your heart.

Robert Pizzutiello  
Parish Road, Victor

## Dissent in diocese should provoke prayer

### To the editors:

I have been wondering why there has been so little reaction to Father Joe Hart's continued call to dissent on the infallible teaching on the ordination of women (*Catholic Courier*, Feb. 29: "Pastor: responsum is not infallible"). This is particularly serious in light of Bishop Clark's assent to this teaching.

I thank Father Cosgrove for his letter in the *Courier* on March 21, calling this to our attention. I feel badly that so many people don't view the ongoing dissent in this Diocese as reason to pray hard and to take action. We are being drawn away from the truth of our beliefs by smooth and logically put arguments. We must be on guard, because we are being drawn away from unity with the Universal Church. Those who promote this deviation promote the disintegration of the Universal Church, and those of us who tolerate it share the responsibility for that disintegration. Our Baptismal and Confirmation calling is to know, live, and promote the Truth of God's teaching.

Father Cosgrove has challenged us to remember that we, as the faithful in the Church, are all to be among the believers. ... Locally we have some who, because of their positions, and theological degrees propose to lead us with their interpretation of a "dated" Gospel, tradition, or value. In "Jesus time, the norm was this, and I don't see where it applies today," and even better, "My interpretation of the Scripture, in light of our Synod priority number such and such, suggests that we need to move in this or that direction," are frequent rationalizations offered by some local theologians, pastors and credentialed parish staff members to promote a change in thinking that supports the modernization of the local Church. They systematically marginalize the faithful with their arguments of authority and add to the chaos that grows in our Churches.

I am uncomfortable, as are most of the

"faithful" with the decline in the number of priests, and I want it to be resolved. I believe that some of us are so obsessed with "our" solutions that we continue to press for them, to the point of disobedience to the teachings and traditions of the Church! What are we as the people of God doing to encourage the priesthood? Can we argue that dissent will add to the number of priests?

Perhaps the best "solution" for the vast majority of us is to be mindful that we could be the cause for someone to accept God's calling because of our sincere belief in the goodness of the priesthood. We also need to remember that as we show continued contempt and disobedience to the Church, we have the ability to discourage, as well. God's covenant to keep us as His people is cause for us to have faith and hope that this problem

will be solved, but in His time. I have great difficulty believing that dissent will yield a fast solution.

S. David Coriale  
Conifer Cove Lane  
Webster

EDITORS' NOTE: We previously published numerous responses to the Vatican responsum and called a moratorium on further letters. In light of that moratorium, some readers questioned our decision to publish Father Cosgrove's letter and doubtless will question publication of Mr. Coriale's letter as well. Our rationale is that the moratorium related to letters on the responsum itself, whereas Father Cosgrove and Mr. Coriale responded to a news article about Father Hart. However, we believe these two letters adequately represent the views of those who disagree with Father Hart's position, and we will publish no further letters of opposition to it.

## Try changing yourself rather than attempting to change Catholicism

### To the editors:

How can unity be formed within Christian churches when there is little unity within the Catholic Church?

An underlying theme of those who rail against papal — or Roman Catholic — teaching can be summed up by "today's prophets." Prophecy ended with the birth of Christ.

Uniqueness, nuance, dialogue et al are synonyms for questioning protestations. These are not to be denied as one side of the coin.

The other side is answering the proposed thoughts with the true Catholic teaching — if the person is disposed to do that.

It is like teaching only subtraction and no addition — or buying a car that has no braking mechanism.

As a convert before marriage and years of study, God permitted me to open my

mind to Roman Catholicism, I had traveled and studied the nuances, dialogues et al and they are all to be found in some other religion.

As a convert, I just don't understand why try and change Catholicism and not yourself? Catholicism will never be "politically or socially correct."

I learned that Roman Catholicism is a tough taskmaster — to begin and will continue, but more easily. It is an oak not a sapling. More factually an ancient redwood.

For all "pragmatic Catholics" and would-be prophets, "Don't knock it until you've tried it!"

Deny Christ's promise to Peter about the "keys of the kingdom" — what's left? God is imperfect.

Shirley F. Schuhart, OFM Tert.  
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Penfield