

# OPINIONS

## Catholic Courier

©1996, Rochester Catholic Press Association.

1150 Buffalo Road  
P.O. Box 24379  
Rochester, NY 14624  
716/328-4340

### President

**Bishop Matthew H. Clark**

### General Manager/Editor

**Karen M. Franz**

### Editorial Department

#### Associate Editor

**Lee Strong**

#### Copy editor/Staff writer

**Kathleen Schwar**

*Finger Lakes*

#### Staff writers

**Rob Cullivan**

*Genesee Valley*

**Mike Latona**

*Southern Tier*

#### Staff Photographer

**S. John Wilkin**

### Business Department

#### Circulation Manager

**Jeanne A. Morin**

#### Office Manager

**Mary DiPonzio**

#### Administrative Assistant

**Lenna Hurley**

### Advertising Department

#### Advertising Director

**Ray Frey**

#### Account Executive

**Tom DeRoller**

### Production Department

#### Graphic Designers

**Kim Parks**

**Amy Sundstrom**

## 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.

## Make time to protect marriages

### To the editors:

My husband and I facilitate a marriage support group at our parish. Throughout the four years that we have been planning topics and encouraging couples to attend, three reasons for not attending reign supreme: 1) We just don't have the time (it's two hours a month); 2) I'd love to attend but my husband would never join me; and 3) There's nothing wrong with our marriage.

While the Catholic Church can't be held totally responsible, it has certainly been weak in supporting marriages beyond the wedding day. It seems to us the Church puts us through marriage preparation, marries us, and then recommends Worldwide Marriage Encounter, but beyond that, there is little if any ongoing encouragement or guidance for married couples. We believe this is reflected in the reasons given above.

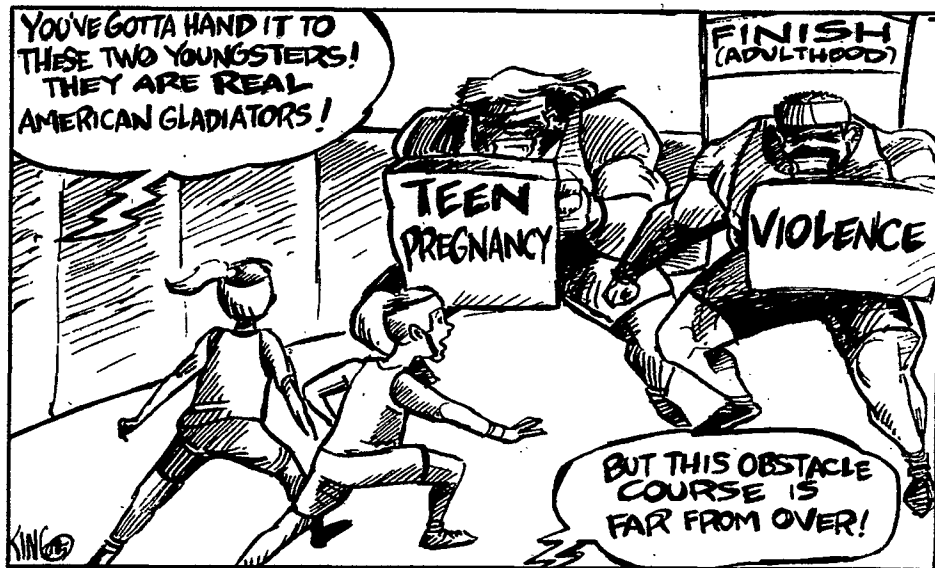
According to reason #1, the marriage relationship is not a priority. Everyone knows they have to take their car in for regular maintenance to keep it in top running condition, and we schedule annual physicals to keep ourselves in good health, but what preventive maintenance is scheduled for married couples to keep their marriages alive and growing? The general mentality seems to be, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

According to reason #2, men tend to shy away from group sharing and communication. We fear our Church, in its effort to be all-inclusive, is leaving our men even further behind. It's not unusual to see 85-90 percent women at church events. How can we reach our men?

As far as reason #3 goes, what about celebrating our marriages and remembering the couplehood that we couldn't wait to have and now maybe take for granted — regardless if there are children or not?

God is the author of marriage and marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church. Ideally couples are expected to remain together forever. We hate to think we are just supposed to "wing it" on our own when we are married into a church community. Our stories are gifts to each other.

**Victor & Christine LaBaro**  
Manhattan Square Drive, Rochester



## Try 'true Christianity,' kids!

### To the editors:

I am in high school religion classes right now in my local parish church. I find that the books we use just do absolutely nothing for the spiritual lives of the students that are using the books. The books used here and in most places are simply useless. Though the people that decide to use these books may be very good people they are not the ones sitting and reading these things.

Most of the kids in my class are forced, by their parents to be there, and their attitudes show it. I think the reason for this is that over the years of this century people have made an attempt to water down the Catholic faith. Kids my age keep telling me that they don't want to follow Jesus because it leads to a boring life. That is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard. You didn't know what an excitement it is to follow Christ until you have done it.

The truth is that the lifestyle of on-the-

edge people that are wasting their lives with sex, drugs, and violence is dull and boring compared to true Christianity. If the people who write our religion books would stop watering down our faith and give us the true faith then more people would want to be true Christians.

It is too bad the kids are already so turned off that they won't open their minds. I almost cry when I see how kids live. They ruin their bodies and having pre-marital sex and they won't let Jesus Christ and His Holy Catholic Church have anything to do with their lives. The damage is done and now we as Catholics have to start living our faith and showing the people who don't have our faith what joy and happiness we have. I haven't done a good job of it and neither have many of you. Yes, they will know we are Christians by our love. That is the truth!!!

**Michael Schillace**  
North Fulton Street, Auburn

## Thanks donors to calendar effort

### To the editors:

Lee Beaudrault and I are very grateful to Father Paul Freemesser for his recent letter suggesting donations to the Monthly Prayer Request for Priests (MPRP) calendar.

Father suggested perhaps \$10 each from 300 subscribers who might be willing to lend their support; actually we received 50 replies totalling \$891.66. Adding these monies to what we have in the MPRP bank account enables us to pay for the March calendar and to pay the Courier for calendars through August 1996. The annual cost for the calendar is approximately \$3,000. We ask God's

guidance in this ministry for Jesus and Mary to pray for our diocesan priests.

Many have asked us to pray for deceased priests. We wish it were possible to add their names, but MPRP is for active and retired priests. Those who are deceased are remembered with all deceased priests on November 2, "Feast of All Souls."

We want to express our gratitude to those who made a financial sacrifice; for those who were unable to contribute, we thank you for your prayers.

**Mary Reilich for MPRP**  
70 Green Knolls Drive, Apt. A  
Rochester, N.Y. 14620-4746

## Even children remember the trauma of sexual abuse

### To the editors:

In response to Lillian Adams' letter regarding Father Gene Emo (*Catholic Courier*, March 21: "Don't Assume"): (Ms. Adams) should be very careful with sweeping generalizations about the "credibility of ... a physically and possibly mentally handicapped person." Are you implying that a special needs person cannot know when their body has been violated?

There are not many children I know of who would make up stories about mistreatment such as sexual abuse. Even at an early age, most children can distinguish good touch from bad — it is a gut reaction. Again, your generalizations are intolerable.

You say Ms. Adams, that you "do not believe anyone can remember things accurately" after 20 or 30 years. Were you ever asked someone about that day? Most people will be able to tell you exactly where they were, what they were doing, even what they were wearing, when they heard the news of JFK's death. Wouldn't it be even more likely for a person to remember something they were

directly involved in? Something as traumatizing as abuse, committed by a trusted, even idolized authority figure has a tendency to stick with you, whether you want it to or not. Unfortunately, events can overload the mind, and it protects itself by totally blocking out an experience — even for 20 or 30 years.

Whatever the verdict in the secular

court, people have been wounded very deeply, and lives have changed forever... Our obligation should not be focused on the innocence or guilt of one man, but rather on helping and healing the victims, their families, and our church community as a whole.

**Marj Smith**  
Ridge Road West, Spencerport

## Proposes new location for state death house

### To the editors:

State corrections authorities recently announced that New York's execution chamber will be located in a yet-to-be-built maximum-security prison rather than in Southport state prison near Elmira. It was decided that it makes better sense to put a permanent death house in one of three prisons Gov. George Pataki's administration proposes to erect within five years.

The commissioner felt it would be better to have a death house at a non-general confinement facility because the fact of an execution has a disruptive effect on a prison.

Gov. Pataki could easily build the

death house onto the governor's mansion. This would be the ideal location for such a facility because it would be far removed from the prison and therefore, would not be disruptive. Perhaps, though, this would be bringing the issue of the death penalty too close to home.

Abortion and the death penalty both are violent acts that are readily accepted in today's society. Perhaps Gov. Pataki needs to be reminded that only God decides when a person is to come into the world and only He decides when we are to leave it.

**Dianna Richmond Ives**  
Simpson Road, Rochester