

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.

Urges prayer for vocations

To the editors:

The many good teachings in the April 4 *Catholic Courier* built my faith in God and our Catholic Church. Bishop Matthew Clark's "Along the Way" does that. So did the feature article on the Sacraments, Sister Patricia Schoelles' presentation on Holy Week, Father Albert Shamont's teaching on Jesus' Resurrection as the finale -- the "good part."

Then follows the Opinions page, that wraps it all up for me. It strongly suggests a need to look deeper into "What really does the Priesthood mean, what and why is it?" St. John Vianney, Curé of Ars, stated that it IS the love of the Heart of Jesus.

If we really, truly understood the answers, wouldn't we want to dedicate ourselves to prayer for vocations and for each and every one of our priests? Just thinking of this urges me to send a donation to the Monthly Prayer Request for Priests, 70 Green Knolls Drive, Apt. A, Rochester 14620. The calendar appears on the last issue of the *Courier* every month.

Dorothy Frederick
Clinton Avenue, Rochester

Nebraska synod made fate clear

To the editors:

Apropos of the *Courier's* news items (March 28) from the Bishop of Nebraska:

Little did I know what sin's at stake 'til a synod in Nebraska did legislate that Call to Action was dangerous bait. But I bit; now I wait May's the date for my punishment, my gate Excommunicate!

Helen W. Williams

Highland Heights, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Our policy is to decline publication of submitted poetry. We have decided to bend that policy in this case, however, because Ms. Williams used poetic form to express her opinion.

Curious about roles

To the editors:

I was pleased that our Holy Father has addressed the role of women in today's Church in his 201-page document of March 28, 1996. This is succinct in view of the senseless pronouncement last November by Cardinal Ratzinger which alienated many of us "handmaidens of God." However, the Pope's document gives no clear direction about how to make reforms and encourage "new forms of participation" for women that do not require ordination. Could it be that in addition to cleaning the church, we should also do windows?

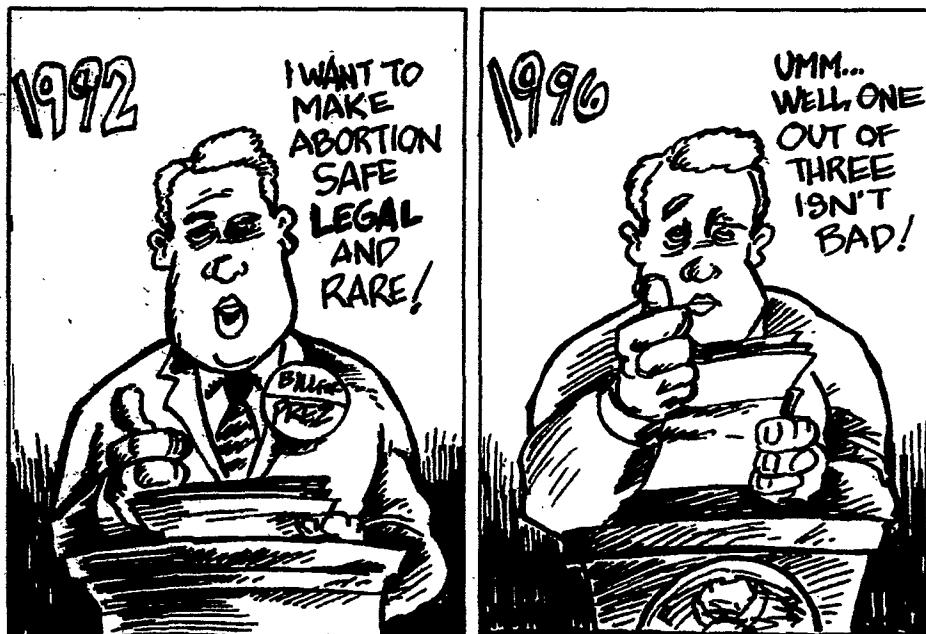
Marion L. Brown
Irving Road, Rochester

Dialogue is better way

To the editors:

Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz soon may listen to the voices of his fellow Bishops and withdraw unreasonable *ipso facto latae sententiae* excommunication. The better way to confront expressions of anti-Catholicism is free and open dialogue. Further, as we progress into the third millennium change will evolve and with it a changed Catholic outlook.

Joe Leahy
Valois, N.Y.



Interest ran high at session on moral decisions, ethics

To the editors:

When 38 people eagerly want to continue asking questions about Scripture and fundamentalism, only to be cut off for the next talk; and when the next talk on conscience formation inspires a multitude of discussions and questions, only to be cut off for lunch; and following lunch, groups of people must make actual ethical decisions in industry before disbanding, one must conclude St. Gabriel's Church in Hammondsport participated in a most successful Lifelong Learning day!

Although the oxymoron Lifelong Learning Day seems contradictory, the Synod Day was just that, a day when lifelong questions and issues were discussed by three people who went out of their way to make the day worthwhile for parish members and area guests. Topics were chosen from surveys conducted at the previous Sunday Masses.

Sister Anne Michelle, pastoral administrator of St. Gabriel's Church, agreed to follow opening prayer service with a talk on Scripture and fundamentalism. Her well researched examples of types of fundamentalism, together with the New Catechism's three criteria for interpreting Scripture, brought forth comments like, "I wish we could hear more on this. I'm confronted everyday in my work by a former Catholic who has become a strict fundamentalist. I wish we had more time for this topic."

Dr. Patricia A. Schoelles, SSJ, President of St. Bernard's Institute, then expertly probed people's minds with her coverage of conscience, formation of conscience,

evaluation of the morality of an action, and the consistent life ethic. She said we were getting a "crash" course from St. Bernard's and everyone agreed. Several people wished they had brought cassette tapes, or as one man said, "Sister should have these talks video taped. We would like to refer to them again and again."

Following a box luncheon, Stephen Drieling, Human Resources Manager at Philipps Lighting Company, gave a multimedia demonstration of the company's ethics policies, followed by case studies of ethical decisions that had to be addressed. Group solutions led to differences and more questions.

Evaluations of the day's activities were most enthusiastic! Participants wanted more! It would seem that these kinds of experiences led the Holy Spirit to guide the Synod representatives to choose lifelong learning as the number one goal. Recent articles in the *Courier* refer to increasing demands for creative catechetical studies and a Leadership Forum where adults discuss current issues. This past Sunday's *New York Times* lead article shows the searching for truth in all religions. We need adult discourse; we no longer have the adult clubs, like Newman or St. Thomas Aquinas, which helped in our search for truth in the past.

St. Gabriel's Synod Committee would like to thank these three people who so enriched our faith. We hope we can present more in the future.

Betty White
Synod Coordinator
St. Gabriel's Church
Hammondsport

What is extraordinary care?

To the editors:

The recent decisions of the appellate courts in Washington and New York to allow physicians to assist suicides have been roundly condemned by our bishops, and rightly so. The direct taking of innocent human life has been condemned by the Church from the beginning.

I think, however, that our bishops need to reach some kind of consensus on the issue which has led to these decisions: the definition of ordinary and extraordinary means to preserve life. Ordinary means must be used to preserve life, extraordinary means are optional.

But what constitutes extraordinary means? Must people with terminal illnesses in great pain be kept alive by artificial means? And what are these artificial means? Must people in irreversible comas be kept alive through artificial nutrition and hydration? Pennsylvania's bishops say "yes"; Texas' bishops say "not always." The problem is complicated by physician, hospital, and nursing home

fears of lawsuits and by families afraid to take responsibility for ending the life of a beloved family member.

I think what is needed is clear consistent teaching from our bishops on what today constitutes ordinary and extraordinary means of preserving life. People need help to reach a consensus among family members, physicians, and hospital or nursing home staff as to when it is no longer necessary to prolong the life of a terminally ill family member.

And all of us need a "health care proxy" to make sure our wishes for care are observed when we are no longer able to make decisions for ourselves. Our parish Consistent Life Ethic Committee has put together such a document and would be happy to make it available to anyone who sends us a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope. Our address is: St. Thomas More Parish, 2617 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14610.

Father Robert L. Collins
St. Thomas More Church
Rochester