

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

©1996, Rochester Catholic Press Association.

1150 Buffalo Road
P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340
800/600-3628 outside Rochester

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

Matthew Scott

Business Department

Circulation Manager

Jeanne A. Mooney

Telemarketing Manager

Lenna Hurley

Office Manager

Mary DiPonzio

Secretary/Receptionist

Donna Stubbings

Advertising Department

Advertising Director

Ray Frey

Account Executive

Laura J. O'Loughlin

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.

Letters must not exceed 500 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

'Attire' struck chord with readers

Keep minds on praying

To the editors:

This letter is in reference to your article regarding Church attire. It would take the "wind out of my sail" to have a young woman sit down next to me clad only in a bikini, but I believe that most people attending Mass use their good judgment and come to Church dressed appropriately.

The Church should be warmly receiving all who attend Mass; especially the young people. When I look around the congregation, I see fewer and fewer young people attending. It has been written in more than one study that those in their early teens start to question the beliefs which they have been taught, and until a later time in their lives, many distance themselves from attending Mass regularly, if at all. I would be horrified to think that any young person would not be welcomed to attend a Mass because he was wearing a T-shirt. I agree that it would be correct to take necessary action if someone was wearing a shirt with something offensive written on it. As restless as our world is today, we should be doing all that we can to get people to come through the doors.

Times have changed, and whether we like it or not, lifestyles have changed. Most households have both adults working; many are working two jobs. This isn't by choice; it's called survival. Not all of us are leaving a golf course or a swimming pool to attend Mass. What about the local nursery owner I know who leaves work to attend the Saturday evening Mass or attends the first Sunday Mass and goes directly to work? Are you going to turn him away because he's wearing jeans? I'm a little perplexed as to why the Church instituted the Saturday evening Mass if not for convenience. Just because we are not in our Sunday Best doesn't mean we offer any less devotion.

We all know how to dress for special occasions. I haven't attended a christening, a funeral, or a wedding and seen anyone dressed in cut-offs. Let's not forget that we all, in some way, tolerate disturbances during Mass. Some do not appreciate the toddler who has screamed for a good portion of the Mass. Some do not like the elderly lady, who is not of sound mind, yelling obscenities during the worship hour.

We all know there is a shortage of volunteers for all activities; whether it is a church function, the local fire department, a school activity, or an ambulance squad. We should be taking our hats off to all of those who give their time. As active as the young girl has been in the St. Rose Church, why didn't someone speak to her about what the proper attire was for serving during the Mass? I hope the day comes when this girl doesn't enter the Church and feel the embarrassment and distress we have caused her.

I suggest that we lower our heads in prayer and avoid gawking at the people who are entering the Church. Please, don't judge me by my jeans!!

Christy Walpole
Main Street, Groton

King deserves better

To the editors:

In response to Father Philipps' letter (*Catholic Courier*, July 11: "Image symbolizes what church ought to be"), would he or anyone see the Pope in the Vatican, the Queen in Buckingham Palace or the President in the White House in shorts?

I doubt it! Should the King of Kings deserve or expect less?

Nancy F. Munnings
South Avenue, Rochester



Would God ask them to change?

To the editors:

Seeing your "disgusting" photograph and letter brings to mind a scenario. A woman, having severely criticized a minister for allowing youth group members wearing skirts above their knees to sing in the choir "right up there in front of everybody," meeting with God in Heaven.

God: Tell me, what was your problem with skirts above the knee?

Woman: It's indecent! It's disrespectful to you.

God: But I designed those knees! I think they are beautiful and they certainly are functional. I don't see any way to improve the design, do you?

Woman: It's temptation!

God: That's all in man's head! That's something he created.

Off in the distance ... four teenagers in summer attire approach. They have just died in an accident. The woman goes down the path to meet them.

Woman: Have you no shame? Show some respect. Go home and put some decent clothes on!

God stands where she left him, shaking his head.

Mary Jane Gill
County Route 1, Addison

Proper attire is way to show our respect

To the editors:

Is it possible Father Philipps has OK'd a new trend? We all prefer comfortable clothes. Sometimes society dictates otherwise. How about no more suits at interviews, no more professional attire at work, T-shirts & shorts at Senior Balls and Junior Proms — no more ties ever and only sneakers at all times for comfort.

This theory might be scorned, but to equate Church with the mall or amusement park seems ridiculous, also. Has Church become so casual that we've forgotten "proper attire" is our way of showing respect. I wonder if we ever thought of clothing in that way.

Sheila Prinzing
South Avenue, Webster

Teach values to our youths

To the editors:

In response to your lead story in the July 26 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, I could write a 20-page letter on why we should dress appropriately when attending Mass. However, I will keep it short in order not to bore your readers.

1. What is Mass? It is the liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In simple words, "Word" was made Man, and the God Man suffered and was crucified. So Mass is the Incarnation of the Word and the Bloodless Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you were attending the funeral service of our President, would you wear shorts?

2. Some people in your story say that only the people assigned liturgical roles should dress according to a dress code and not shorts or casuals. I have always been thought that we are ALL Church, not only the liturgical helpers. If there is a dress code for them it should be for all. I, too, am part of the Church.

3. If you are invited to attend a Wedding Mass, are you going to wear shorts or casuals? Isn't our Lord Jesus Christ more important than some bride or groom who invited you to their wedding Mass?

4. To those who say their community is a resort community, I say, if you're going to the beach, wear shorts or casual clothes, but when you come to church, wear what you would wear if you were going to visit the Queen of England. Are you not going to visit Jesus Christ, our Most High King?

If your pastors and bishops are afraid to take a stand, then we are truly, a lost generation of Christianity. Our pastors have failed to teach us God's Commandments and the true presence of the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus in the Eucharist. Some even teach us there is no sin as long as we love one another.

We have already lost two generations of our children, when are we going to say enough is enough. Let us go back to basics and teach true moral value to our youth. Every time we give in an inch to our children, they take a mile. How long is this going to go on?

Dr. Frank A. Succes
Crescent Avenue, Auburn

Saddened by focus on style, judgment

To the editors:

In a time when people are struggling to connect with the Catholic church, I am saddened that time is being spent discussing the criteria for "proper attire" at church services.

A church is meant to be a place where everyone is welcome and judgment stays outside. The last thing that we should be concerned with is the way in which a person is dressed when they come to worship. Why do we still struggle with accepting and loving a person for what is on the inside?

There are many people who cannot afford clothes that would fall under the guise of "proper attire." Some race from one commitment to the next, and barely find time to attend church services. Are they to be punished because some church members do not approve of their style of dress? In the long run, does it really matter?

I do not remember reading that Jesus turned someone away because they were not in a dress and pantyhose or a suitcoat. Who are we to do any different?

Virginia Segerson
Monroe Avenue, Rochester

We will publish a final batch of "attire" letters next week. New letters will not be accepted.