

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.

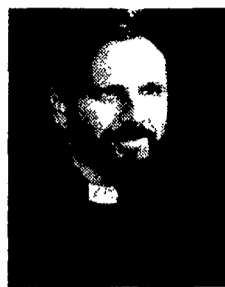
Letters must not exceed 500 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

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.

Hero taught by prayerful example

To the editors:

The Diocese of Rochester lost a great man this week. He was the kindest, most gentle, most humble person I have ever encountered. He was truly a great man. He was a hero, not the great sport hero-types that we have around today for everyone to admire, but a real hero, the kind of hero that was always there for others, wherever he was assigned, whenever you needed him.



He came into my life at that confusing, troublesome, junior high stage. He always had time for the students at St. Margaret Mary's. Not once did it ever occur to me that he might have had other things to do besides taking the Legion of Mary to Conesus Lake or taking the entire eighth grade to Stonybrook or Letchworth. He was always available to us and I suppose at our very young age we might have taken that for granted. That was just Father

Trott, whenever you needed him, there he was.

He was even called upon in his priestly duties at St. Margaret Mary's to talk to students who had gotten into some sort of trouble in the school. I know. I was one of them. And as I drove the 50 miles home to Geneva from Irondequoit this past Friday night I spent the entire time trying to recall at least one time when he had become angry or even raised his voice because of some silly thing I had done. I couldn't recall a single time. He always dealt with the students with patience, calmness, and understanding. And in his gentle way he made us see that whatever mistake we had made could be corrected, and we shouldn't do it again, and we didn't.

He taught by example how to be a simple loving person. I have carried that lesson into my adult life, into my teaching, into my parenting. But he gave me and many others a gift that can't be measured in earthly terms. He gave me an understanding of the power of prayer.

For any class trip, any Legion of Mary

trip, any religion class he taught, began with prayer. I recall pulling into a state park with the eighth grade and we hadn't yet completed the rosary. We all sat there in the bus in the parking lot finishing our prayers without any question. It was just what you did. You prayed before any event in your life and that prayer, that Rosary, would bring you comfort, peace, and joy that nothing in this world could.

He taught us by example to always turn to God in prayer. Last Wednesday night I couldn't sleep. I found I had a troubled heart, wondering after hearing the news of this sudden death if I had really told him in some way during my adult life how much he had done for me. Suddenly I found myself doing what he had done so often with us, praying the Rosary — and the peace came. Thirty years later his message to me as a child about the power of prayer still comes through loud and clear. He was a hero who led by example and I will miss his presence deeply.

Beryl Tracey
Larchmont Street
Geneva

Candidates encouraged to combat hunger

To the editors:

The front-page article in the Sept. 19 issue of the *Catholic Courier* ("Bishops: Catholics called to involvement in politics") would receive a very positive reaction from Catholics involved with Bread for the World in the Rochester Diocese. These Catholics are actively involved in connecting their faith to social justice.

Members of St. Louis Church in Pittsford and Corpus Christi Church in Rochester and many individual members of Bread for the World in the 28th Congressional District have written letters to the (district's) two candidates, asking them to commit to ending childhood hunger in the United States. Under the leadership of Paul Knipper, St. Louis Parish sent 257 letters to the two 28th Congressional District candidates. At Corpus Christi Parish, 170 postcards were filled out in August and sent to the candidates, according to Carol Crossed, who led the effort there.

The letters request that the candidates for Congress sign a statement promising "if elected I commit to enacting legislation supporting federal programs which help overcome childhood hunger in the United States." The statement asserts that "childhood hunger in the U.S. is unacceptable and preventable."

Candidate Geoffrey Rosenberger declined to sign the commitment. Mr. Rosenberger responded with a letter explaining his policies and said that he would supply his letter to anyone interested. Candidate Louise Slaughter also declined to sign the commitment. Rep. Slaughter stated that she has supported Bread for the World since she has been a representative and intended to continue doing so.

The effort to gain pledges is part of a nationwide effort called "Elect to End Childhood Hunger," being coordinated by Bread for the World, a nonpartisan Christian citizens' movement that seeks justice for hungry people. Bread for the World lobbies the federal government to use citizen tax money for the important Christian duty of feeding the hungry.

Until recent legislation overhauling welfare programs, over a million children in New York state have relied on food stamps for adequate nutrition; and over 400,000 babies, preschoolers and pregnant women in New York state relied on the federal WIC program for nutrition supplement. Candidates need to be told by voters in Monroe County that federal nutrition programs are essential for the health of these children and our society. The Nutrition Consortium of New York State estimates that 33,000 children in

Monroe County are hungry or at risk of hunger. The recent changes in welfare make it more important for Catholics to let candidates know of their concern for the poor. In a nation as wealthy as ours there is no reason that children should be denied food.

Richard Wahl, CSB
Augustine Street, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Father Wahl is Campaign Coordinator for Bread for the World in the 28th Congressional District. Due to space limitations, the text of the Candidate Commitment to End Childhood Hunger has been eliminated from this letter. Information may be obtained from Bread for the World, 1100 Wayne Ave., Suite 1000, Silver Spring, Md., 20910.



Maryknoll priest urges petitions to close School of the Americas

To the editors:

I am a Maryknoll priest writing from the federal prison in Atlanta, Georgia, where I'm serving a six month sentence for a nonviolent protest against the U.S. Army School of the Americas. I was among 13 arrested, including a 74-year-old nun, a Jesuit priest, a lawyer, WWII veterans, and a mother of eight. The School of the Americas (SOA), located at Fort Benning, Ga., trains hundreds of soldiers from Latin America each year in combat skills at U.S. taxpayers' expense.

As a missionary in Latin America, I saw first-hand the violence done to the poor by the military. While the power and wealth are in the hands of a small elite, the vast majority of our sisters and brothers in Latin America live in degrading poverty and see their children die before their time. And when the poor can no longer endure their suffering and cry out for life and justice, the SOA-trained soldiers are there to silence them — and those church leaders who try to defend them.

According to the United Nations Truth Commission Report on El Salvador, graduates of the School of the Americas were

responsible for the massacre of six Jesuit priests; the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero; the rape and murder of four U.S. church women; the massacre of El Mozote, where over 800 men, women, and children were killed; and many other atrocities.

At a time when budgets to schools for our children are being cut, the School of the Americas is costing millions of dollars of our tax money. This is shameful!

Shortly before Archbishop Romero was killed, he said, "We who have a voice must speak for the voiceless." As a missionary trying to heal the suffering of the poor in Latin America, I ask that you write your members of Congress and President Clinton and request that they close the School of the Americas. I also recommend as a good resource the Maryknoll video, "School of Assassins," which was nominated for an Academy Award. To order, call 1-800-227-8523. And for more information, please contact: SOA WATCH, P.O. Box 3330, Columbus, GA 31903.

Father Roy Bourgeois
Federal Prison Camp
Atlanta, Ga.