

OPINIONS



Seeks clarity on 'divisions' in the church

To the editors:

I'm a little confused by the point W.G. Beene is trying to make in the Oct. 3 letter ("Recent column deserves praise") about names for the various Christian churches. However, I do have to clarify a common misconception about the Eastern Church and, therefore, what I perceive to be a misperception about the Catholic Church and what "churches" it consists of.

People frequently talk about the Eastern Church and Eastern Orthodox Church as being one and the same. Even Father McBrien, in the column W.G. Beene refers to, wasn't clear that he distinguishes between the two, writing as if the Eastern Church needs to be "welcomed" by the Catholic Church. But, you see, the Eastern Church IS a part of the Catholic Church and has been for thousands of years. I'm not well-enough versed in the history of our Church to get into the particulars, but W.G. Beene can research the spread of the early Church and how two central seats for its leadership arose in both Rome and in Constantinople. The vast distances and cultural differences made it wise to keep the Church under two basic Rites, but maintain one

"home" for the Church in Rome.

So, you see, the Catholic Church consists of two rites — the Roman or Latin Rite and the Eastern Rite, BOTH under the leadership of our Pope. The Roman or Latin Rite is what most Americans and Western Europeans are familiar with. The Eastern Rite is what many Eastern Europeans — like the Ukrainians, Greeks, and even Filipinos — have grown up with. The differences most people will notice between the two rites is the native language used at Mass and the placement of the altar. The theology is one and the same.

The Catholic Church, then, has two very similar, yet very unique "halves." Both are true, both are valid. Both are Catholic. Therefore, to call the entire Catholic Church "Roman" is not really correct. It really and truly is the Catholic Church, period.

As someone who grew up in the Eastern Rite and received all first sacraments there — in a Ukrainian Catholic Church — while at the same time was educated by nuns in a Roman Rite Catholic school and learned to love and appreciate that part of my Church as well, I cannot tell you how it pains me to see a division that



does not exist being drawn. I am a Catholic. Never mind what rite I attend on any given Sunday.

And the Eastern Orthodox? Or as some call it, Orthodox Catholic? It may be Christian, and it may look and sound Catholic, but it just isn't Catholic. Mr./Ms. Beene, because they don't regard our Holy Father, the Pope, as their head. They are basically a "Protestant" sect with Eastern Rite trappings.

So, yes, Father McBrien, and yes, W.G. Beene, I get the idea about all Christians being part of the Body of Christ. But let's be careful when we introduce each other.

Anna F. Decker
Northview Drive, Penn Yan

EDITORS' NOTE: Coincidentally, the front page story in this week's issue explores local links and common beliefs among the Eastern and Latin rites of the Catholic Church.

Church is a constant friend amid transitions of life

To the editors:

"The Human Side" by Father Hemrick (Sept. 26: "God brings familiarity to life disrupted by move") is a logical summary of behavior when transfer to a new location occurs.

It is natural to "squirrel-away" possessions thought to be useful. Then, without a "get real" attitude, possessions soon possess us. Most often we fail to divest until the notification to "move along" arrives as the last message at our work station. It often is said that "only if I had planned ahead," this move would be a much less

stressful event to manage.

The "right size" rationale now applies to those of us who are Senior Citizens. We know that some day soon we shall no longer be capable of maintaining a home-stead. It is prudent to begin a plan for appropriate and smaller living accommodations, rather than wait until the last moment, then transfer the task to children who may be far distant and unable to properly assist dear old Mom and Dad who must move into a continuing care retirement community. At this point they suddenly find that they did not plan to

fail, they simply failed to plan — The Human Side.

I wish to express an honest area of disagreement with Father Eugene. It is the loss of real friends. In today's mobile society, friends are people in a common environment. When that constant changes, friends are not lost — just a drifting apart and in time a fading away occurs, because the constant is no more. There is one constant, the church; it is my friend wherever I may live.

Joseph P. Leahey
State Rt. 414, Valois

Thanks paper for introducing readers to columnist

To the editors:

Thank you for giving readers a taste of George Weigel's writing. We know that his column will be read closely — not only by those who tend to agree with his point of view — but also by those who do not. We hope that ultimately you will decide to run his column weekly. Assuring balance to the views of Father McBrien would be an important step for the Courier to take in the direction of Cardinal Bernardin's Common Ground Project.

And we bet would attract readers and

advertisers who so often are offended by remarks in Father McBrien's column.

Again, our thanks, Ms. Franz.

Mary Lou and Ed McGarrell
Wall Street
Elmira

EDITORS' NOTE: Weigel's column first appeared Oct. 10 and will run again Nov. 7.

Although the McGarrells do not raise the question, we'd like to take this opportunity to clarify General Manager/Editor Karen Franz' Sept. 19 column, which apparently created some confusion among readers. Several people have

raised the concern that in evaluating reader response to four "trial" columnists, the Courier would consider cancelling one or more of the columns by Sister Patricia Schoelles, Father Richard McBrien and Father Albert Shamon.

We want to make clear that we are NOT considering cancellation of any of these columns, nor certainly of "Along the Way" by Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

The "trial" columnists are being considered only to fill a slot vacated by Gregory Pierce, who stopped writing his "Faith and Work" column in June.

Disagrees on favorite columnists

To the editors:

I read your column "Between the Lines" in the Sept. 19 edition of the *Catholic Courier*. I'm pleased that you are accepting suggestions from readers as to the selection of columnists. I would like to offer the following:

I noticed that one of your readers from Rochester wrote in and listed her favorite parts of the *Catholic Courier* as being the columns of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, Father Richard P. McBrien, and Sister Patricia Schoelles, and letters to the editors.

I would like instead to list those parts of the *Catholic Courier* that I find to be the worst. They are the columns of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, Father Richard P. McBrien, and Sister Patricia Schoelles, and some letters to the editors — depending on whose letters are printed.

Father McBrien and Sister Schoelles do not represent the truths contained in authentic Catholicism; they are promoting a form of new age Protestantism and Bishop Clark is allowing and condoning it.

Your contributor from Rochester also stated that she would like to see the paper used more as a teaching tool rather than a social update. That's a good idea, may I suggest the Magisterium as a source of teaching? I don't think that I should count on it for such a columnist would totally conflict with the paper's "personality."

Now I would like to list the best parts, Father Albert Shamon's column "Word for Sunday," and some letters to the editor — depending on whose letters are printed. The best part of the *Catholic Courier* I like is when I'm finished with it and I pick up the latest issue of *The Wanderer* — they usually arrive in the mail together.

I must seriously say that the dissent and heresies which are plaguing the Diocese of Rochester and are promoted in the *Courier* are causing great harm. The harm is mostly to the people who put their trust in those who are leading them astray, but no one is hurt more than those who willfully refuse to accept God's divine truths as revealed to The Holy Roman Catholic Church, and who cause others to be led by those who are blind.

Robert A. Martino
West Church Street, Elmira

Agrees with need for quiet

To the editors:

I agree with columnist Eileen Marx when she says we need to "build a little quiet time" into our children's day (Sept. 26: "Let children know you value quiet").

In fact, when most of my four kids decided they no longer required an early afternoon nap, we simply stopped calling it nap time. We since refer to it as Quiet Time, which means they may read, dream, write and think, or anything else they prefer, so long as it is done quietly.

The added benefit is they usually inevitably use the period as a nap time, and we all rest easy.

Ivan Ramon
Rochester