

# 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.

## Feels ministries diminish priesthood

### To the editors:

The articles and letters which have appeared in recent issues of the *Courier* on the subject of vocations to the priesthood are a healthy attempt to air the many opinions of your readers and diocesan representatives on the subject. I would encourage you to continue this discussion so that your readers might have a fuller understanding of the reasons for the decline of interest in vocations to the priesthood in this diocese as well as many other dioceses in the United States.

So much confusion has arisen here with respect to the true meaning of the priesthood that there should be little wonder about the reluctance of many truly fine potential candidates to accept the call.

While we may speak as much as we want about the priesthood of the laity and the desirability of lay involvement in various ministries — see Robert Collins and Pat Schoelles — only the priest can celebrate the Eucharist; only through his agency can the Eucharistic bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Only the priest is commissioned to grant us absolution when we confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness. Only an ordained minister is authorized to preach the homily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

There is clearly an attempt on the part of many in our diocese to minimize even



these most sacred functions of the priesthood. How many confessions are heard in your parish each week? Does your pastor permit unordained religious and lay persons to preach the homily? Is the Blessed Sacrament revered and worshipped as the true presence of Jesus Christ?

If the answers to these questions are what I think they will be, why should any young man choose the path of the priesthood? If the sacrament of reconciliation

is no longer promoted as a means to sanctification; if anyone can preach the homily at the Eucharistic service; if the Eucharist is merely a "symbol" of Jesus and not Him, truly present, why do we need priests? In their eagerness to promote the idea of priesthood of the laity, the true priesthood has been reduced to nothingness by the "progressive Bishops" in the Church. They are eating their young.

**Joseph A. F. Valenti**  
Park Circle Drive, Fairport

## Pleased diocese seeks the best candidates, not most

### To the editors:

Lee Strong's story, "Vocation leaders weigh 'quality' vs. numbers" in the Oct. 17 *Catholic Courier* raises some good issues. I must support fewer and better priests if we are forced to choose between quality and numbers in the immediate future. A recent conversation with my sister, who lives in the Diocese of Fargo, confirms my belief.

The bishop of Fargo has brought in a number of young priests from outside the

diocese. The behavior of these men is arrogant and patronizing. They appear to be working toward eliminating lay people from church ministries, especially liturgical ministries. My sister had not worried about church politics before this fall. Now she is frightened and upset and is wondering what is happening to her beloved Catholic Church to which she converted almost 20 years ago. She and others are thinking about attending Mass in a neighboring diocese.

My sister's story also confirms the wisdom of having "homegrown" priests, although it certainly is possible to welcome outstanding men from outside of the diocese, as we in Rochester know well. But it should not be a policy to recruit priests from other dioceses. I am pleased that Rochester continues to look for the best candidates, not the most.

**Sheryl B. Zabel**  
Lyndon Road  
Fairport

## 'Mixed marriage' mother relates to article on teens

### To the editors:

I was pleased to see the article in the Oct. 24 *Catholic Courier* on youth and ecumenism (On the Move: "Catholicism and other faiths"). I have not always agreed with the articles in the *Courier*, but read it because I too come from a "mixed" marriage. I am active in a Protestant church and my husband is a parishioner at St. Mary's Church in Scottsville. Our faith brought us together but being in a mixed marriage has not always been easy. However we know that this was part of God's plan for us. At every turn the Lord has put people in our path that supported and celebrated our differences.

We married in my parents' church but believed we wanted to incorporate both traditions in the service to better represent us. Both the Priest and Minister were enthusiastic about this and both celebrated our marriage with us.

When I was first pregnant, my husband said he wanted the children raised in one faith so as not to confuse them. I said "then they will be raised Presbyterian." We both felt the need for pastoral counseling and went to the priest at my husband's church. He talked of how wrong it would be to exclude one tradition from our children and how that could be perceived by a child. He told us that our differences are just different expressions of our love for Jesus and these differences should be celebrated as gifts that God gave us to share.

Before our son was born my husband received a promotion and we had to relocate. After we moved both of us agreed the Baptism would take place after we found church homes for ourselves. It did not take long. The first meeting I had with the pas-

tor of my new church I explained that we had chosen to have our child baptized in the Catholic tradition. We felt this was the best choice for us and our child. She eagerly shared with me that the Priest at my husband's church was a friend of hers and asked if we could once again celebrate honoring both traditions. I knew the Lord was present in this. We agreed and on a Saturday morning a few months later both the priest and minister celebrated our son's baptism. It was such a joy and neither of us gave up any of ourselves to do so. That son is now eight and our youngest son was also blessed in the same manner.

The Lord has continued to put people in our path that both support our differ-

ences and challenge our spiritual journeys. He has taught us respect and genuine love for the other's tradition. Our Lord has taught us that our lives before and after church on Sunday defines our spirituality. He has taught us to raise children who love Jesus and who use prayer when they are truly concerned. Our Savior has blessed us many times over and we know this is part of our journey.

Our Lord created us and believes that differences are to be celebrated as well as studied and prayed about. If everyone did this think what a powerful universe we would live in.

**Ann J. Sheehan**  
Robert Quigley Drive, Scottsville

## Applauds diocesan, regional pro-life leaders for underscoring dedication to the unborn

### To the editors:

The Rochester community has been very fortunate to have certain members of the clergy lead the fight against the evil of abortion.

Father Anthony Mugavero is one such leader. He truly is a man who has practiced what he has preached by always being out on the front lines to fight against the injustice of abortion. Father Norman Weslin, founder of the Lambs of Christ, is another inspiring leader. He recently led a peaceful march to the Rochester Planned Parenthood with more than 300 people taking part. Also, his numerous arrests at abortion facilities in other states can attest to his commitment to the unborn.

On Oct. 26, the Most Reverend James

M. Moynihan, Bishop of Syracuse, was the featured speaker at the Catholic Physicians' Guild Fall Dinner. He mentioned that we all need to get involved in order to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the law which legalized abortion.

There is always strength in numbers and just think how impressive it would be to see all the clergy in the Diocese of Rochester, being led by our leader, Bishop Matthew Clark in taking a stand against abortion at the various abortion facilities. Pope John Paul II has said that "we need not be afraid," and that God will always be there to protect us from any and all evil that exists in the world.

**Dianna Richmond Ives**  
Simpson Road  
Rochester