

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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

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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.



Communion services offer real meaning

To the editors:

I have been wanting to write to you ever since you ran your article on "Is Sunday Mass a thing of the past?" (July 11) and now with Bishop Clark referring to future changes (in "From East to West a Perfect Offering is Made" spurred me to write about being a Communion Service presider at the Highlands/Laurelwood, an independent living community, in Pittsford with St. Louis Church.

I am one of a group of 13 presiders. Each presider is scheduled one Sunday once every two months. I must tell you that this is such a gratifying and spiritual experience. Someone asked me how I felt doing this service. I said "I can best describe it as a 'spiritual euphoria.'"

The residents at the Highlands/Laurelwood really enjoy and appreciate us coming each Sunday and I can honestly say we feel the same.

This Communion Service does not just distribute Communion; that's only a part of this Eucharistic Service. I refer to this service as a "mini-Mass" without the consecration. After the Gospel is read, a homily follows. In having to do a homily, it makes me really read the Scriptures with a deeper meaning and understanding.

We try to make this Communion Service very special and religious to the residents who attend.

Marge Mancine
Candlewood Drive, Pittsford

Wishes church would address animal rights

To the editors:

I was very pleased to read Joel Freedman's letter entitled, "Animals, too, worthy of moral concerns." And I am equally happy that the *Catholic Courier* published it. I would like to see the Catholic Church as a whole, speak on the issue of animal cruelty and exploitation for it is a human issue as well as an animal issue. Compassion is essential for true empathy and by showing compassion for all of God's creatures, we as humans, can only benefit our fellow humans as well. The two are not mutually exclusive as some people would like us to think. And studies have shown that there is a true correlation between animal cruelty that goes unchecked and child abuse, domestic violence and criminal behavior.

If we hold to the real meaning of stewardship, we can not omit addressing this topic through our churches for it is in so doing that we will come to reach the harmony between each other and with creation that God intended for man. The first step is education and spreading the good news that God did in fact form a covenant with all creation and human beings. When we acknowledge this, we will have a new vision and then we can truly start renewing the face of the earth.

Rita Sarnicola
Barber Street, Auburn

Diocese could do more to encourage vocations

To the editors:

"Eucharist: Parishes asked to plan ahead" (*Catholic Courier*, Oct. 24), is the same old, tired, and helpless response resigned to a shortage of priests and diminishing sacramental service. Such an attitude of resignation in private industry would certainly be cause for serious reprimand. That this posture exists in the chancery, nonetheless, requires some vigorous examination.

The point here is that all of our efforts should be directed toward the positive goal of attracting priests and priestly orders. That little enthusiasm exists for this should surprise few. The ongoing bitter disappointment of all the women-priest wannabes and their supporters, brought along by much false encouragement, could hardly be expected to properly nurture the priesthood. This general discouragement is now systemic and widespread. Some fresh air is very necessary here. However, in the immediate term, there are some pro-active steps available to any official with a hint of motivation.

Archbishop Crescenzo Sepe, head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, announced last year that the Vatican will provide priests from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, where there is strong growth in vocations, to North America and Western Europe, where declines are being experienced. The Archbishop said that bishops requesting extra priests have been asked to be specific in describing what they need: pastors, seminary professors, chancery officials, youth minis-

ters, or others. Well, did the diocese of Rochester respond to this invitation?

We have all heard of the growth of vocations in newly established orders: Legionaries of Christ, Confraternity of St. Peter, etc., etc. We have also heard the hand-wringing response from the chancery that none of these orders have initiated contact with the diocese. How's that for lack of energy? This diocese should be putting together incentive packages to lure these orders to Rochester, and aggressively pursue them. But that, of course, sounds too much like private sector business where some accountability for performance is expected.

What about any plans to seed and encourage the local community as a committed source for vocations to the priesthood? Aside from the obligatory petitions for vocations during the prayers of the faithful at Mass, there is little evidence at the parish level of any recruitment/development activity. Would young men even recognize our esteem for the priesthood in our conversations about or interaction with our priests?

Let's admit that all we ever hear about in the local church is the call for lay ministers; a rather Protestant solution to a self-induced problem. Our actual response toward the development of priestly vocations does indeed reflect the measure of zeal for our faith, our Eucharistic Faith. Can we really be proud of our efforts thus far?

W. Randolph Smith
Rochester

Appreciate paper's 'balanced view'

To the editors:

This letter is long overdue. Many times we have intended to write to you to support your ongoing effort to bring to our diocese a balanced view of the concerns which are part of the reality of our lives as American Catholics.

It is distressing as well as puzzling to read, again and again, the letters which reflect such a negative and mean-spirited attitude.

Pope John XXIII has often been quoted as having said that a second Vatican Council was needed to open the windows of the Church to let in fresh air. The documents of that council have been faithfully implemented by the Bishops of

Rochester.

We are very grateful that Bishop Clark has continued in that tradition.

The *Catholic Courier* informs, instructs and, encourages its readers in its total coverage. We would like to cite particularly, four writers we believe to be especially effective: Bishop Clark, Father McBrien, Sister Schoelles and, Father Shamon. Each reflects the Christian virtues: Faith, Hope, and Love as well as Joy — a virtue all too often lacking among some of our Catholic brethren.

Carry-on! You are doing a fine job.

Vincent and Eleanor Sementilli
Chemung Street
Corning

Courier should not print attacks on bishop

To the editors:

Enough is enough!
It is totally inappropriate, not to mention mean and misleading, to print letters criticizing Bishop Clark in the *Courier*.

To get real, he is the President of the paper. I admire his willingness to hear all sides of an issue, but letters knocking him in his own paper — that's too much.

To charge Bishop Clark with condoning a "form of new age Protestantism" (see Robert A. Martino letter in *Courier*, Oct. 31, 1996) is wild and irresponsible.

Our diocese has been blessed in the 20th century with a succession of fine

bishops. When the history of the diocese gets written up to date, I'm sure that Bishop Clark will be seen as one of our great bishops.

P.S. I have nothing to gain by my defense of the bishop. I'm retired and we're not making monsignors here anymore.

Father Robert J. Kanka
Hornell

EDITORS' NOTE: We certainly understand Father Kanka's point. But he overlooks the positive aspect, so to speak, of publishing letters both of praise and of criticism: Doing so alerts the entire community to what is being thought and said — and by whom.

Grateful for article about pro-life procession

To the editors:

I deeply appreciated Mike Latona's coverage of our Pro-Life Procession with Father Norman Weslin in the Oct. 24 issue of the *Catholic Courier* ("Pro-life march attracts hundreds"). I felt honored to be one of the 300-plus Catholics who ventured out in the driving rain. Bad weather could not dampen the tremendous dedication and enthusiasm felt in the procession.

As we stood up for the sacredness of life, peacefully praying and singing hymns in front of Planned Parenthood's Abortion Facility, chills went down my back. As one participant exclaimed, "I never been so proud to be a Catholic!" It was truly a beautiful witness for life and our Catholic Faith.

Thanks for the nice article!

Michael J. McBride
Fillingham Drive, Rochester