

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 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.

Courage fosters chaste friendships

To the editors:

In the *Catholic Courier* of Thursday Nov. 7, the article on "Ministry to homosexuals and their families" was interesting and informative.

The official teaching of the magisterium is very clear about the pastoral care of the person who has a homosexual orientation. The orientation is not sinful in itself but genital contact is sinful therefore celibacy is the only alternative for those who find homosexual orientation to be a permanent condition. Others may find that they can move on to a heterosexual commitment that culminates in marriage but for those who find their condition to be permanent then celibacy is the way to perfection but this does not mean that close friendships cannot be formed between those who have this orientation as long as they do not culminate in genital activity.

Therefore if Father Jim Callan and Father Robert Kennedy are talking about "gay unions or permanent commitments" with sexual activity being assumed in such "unions," then they are on the wrong track and not in conformity with the magisterium. However, if they mean by these "unions" and "commitments" chaste friendships then this is not only possible but necessary in a celibate Christian life



and should be encouraged and sustained in order to live lives that may serve as good examples to all of us on our way to eternal happiness. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states in paragraph 2359:

"Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can

and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection."

The organization called Courage is an excellent aid where homosexuals can meet and support one another according to the teaching of the Church. It was founded in 1980 by His Eminence Cardinal Terence Cooke, Archbishop of New York and continues to be sponsored by the Archdiocese of New York.

Father Donald G. Timone of Courage was visiting Rochester in the fall of 1994 and took the time to approach someone in the Pastoral Office of the Diocese of Rochester as to the establishment of a Courage chapter in Rochester. He received a reply to the effect that "at the present time we (the Rochester Diocese) are not interested."

The organization of Courage can be contacted at St. Michael's Rectory, 424 W. 34th St., New York, NY 10001 (212/421-0426). In my opinion this organization is needed in Rochester and could benefit many who are confused about their homosexual orientation and could provide a very needed meeting place where chaste friendships could be formed and support given in living in conformity with the teaching of the Church.

Gerard G. Klueber
Ellicott Street, Rochester

Suggests studying papal letter to families

To the editors:

Regarding your (article) of Nov. 7, "Ministry to homosexuals and their families," I see very little support given for the teachings of our Catholic faith — that all of us are called to live a chaste life. Your article briefly mentions Father John Harvey and the spiritual support group, COURAGE, which was founded in 1980 by Cardinal Cooke of New York. Father Harvey is the Founding Director of COURAGE and EnCOURAGE, helping Catholic men and women and their families, to live in accordance with the Catholic Church's pastoral teaching on homosexuality. Readers should be encouraged to contact them by writing: COURAGE, c/o St. Michael's Rectory, 424 West 34th St., New York, NY 10001.

Also, Dr. James Dobson, Focus on the Family, has a very helpful book, *Setting the Record Straight, What Research Really Says About the Social Consequences of Homosexuality*, by Larry Burtoft, Ph.D. Their address is: Colorado Springs, Colo. 80995. This book answers many questions that people ask.

I believe the *Catholic Courier* should spend some issues studying Pope John Paul's "Letter to Families," to promote the dignity of marriage and the family. In Paragraph 17, Family and Society, our Holy Father writes:

... Marriage, which undergirds the institution of the family, is constituted by the covenant whereby 'a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life,' and which 'of its own very nature is ordered to the

well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children.' Only such a union can be recognized and ratified as a 'marriage' in society. Other interpersonal unions which do not fulfill the above conditions cannot be recognized, despite certain growing trends which represent a serious threat to the future of the family and of society itself.

"No human society can run the risk of permissiveness in fundamental issues regarding the nature of marriage and the

family! Such moral permissiveness cannot fail to damage the authentic requirements of peace and communion among people. It is thus quite understandable why the Church vigorously defends the identity of the family and encourages responsible individuals and institutions, especially political leaders and international organizations, not to yield to the temptation of a superficial and false modernity."

Marian Buchheit
County Line Road, Webster

Homosexuals reject vulnerability in conscious choice of orientation

To the editors:

"A homosexual orientation, 'because not freely chosen, is not sinful'" states the U. S. Catholic Conference. I would have to respectfully disagree with this statement. It contradicts thinking of psychologists that sexual response is a function of our thinking or brain. Our thinking is a matter of choice.

Heterosexuality is a matter much greater than physiology. It is a vocation to image God as male or female. Homosexuality is a rejection of the vulnerability inherent in our masculine or feminine sexuality. Men are to form God in others and in the world directly through their initiatives as God forms human bodies and souls through his initiative. He responds to the woman's adulation by giving of all his natural and spiritual goodness to the woman and to the world.

The woman's role is to honor and to increase the man. The woman's continual receiving from the man in order to be fully woman corresponds to the eternal begetting of the Son from the Father. She receives her sexuality from the man just as Eve received her being from her husband's rib. She is able to share of her fullness which she receives, with her children and the world.

The man's vocation calls for more daring while the woman's is more vulnerable. Weak men can reject their role of subduing the earth and fashioning families according to God's plan. Very strong men disdain the more subordinate role of women. Very strong minded women can resent the more active vocation of men. Weak women can feel incapable of bear-

ing with the infidelities of men or like Christ suffering to redeem men. All of these are rejecting vulnerability as exemplified by Christ and entailed in authentic human sexuality.

We are formed by our choices. Those especially who have witnessed sin in their families or in the world can reject the vulnerability entailed in living the truth. May we by our joyful and sacrificial vocations to embrace the deepest meaning of human sexuality lead others to do the same.

Helen Ann Wagner
Lark Street, Rochester

Emotional reasoning can lead to sinfulness

To the editors:

Excerpts from the *Catholic Courier's* Nov. 7 article on ministry (to homosexuals): "I am in favor of the church allowing and promoting same-sex union because of the need to foster fidelity in the gay community. Fidelity is the heart of the Gospel" so asserts a local Catholic priest.

It's emotional, pragmatic and immoral, this type of advice can result in mortal sin or at best the near occasion of sin. Remember love the sinner hate the sin, but in order to forgive the sin the individual(s) must sin no more not perpetuate it.

We are replacing Catholic tradition and the Bible — Leviticus, Romans, and Timothy — with a make everyone feel good no matter the consequence philosophy. It's wrong and will not work.

Jim Myers
Gatewood Avenue, Rochester

Applauds initiative

To the editors:

I am sure that many Rochester families read with a great deal of interest the lead article in the Nov. 7 issue of the *Courier* ("Ministry to homosexuals and their families"). It is a welcome piece of news to know that the Diocese of Rochester has announced a formal collaboration with the Catholic Gay & Lesbian Ministry. Hopefully, this work will be of benefit to many.

I applaud Bishop Clark and the Ministry members on moving forward with this new initiative.

Pat Slimper
Barker Road, Pittsford