

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.

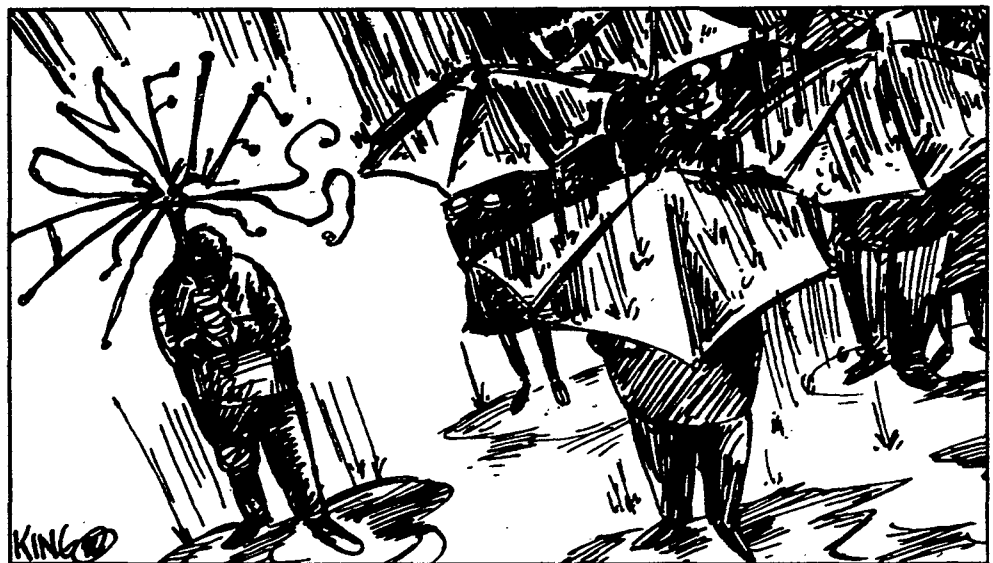
Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

There, but for grace of God ...

To the editors:

After reading the article by Rob Cullivan on the House of Mercy and the statement of Bishop Matthew in *Along the Way* (Jan. 9, pgs. 2-3) ... regarding thoughtful and creative ways to meet pastoral challenges, it appears that we are, once again, challenged as a local church and community of love to, as Pope John Paul II said in his speech on the Mall ("I Come As a Pilgrim," Washington, D.C., 1987 VIDEO) stand up for justice, stand up for the marginalized, stand up for the poor (paraphrased).

This is what Srs. Grace Miller and Rita Lewis (RSM) have been doing since the House of Mercy began its outreach ministry to the poorest of the poor of Rochester. They have been doctor, lawyer, nurse, counselor, nose wiper, advocate, peace maker, sister, friend to people who



desperately need them. Now we are challenged, once again to support and affirm them in their ministry! The community knows the extraordinary work these courageous sisters have done on their behalf. The community would consider it a tragedy if that work was not allowed to continue. And there, but for the grace of God, go each of us, as my father used to say.

In fact the House of Mercy saves community government and the taxpayer thousands of dollars each year by expediting

services from charitable organizations such as food, clothing, medicine, advocacy, etc. for the poor. If we had to foot that bill, we'd have a different attitude as to whether or not the House of Mercy should continue its stellar record of love and mercy to all who stand in need of God's mercy.

**Brother Augie Jackson, OSCO
Abbot of the Genesee, Piffard**

EDITORS' NOTE: As the Page 1 story this week indicates, it appears likely that the House of Mercy will be able to continue its ministry to Rochester's homeless.

We need to do more to oppose abortion

To the editors:

ABORTION, a terrible, hideous word. Abortion is the taking of innocent lives from the safety of a mother's womb as they are brutally murdered, yes MURDERED! There are 1 million, 400 thousand abortions each year. That is about 4000 abortions each day at hospitals and clinics. Hospitals are supposed to protect lives; how many perform abortions? We need to ask abortion clinics what they do with the bodies of these babies after an abortion. We need to open our eyes to the atrocities of abortion as seen in pictures of PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTIONS, we need to open our hearts and mouths and pray to God and we need to open our ears to hear the SILENT SCREAMS.

Every day, every week, every month and every year we are hearing more and more about protection of the unborn as people of all faiths, ethnic backgrounds and races are banding together to protect these innocent babies. People need to continue their non-violent protests against abortion, to pray to end abortion and to elect officials who are against abortion. This may not be popular on earth but certainly pop-

ular in heaven.

I would hate to think that an abortion performed 20 years ago would have snuffed out the life of a baby that would grown up to find a cure for AIDS or Muscular Dystrophy or cancer. Maybe this baby would have grown up to be the peacekeeper our world so desperately needs.

With all the education and intelligence in our society, why should ABORTION, the last resort, be chosen? If there needs to be a choice, choose life or choose not to get pregnant. Why do we have the mentality that because abortions are so easily obtained, why abstain or why be careful? We abstain from caffeine, nicotine, salt and fatty foods for our health. We are also careful and try to prevent injuries by wearing seat belts, safety shoes and safety glasses. We have burglar alarms to prevent thefts. Why don't we abstain or why aren't we careful to prevent the MURDER OF INNOCENT BABIES by abortion? Schools are telling students about 'save sex and safe sex'. Adults need to practice the ABC's of pregnancy - Abstain, Be Careful!

I am not trying to judge those who have had an abortion, they have their reasons.

However, when we receive our final judgment, how will we be judged by God, what will we say to God? How will we be judged for not praying to end abortion? How will we be judged for not praying for the mothers, fathers, families and innocent children touched by abortion? How will we be judged for not passing out pamphlets showing partial birth abortions? How will we be judged for not peacefully protesting in front of a killing clinic one time in our life? How will we be judged for not placing an anti abortion sticker on our car or van? How will we be judged for not letting our politicians know that we want them to be anti abortion candidates?

People talk about choice, what about choosing life, what about choosing adoption? Think of all the people waiting and wanting to adopt, their choice is to pray and wait. Put the past behind us, correct our mistakes, defeat the killing and let the babies live. One final thought - I wonder how many women and men are out there wishing they had a child to watch, to cuddle, to nurture, to protect, to adopt?

**Steve DeLucia Jr.
Webster**

Silence not always golden before, during Mass

To the editors:

I am writing in response to the letter by John Niziurski Jr. in the January 9 edition of the *Courier*. Mr. Niziurski is irritated by people talking before Mass, stating that it "shows a lack of respect" for the house of God. As Catholics we come together to celebrate the Liturgy as a parish ... a congregation ... a family. We don't (or at least shouldn't) come to quietly observe or say the rosary during Mass; but to participate fully, consciously and actively as a church in praising God. Private devotions are just that, done in private!

My church is one of those that is alive with conversation before (and after) every celebration. As I greet my fellow parishioners I can sense the warmth and familiarity that my 'parish family' has to offer. Talking,

laughing, plan-making and health up-dates (to quote Mr. Niziurski) allow me to give thanks and to make petitions on behalf of my 'parish family'. Hospitality and recognizing the individuals that make up our faith community is very important. Yes we are one body, but our differences are many. Ignoring those differences and our need to care for each other would be like inviting a guest over for dinner and then expecting them to remain silent throughout the meal. Silence is not necessarily a sign of respect, for many it could be one of fear. We are called to be active participants in our Liturgies. Active participation in anything naturally produces a more social atmosphere.

Recently a couple arrived at my church 40 minutes early for Mass. Our Pastoral Asso-

ciate greeted them and being a bit confused by their arrival time, asked if they were aware that Mass didn't begin until 11:30. They responded that yes they knew when Mass began and that they like to come early to listen to the choir practice! Our needs and desires are so different but all are welcome in God's house.

**Lori Osgood
Brower Road, Spencerport**

Efforts needed to attract priests

To the editors:

I totally agree with the letter from W. Randolph Smith printed in the Nov. 28 issue of the *Catholic Courier*. All of the initiative today seems to be directed at how we are going to get by without priests, and assumes there is nothing that can be done to correct the shortage. Our energy and initiative should be directed at how to attract men to the priesthood by finding the reasons why it isn't happening and eliminating them and by creating a positive plan to make it more appealing.

**Paul Olsen
Moorland Road, Rochester**

Bishop should write about other topics

To the editors:

In his weekly column, Bishop Clark often writes about his family, especially his nieces. While I admire his affection and devotion to his relatives, I do not find this topic particularly interesting or helpful in my daily living. In fact I was amazed when in a recent article he extolled the praises of one of his nieces meeting a male friend through the internet. As we have read re-

cently, this can result in some very unfortunate consequences and I am surprised that Bishop Clark condones and even encourages such a potentially dangerous practice. I hope that in the future the bishop can write mainly about inspiring lessons in life which could be more helpful to our spirits.

**Crusa Ferrera
Baxton Circle, Rochester**