

# OPINIONS

## Catholic Courier

©1997, Rochester Catholic Press Association.

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

### President

**Bishop Matthew H. Clark**

### General Manager/Editor

**Karen M. Franz**

### Editorial Department

#### Associate Editor

**Lee Strong**

#### Copy Editor/Staff Writer

**Kathleen Schwar**

*Finger Lakes*

#### Staff Writers

**Rob Cullivan**

*Genesee Valley*

**Mike Latona**

*Southern Tier*

#### Staff Photographer

**Matthew Scott**

### Business Department

#### Circulation Manager

**Jeanne A. Mooney**

#### Telemarketing Manager

**Lenna Hurley**

#### Office Manager

**Mary DiPonzio**

#### Secretary/Receptionist

**Donna Stubbings**

### Advertising Department

#### Advertising Director

**Ray Frey**

#### Account Executives

**Laura J. O'Loughlin**

**Loretta Lowans**

### Production Department

#### Graphics Manager

**Kim Parks**

#### Graphic Artist

**Zoe Woodruff**

## 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.

## More comments on our columnists

### True premises lead to false conclusion

#### To the editors:

It grieves me that there were objections to Dr. Patricia Schoelles' column of Dec. 5. When reading it, and upon re-reading several times, I was, and am, struck by the marvelous way in which she articulated what I myself have believed and have been unable to put into words. I urge your readers to open their minds, to go back and study the article and reflect upon it.

One writer postulated: Christ is the way, the TRUTH, and the Life. God is, was, and always will be. ERGO: Truth is unchanging!

Her premises are correct but she has arrived at a false conclusion to her syllogism. There is ABSOLUTE truth, such as she posited, but truth is not always absolute so we cannot say it is unchanging. There is a distinction and careful study of a good dictionary will illustrate the difference.

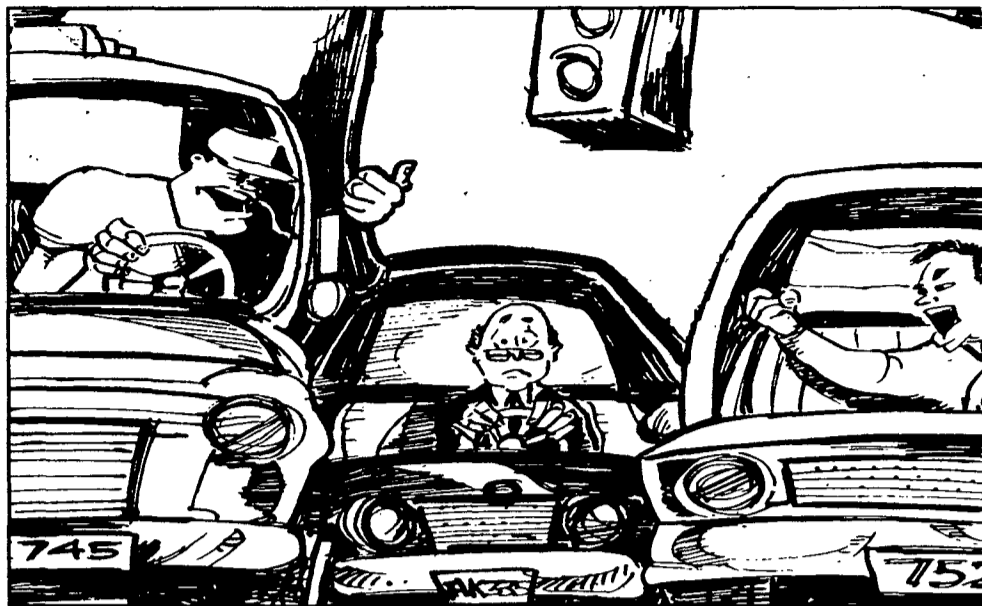
The faithful are the living body of the church, and change and growth are intrinsic to any living organism. Study church history. The popes — and magisterium — have erred in many instances. One example, within my own lifetime, was being told it was seriously sinful to attend a non-Catholic religious service, and Luther, Calvin and others were considered heretics. Now it has been said that Pope John Paul II will go down in history as the Pope who has done the most for ecumenism. Is he right? Or, were his predecessors?

If we are to believe Scripture, each of us has received the Holy Spirit through Baptism. Would we need the Spirit, with all of the Spirit's wonderful gifts, and our good minds, if God had not intended for us to use them? Of course, we are obliged to form right consciences, learning from the Church's wisdom, but balanced by what we prayerfully conceive as right for us and in accord with our own individual circumstances.

During this week in which I write, the daily Gospel readings have been from Mark. Read the first few chapters, especially about Jesus' healing on the Sabbath, and eating heads of wheat and holy bread when they were hungry. Jesus defied the law for the sake of the common good. I think we approach truth by trying to follow Christ's "WAY," compassionate and loving. We must ask ourselves: "What would Jesus think? What would Jesus say? What would Jesus do?" Sure, we might err. He who lived among us, though without sin, understands our human condition. He is pleased when He knows we try.

Be not afraid! God will not abandon us!

**Grace B. Carnes**  
Eagle Ridge Circle, Rochester



## Never saw 'blast' in Courier

#### To the editors:

First of all I am an avid reader of the *Courier*, and I was especially interested in the letters to the editor (in the) Jan. 9 issue.

I totally concur with reader (Mildred A.) McAnany ("Please continue presenting balanced, informative views") on the continuation of Father Richard McBrien's column each week. Secondly over the years I have read various comments such as those stated by reader (Joseph) Wasilewski. In my honest opinion, reader Wasilewski is either "reading" something into each article, prefers to come to his own conclusion on matters of teachings and interpretations, or just totally dislikes Father McBrien for his straight forward views and opinions.

I do not believe that Father McBrien is trying to mislead or misguide any reader, but rather, is giving the reader the opportunity to have, as they say, both sides of the story. In today's society, with the educational levels higher than they have been in the past, we look forward to honest opinions and answers to many questions that for years our parents and grandparents took for granted, and never challenged the decisions of our church leaders. Today's society is still respectful of our church and its leaders, but the world and its society is and continues to change. What Father McBrien presents in some of his articles, is an honest and truthful view, and the question "is there a legitimate reason why we cannot consider this or that change?"

As the reader, I may or may not always agree with an article, whether it be written by Father McBrien or any other author, but what I have never read in the *Courier*

is a blast against Pope John Paul II or against our church leaders, wherever they may be. What we do have, as all of us are "the church," is the right to ask questions, and seek answers to why certain decisions were or were not made, hopefully benefiting the full communion of our Catholic community. I like to read the opinion of others, and I enjoy the weekly columns of Father McBrien. Keep them coming!!!

**Anthony M. Gramza**  
Peak Hill Drive, Rochester

## Remove hands blocking collars

#### To the editors:

Congratulations! You finally have found a columnist, unafraid or unashamed, to wear a Roman collar — Father Eugene Hemrick.

Richard McBrien prefers the four-in-hand. Father Albert Shamon prefers to cover his with his fist.

Our leader — Bishop Matthew Clark — covers his with both hands.

Maybe things are brightening — now if we can get our sisters into the habit — well. May God bless you.

**Joseph B. Shinal**

Shamrock Avenue, Seneca Falls

**EDITORS' NOTE:** In the cases of Bishop Clark and Father Shamon, the choice of poses was the photographer's, not the subjects'. We hope to obtain better photos in the near future.

## Don't compromise the truth for unity

#### To the editors:

In response to Father R.P. McBrien's column of Jan. 9, I wish to react by saying: When has Pope John Paul II not been gracious?

We must remember that Martin Luther was not a great man. Yes, very intelligent and wrote many good things. He was not great because he wasn't humble or obedient.

We cannot compromise the truths of Catholicism for "unity."

**Helen Shultz**  
Main Street, Newfield

## Name change due?

#### To the editors:

After reading this week's "Along the Way" column by Bishop Clark, Rev. Richard McBrien's "Essays on Theology" and the periodic essay of Sister Patricia Schoelles, I'm convinced that your paper is well over due for a name change. Instead of *Catholic Courier*, I propose *The Devil's Advocate*.

**Michael P. Valerio**  
Malin Lane, Penfield

## Schoelles is not a 'fringe scholar'

#### To the editors:

Your "Opinion Page" for Jan. 16, featuring letters from readers reacting to recent articles by Dr. Patricia Schoelles, SSJ, presents a distorted picture of reader response. Blame the inertia of those of us who take her excellence for granted.

Sister Patricia Schoelles earned her doctorate in theology from the University of Notre Dame with distinction. She has earned as well the admiration and appreciation of hundreds of students, professional colleagues in a variety of fields, and other deeply thoughtful persons nationwide. She is no "fringe scholar." I can assure your readers. Her faith reflections in the *Catholic Courier* offer a valuable opportunity to follow the workings of a keen intellect rooted in a deep Christian faith.

Readers who question her orthodoxy should recall some recent declarations by Pope John Paul II, which by their standards would be "heretical" as well. Two years ago the Holy Father exonerated the condemned and excommunicated scientist Galileo. Yes, Cardinal Bellarmine and

both 17th century Popes involved were actually wrong! More recently, the Holy Father asserted at a meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences that "Today, new knowledge leads us to recognize that the theory of evolution is more than a hypothesis." New knowledge enlarges our understanding of the truth, and requires that we change some of our formulations of it as a result. Sister Patricia's approach could not be more orthodox. Or are we issuing "walking papers" to the Holy Father as well?

It could be argued that the mindset and influence of Mother Angelica is dangerous, although for quite different reasons. But this does not give me — or anyone else — the right to "clobber" her. She is entitled to courtesy and respect from those who thoroughly disagree with her, as well as from her supporters. But since she herself is unlikely to point this out, I take the trouble to do so, in the interests of civility and fair play.

**Marion A. Hctor, SSJ**  
Waldo Avenue, Rochester