

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.

Children don't need to know it all

To the editors:

Words to a lovely, old song, usually heard at Christmas time, "toyland, joyland, little girl and boy land...once you leave its portals, you can ne'er return again." We grandparents and parents have long been fighting a losing battle to preserve the innocence and the "childhood" of our children.

We all know how the ugliness of the world has risen to unbelievable heights of prominence and dominance via TV, books, magazines, movies, schools, streets, etc. we elders have tried to hold back the tide from engulfing our little ones, young ones, impressionable ones.

Imagine the shock we received when entering the vestibule of our church the other day to see a poster publicizing, advertising a Mass for gays, lesbians and their families, friends to be presided over by no less a personage than our Bishop.

In no way, shape or manner am I judging these people or the ministry to them, but I protest vehemently that the freedom to choose when to bring up this subject to the minds of those entrusted to our care has been torn from our hands.

A habit of perusing the posters, notices, announcements pinned up on the walls of vestibules does not allow us time to shield the eyes of those so trustingly following us closely. Curiosity aroused, questions asked and, as my dear, departed mother used to say, the cat's out of the

bag. It's an in your face to the strong belief that we have had good reasons to keeping the cat in the bag and we'll determine when to bring it out.

For a long time, for many Christmas seasons, I have wept whenever I heard that song and now, that last bastion of defense, that haven of peace, that partner in training our children in the way we would have them go has horribly failed

us. Our church has thrown open the door for all to see and know that which should not be seen and known by everyone. Better our Bishop should celebrate a Requiem for shattered, lost innocence, for destroying that joyland of little girl and boy land.

Catherine B. Yankton
Hoffman Street
Auburn

Prays bishop will reconsider

To the editors:

Do Rochester Catholics have reason to be concerned over Bishop Clark's public demonstration of an "open attitude toward including and honoring gay and lesbian people at a special Mass here in the Rochester Diocese"?

To welcome all people — prostitutes, fornicators, and homosexuals is the right thing to do, but the welcome should be a qualified welcome. They should all be asked to join with us in our community worship — but they and we must also make definite commitments to leave that lifestyle behind. However, if Bishop Clark's "welcoming" of gays and lesbians is an unqualified welcome, as it appears, without concern over whether their intent is to continue to engage in homosexual practices, Catholics in the Rochester Dio-

cese have grave reason for concern.

There was once such a thing as RIGHT and WRONG. The Bible teaches this, and our Church taught it. Is this Diocese drifting into the deceitful culture of fewer and fewer WRONGS?

The comments I have read and heard lead me to believe that Bishop Clark is responding to political pressure from liberals for the unconditional acceptance that most gays and lesbians demand with their "in your face" tactics. The Bishop's approval does not bode well for the future of our church in the Rochester Diocese. I had expected better from Bishop Matthew Clark and I pray that he will reconsider the wrongful danger of what he is doing.

Paul Cannon
Sherri Ann Lane, Rochester

Hospice article brought back fond memories of home parish

To the editors:

Recently the *National Catholic Reporter*, an independent Catholic newsweekly out of Kansas City, Mo., featured a two-page article on the rare parish-run hospice at my native Corpus Christi Church in Rochester ("Parish-sponsored hospice: a home where dying is a vital part of life").

To read it, for me, was to begin to revel in memories; for it was there that I was baptized 79 years ago this month, received my First Communion, was confirmed, said my First Mass, and officiated at the funerals of my parents and loved ones.

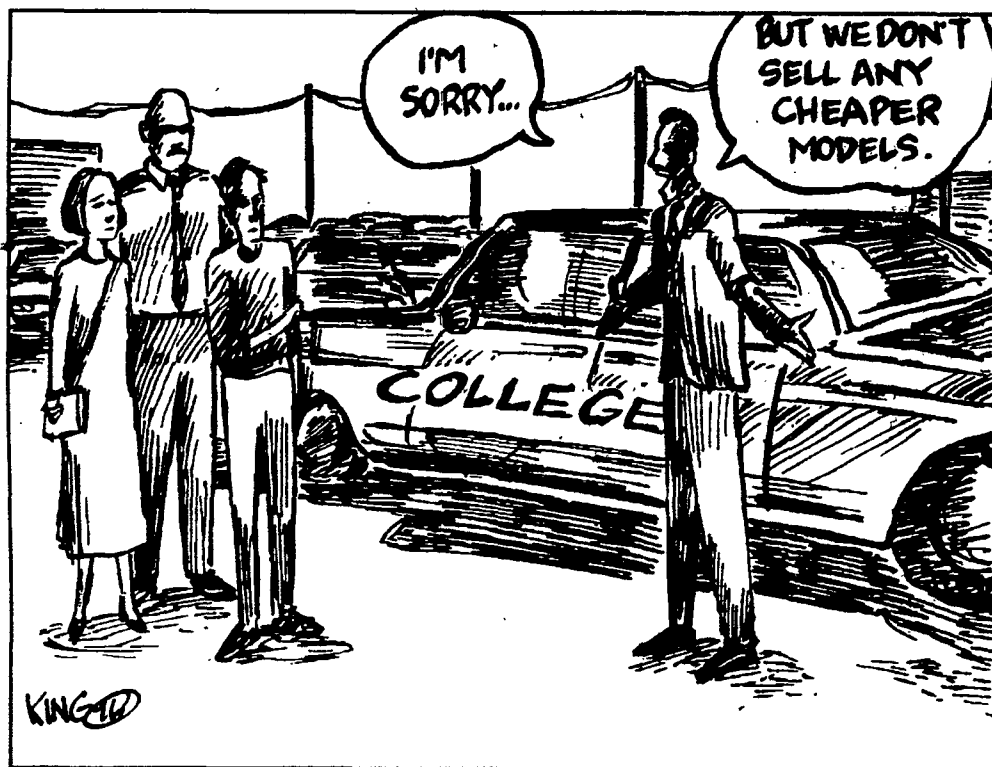
To it now I take my wife each year to experience something of its present wondrous dynamism.

My old parish on East Main Street, like the larger church, has undergone seismic changes from the parish of my youth, when everything seemed tidy, well ordered and comfortably organized.

Today not alone is it rare, "very, very rare," in the words of a national official, for its sponsorship of a hospice, but it is also unusual for its number of ministries: to the sick poor, the dying, the homeless, ex-convicts, the disabled, the alienated, the needy at home and abroad, gays and lesbians — whom then I had never heard of — and others.

Unlike other parishes, which suffer the sickness, retirement, or death of their pastors, Corpus Christi, according to its bulletin, has as pastor Jesus Christ, assisted as of old by a woman and a charismatic administrator, Father Jim Callan, whose only motto seems to be "Inclusiveness in Christ."

E. Leo McMannus
Sail Pointe Circle
Venice, Florida



Quality education, parental role key to success of Catholic schools

To the editors:

In honor of Catholic Schools Week (Feb. 9-14, when this letter was received), I would like to take this opportunity to share with your readers why I chose Catholic education for my children, particularly St. Michael School in Newark.

I was raised in the Catholic Church and have always wanted the same for my children. When my first child was born, I almost immediately began thinking about his education and knew that St. Michael School would be the school of choice.

My husband, however, a non-Catholic, was not so sure. I think a lot of people have a misconception about Catholic schools and picture "nuns and rulers" instead of the quality education the children receive.

My husband agreed to at least tour the school and talk to some of the administration and after being there for a very short time, readily agreed that this would be where our children receive their beginning education. Now, I am not putting down public schools but I have seen a lot of kids having problems and the public school system has failed them miserably.

The kids lack respect for teachers, fellow students, and themselves.

At St. Michael School, the kids are taught to love and respect God, their family, and most important, themselves. The school has a policy that all families put in volunteer time through the year, so families are constantly involved with the students. The kids seem to thrive on the knowledge that their parents are a part of their education.

St. Michael School, under the direction of Principal Kathy Peters, is an accredited New York State School and follows New York State curriculum as well as Diocesan curriculum. The school is a member of the National Catholic Education Association and the Catholic Administrator's Association of New York State. There are many extra-curricular activities at St. Michael's, including sports!

If you are considering Catholic education for your family, feel free to contact the school office with your questions at 315/331-2297.

Susan Clemons
Charlotte Street
Newark