

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.

'Neutering' plan shows absurdity, arrogance

To the editors:

"Reductio ad absurdum" is about the only term I can use to describe the all-out attempt by diocesan leaders to neuter the language used in so many of the churches of this diocese so that we no longer will recognize male or female — even though God made us that way — in the written word, by deliberately forcing "inclusive language" upon us every time we have any contact with the church.

We have already witnessed how these leaders have altered their writing styles and set up a Synod Goal so as to accommodate this great work, and we have heard them preach the "Word of God" from their pulpits in a language never before known to man until recent years.

Incidentally, even though I am opposed to the teaching of Ebonics, I do believe that, as a language, it is in a better position to justify itself than is this neutered English which our Catholic liturgists spout so frequently.

Be that as it may, the latest piece of neutering has appeared in the newsletter of my home parish.

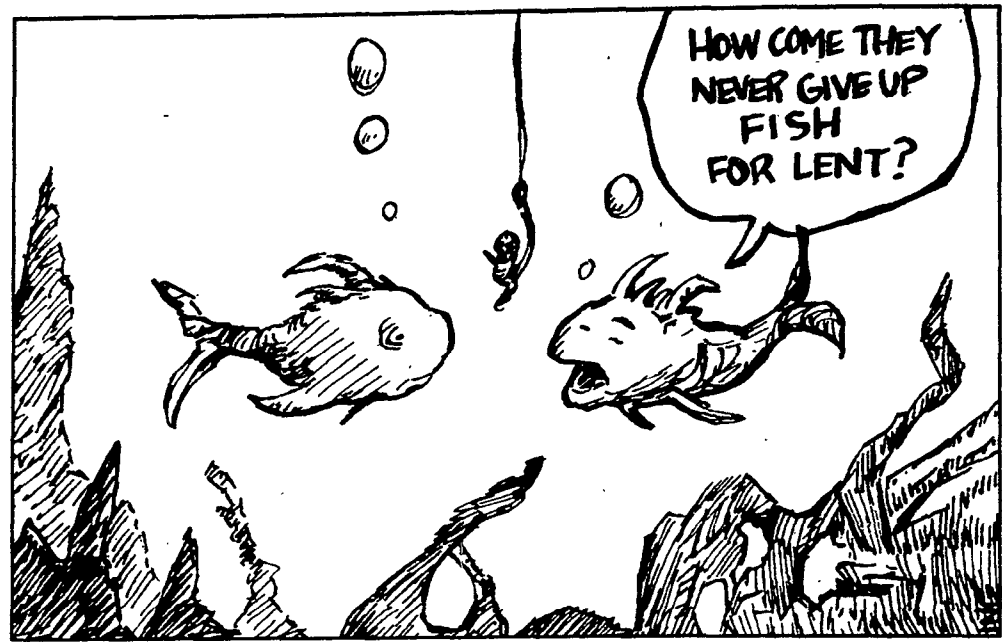
In one of its articles, these self-appointed guardians of the English language had the audacity not only to censor the wording of an encyclical by our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, but what is worse, they had the gall to admit parenthetically that they had done so as to make it conform to the new rules of "inclusive language!"

What right they had they to censor and neuter a teaching message of the Vicar of Christ is beyond me, but then, why not? They have already censored the very Word of God as it appears in the Scriptures, so I guess the pope must learn to conform, just as God has.

However, all of this just proves how really inane the whole business is.

More than this, it makes me wonder if the emphasis on men, fathers, and sons which is so evident in the Old Testament, as well as St. Paul's admonition to husbands and wives in the New Testament, wasn't God's way of preparing the generations of today for this very assault by the liturgical neuterists, who would tear down the natural order of things as He had designed them, and set up their own in defiance of Him. Only time will tell.

George A. Goodwin, Jr.
Laredo Drive
Rochester



Current statistics bode ill for non-celibate priesthood

To the editors:

Msgr. Shannon thinks it is time diocesan priests set aside the charism of celibacy in order to better serve God's people ("Is it time...?" *Catholic Courier*, Jan. 30).

With all due respect I seriously doubt that our age is the best to load either vocation with additional freight. After all, more than half of all marriages fail, whether Catholic or non-Catholic. In the recent past more and more priests are bailing out, many of them because of celibacy.

Today, what we need in the priestly line are not just more men but men more dedicated than in the past. Men who can fight the call of the world, and uphold the teaching of Jesus the great High Priest, while leading their flocks to heaven. Men who actively support their brother priests through prayer, advice and good example. Men, who "by preserving virginity or celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (are) consecrated in a new and excellent way to Christ... They are less en-

cumbered in their service of His Kingdom and of the task of heavenly regeneration. In this way they become better fitted for a broader acceptance of fatherhood in Christ" (Vatican II document "On the Ministry and Life of Priests" n.16). We need men who realize, as one seminary professor put it, that if they fail as priests, it is because they first failed as men.

Similarly, we need married fathers who realize that if they fail their wives it is because they first failed as sons to the eternal Father.

To attempt to blend priesthood and marital fatherhood is to burden both vocations to the point of certain rupture. Moreover, married priesthood as the norm for Latin Rite Catholics will destroy that unity to which we all aspire. What we finally will arrive at is a Catholicism as fissiparous as definitional Protestantism.

Jan E. Fredericks
Birr Street
Rochester

Celibacy proposal 'out of kilter'

To the editors:

Msgr. William H. Shannon's letter (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 30) urges the abandonment of the Church's present discipline of celibacy for priests of the Latin Rite. The problem with his proposal is that it is out of kilter with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and all the Popes of this century. The Second Vatican Council whose teachings are supposed to be implemented — not abandoned — for the sake of real renewal of the Church, praised, recommended and reinforced the Church's present discipline. In no way did the Ecumenical Council desire optional celibacy for priests of the Latin rite — see its "Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests," 16.

As the central document of the Council *Lumen Gentium* noted, it is "the Church's holiness that is fostered in a special way" by priests who are faithful to its teachings and desire. "Towering among the counsels of Christ is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the Father (cf. Mt. 19:11; 1 Cor. 7:7) to devote themselves to God alone more easily with an undivided heart (cf. 1 Cor. 7:32-34) in virginity or celibacy. This perfect continence for love of the kingdom of heaven has always been held in high esteem for the Church as a sign and stimulus of love, and as a singular source of spiritual fertility in the world." (L.G., 42)

James Likoudis
South Genesee Street, Montour Falls

Revising scriptural language reduced impact of 'Visitation'

To the editors:

The "new" interpretations of Scripture are made with the intention of clarifying words or passages — but I think sometimes the real meaning can be lost in the process; take the following, for example.

During the season of Advent — in the readings at Mass we heard about the Angel's Annunciation to Mary, and then her Visitation to her "aged" cousin Elizabeth, who, as the Angel told Mary, was in her sixth month of pregnancy.

The two meet, and as the "new" version reads, "...when Elizabeth saw Mary, the child stirred in her womb." What a let-down from the "old" interpretation — what a difference in meaning!

Children begin to "stir" before the sixth month — the first time bringing amazement, and all those that follow, a gentle feeling of wonder. So, for Elizabeth's child

to just "stir" at this particular moment was not something happening for the first time, but something with which Elizabeth was already familiar.

The "old" interpretation read, "...the child leapt in her womb"! What a difference between "stirred" and "leapt"! This was a momentous occasion for both mothers and their children. Elizabeth and her

son were in the presence of God and His mother and they both rose to the occasion — John with his "leap" of joy and Elizabeth with her greeting of wonder, "...who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Betty DeBlasio
West Hill Road
Elmira

Commends bishop for advice on leisure time

To the editors:

A reader has suggested that the Bishop write on other topics than his nieces and ways to improve our living.

To me, the Bishop's column reflects the thinking of a spiritual man who knows how to use his time wisely in these days of frenetic life styles.

I recommend to the readers of the *Catholic Courier* the slim book written by Joseph Pieper entitled "Leisure: The Basis of Culture." Surely, the Bishop is displaying needed leadership in showing us how he spends his leisure time.

Tom Fogarty
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