

# 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.

## The fears of a mother

**EDITORS' NOTE:** Our letters policy bars publication of anonymous submissions unless 1) they provide otherwise unobtainable information of critical public interest, and 2) their authors would suffer serious consequences if their identities were revealed.

The following essay came to us through Mary Ellen and Casey Lopata of the Catholic Gay and Lesbian Family Ministry. Since it is a personal reflection rather than a statement of opinion, it falls outside our policy for letters. Yet we believe the essay provides a uniquely personal perspective that - without the veil of anonymity - could be presented only at great cost to the author and her family.

...

I have a son. When I think of him, I smile. He is a joy: intelligent, compassionate, a good listener, full of life and fun, with an ability to make and keep friends. His nieces and nephews light up when he's around, for he listens to them and plays with them, relishes their company.

He is a son any mother would be proud to have.

Some time ago, this son came to me and said, "Mom, I need to talk to you."

Every parent gets icicles down their spine when an older child says those words. It is never going to be something you want to hear. Never.

We sat together, in a room apart from the rest. "Mom, I think I'm gay," he told me. My world shredded.

I found myself saying and then believing, "If you are gay,

### GUEST REFLECTION

then God has created you gay and you must be true to the person He has created you to be."

We talked for an hour or so and he shared his agony with me, his unsureness, his grief. "One of the hardest things to deal with is the idea of never having a family, never having children. I always thought I would meet a woman I would love, we would marry and raise a family. I love kids."

My son is still searching for answers, still not certain of his orientation but very sure of the high cost of being homosexual in this society of ours. And I still say to him, "Find out who God created you to be. You must be true to who you really are. Talk to people you trust, to people who are knowledgeable."

I am fearful for this young man I love and respect, fearful of the price he may have to pay, fearful of the losses and cruelty he faces. He did not become someone else to me when he shared this information with me. He is the same good human being he always was.

So I say to people quick to rush to judgment, quick to condemn: Look at your own children, look at them well. This son gave no indication, fits no stereotype. He is well adjusted, well liked, a contributor to our world. He certainly did not choose to be gay, if indeed he is. And I, for one, do not think God made a mistake when He created him.

What if YOUR son or daughter came to you and spoke the words, "Mom, Dad, I'm gay"?

## Doubts provocative acts occur only at fringe

**To the editors:**

Bishop Clark's "Along the Way" column of Feb. 27 invites responses to questions he poses regarding his celebration of Mass for gays and lesbians. From my perspective I offer the following:

Yes, I accept the Church's distinction between homosexual tendency and activity. I also would assume that the congregation at the Cathedral Mass would include predominantly homosexuals and supporters who are seizing the opportunity offered by the Bishop to have Catholics accept their orientation. The occasion offers another forum for their widespread and energetic activism for

recognition. I would not indulge in judgment of the moral condition of heterosexuals present but would inquire as to their motivation, which I would expect to be quite variable.

I have been aware of the Catechism's statement that homosexuals do not choose their condition. I am also aware that the Catechism states that "its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained," an important consideration; "their acts are contrary to the natural law;" "their acts are of grave depravity;" "under no circumstances can they be approved;" and "homosexual persons are called to chastity."

Regarding the U. S. Bishop's statement, I do not find it particularly helpful since it is restrictive and limited to one specific characteristic at the expense of any number of others. The descriptive "introduction" scenario described by Bishop Clark appears rather implausible and strains credulity. It is purely conjectural.

I have had neither association nor knowingly worked with homosexuals and can offer no reaction as to subsequent revelation except surprise and disappointment. My knowledge and reaction to homosexuals stems from the numerous reports and evidence of their activities - gay pride days and marches; AIDS; nude, obscene parades disparaging the Catholic Church; desecration of the Sacred Host; special bath houses for their activities; and provocative newspapers published in support of their lifestyle - hardly conducive to acceptance and fraternization. They are so prevalent that they cannot be considered as the extreme fringe of the group.

The questionable element involved in the discussion appears to be the overemphatic placed upon the "compassionate" attitude expressed at the expense of the moral rectitude encompassing spiritual rehabilitation. One wonders why the diocese does not promote the efforts of the organization called Courage, founded by Father John Harvey - a spiritual support group of Catholic homosexuals who desire to free themselves of their homosexual activities. It would appear to be an ideal rehabilitation option. The absence of such an organization creates the impression that spiritual restoration is fruitless. Courage has proven otherwise. For those desirers of conversion, there is Courage - for those content with their condition there is "common ground" conversation.

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Horseheads

## Divine inspiration provided 'knowledge' for Bible writers

**To the editors:**

In response to Msgr. William H. Shannon's article in the opinion page of the March 6 edition of the *Catholic Courier* ("Don't seek Scripture's counsel on homosexuality").

I commend the Bishop in reconciling with the homosexuals. After all we are to "love the sinner but hate the sin." But his approach and stand on the issue has diluted the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is ultimately causing much controversy and division in the Diocese. In response to Msgr. William H. Shannon's opinion on the matter, I would just remind the monsignor on a few things he had stated. In his statement, and I quote, "The biblical writers knew absolutely nothing of a homosexual condition that was not chosen, but given." The biblical writers were inspired by God through His Holy Spirit. So I am sure monsignor that they had full knowledge of homosexuality. To refresh your memory a little from

the Old Testament, the book of Leviticus 18:22 "you shall not lie with a male as with a woman; such a thing is an ABOMINATION." An abomination in God's eyes is something that He does not want to look at. In the New Testament, St. Paul in his letter to the Romans 1:26-28, says "For this cause God has given them up to shameful lusts; for their women have exchanged the natural use for that which is against nature, and like manner the men also, having abandoned the natural use of the woman, have burned in their lusts one toward another, men doing shameful things and receiving in themselves the fitting recompense of the perversity." Are we becoming a Church where the feeling is, never mind God, if it makes you feel good its all right? Let us not come to a point where Sacred Scripture becomes diluted and or polluted, after all it is the WORD OF GOD.

Pat Marcello Sr.  
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## Accept the individual, but also encourage change

**To the editors:**

We are called by the Lord to love all our brothers and sisters. Bishop Clark demonstrated that with a special Mass for the homosexual community. In reading his "Along the Way" column and the interview on the following page, I read a lot about acceptance. However, I saw nothing to admonish this behavior or to suggest it is possible to change.

There are many groups that work for a long-term reversal of the homosexual ori-

entation with a success ratio of up to 75 percentage. For your information here are a few:

1. Exodus International, PO Box 2121, San Rafael, Calif. 94912, (415)454-1017
2. His Heart Ministries, PO Box 12321, Aurora, Colo. 80011, (303)369-2961
3. Courage, St. Michael's Rectory, 424 W. 34th St., New York, N.Y. 10001, (212)421-0426
4. Freedom Ministries, PO Box 12189, Des Moines, Iowa 50312, (515)255-9902

5. Homosexuals Anonymous, PO Box 7881, Reading, Pa. 19603, (610)376-1146

For the family of a homosexual, there is support for you also:

Spatula Ministries, PO Box 444, La Habra, Calif. 90631

We must not only show acceptance of the individual, but also, reach out to that person with hope and help.

Howard Enkling  
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Owego