

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 Schwarz
Finger Lakes
Staff Writers
Rob Cullivan
Genesee Valley
Mike Latona
Southern Tier

Staff Photographer
Matthew Scott

Photography Intern
Kerry Huller

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

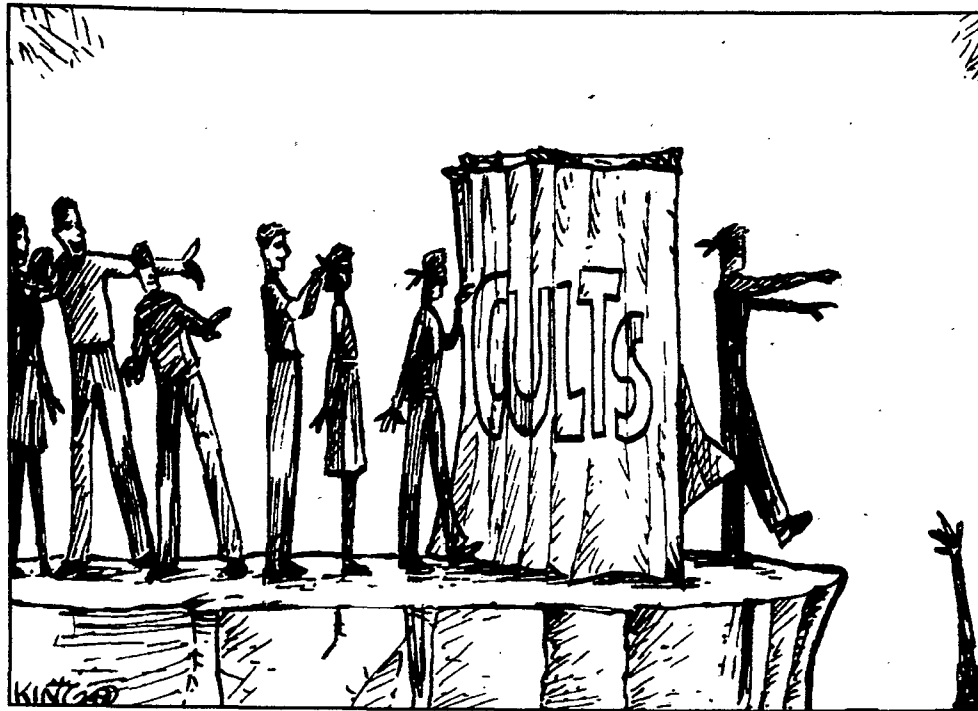
Letters Policy

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.



Stress on 'mother's charism' undercuts teaching of values

To the editors:

I hesitate to liken the Church of this day to a single-parent family, but it would seem that in our priests we have the charism of motherhood rather than fatherhood. Not surprisingly what has happened in society is following in the Church. The feminine virtues of mercy, gentleness and compassion are omnipresent and witnessed particularly in preaching and confessional roles. If one reads the Sermon on the Mount however, one sees that Christ challenged people to the extremes of their humanity. His words were demanding — and even threatening. Human flesh and blood would have to be fully enlisted in the quest for holiness.

The approach of most in the Church today unwittingly dichotomizes nature and grace. That every human effort is required of us if grace is to be fully effective is neglected. We have Mass without the preaching of virtue. My children are almost never taught virtue in homilies. Yet nowhere is this dichotomy more evident

than in the Sacrament of Penance. The paltry penances which are given do not instruct or admonish. Not surprisingly — given the complementarity of nature and grace — my children, my husband and I see no effect in our lives from our reception of this sacrament. Habits of sin cannot be broken absent a daily regimen of reparation each time the sin is committed.

The pastoral psychologists of this century naively espoused that a habit of sin usually lessens culpability. This discarded the teaching of centuries that factors such as knowledge and duration increase the sin. One can be gaining in knowledge of the evil effects, and of the inspiration of grace all the while the sin endures. A sin as part of a habit, thereby may be more rather than less culpable.

Common sense — that gracious endowment of nature to both mothers and fathers — balance and zeal ought accompany our sacramental life.

Helen Ann Wagner
Lark Street, Rochester

Liberals, conservatives must open minds to gain each others' wisdom

To the editors:

In reading the Letters To The Editor in this paper I have become very discouraged; discouraged by what I read and discouraged with myself. It has become apparent to me that no matter which side of an issue I may lean toward, the other side has something to teach me as well.

You may think by this statement that I am wishy-washy but I do not think that this is the case. I believe that I have very strong opinions on the issues being discussed but if I don't try to see the other side I fail to get the whole picture and then my opinions lack wisdom. A bumper sticker I saw the other day stated, "A mind is like a parachute — it works best when

it's open."

Yes — liberals can learn from conservatives and conservatives can learn from liberals. Both extremes have part of the truth. Together we are the Body of Christ.

Much has been written about the recent Mass for the gay and lesbian community. What's next, perhaps a liturgy for prostitutes and tax collectors? It reminds me of a man I read about who lived 2,000 years ago. As I recall, the scribes, Pharisees and other righteous people of his time really took care of him! You see, he was too far ahead of his time. We still haven't caught up.

George J. Henkel
Colonial Village Road, Rochester

Hospital stay highlighted priest's influence

To the editors:

Too often, we as parishioners take for granted the extraordinary men who we are blessed to have as our Priests! I am a parishioner at St. Paul of the Cross Church in Honeoye Falls and although I've always felt the love Father (Lawrence A.) Gross has for all of us, I didn't realize the impact he has had on my life until he told us he was scheduled for surgery and would be out for six to eight weeks! At first, I felt scared for him, but then I also started feeling scared for myself — lost. That's when I realized how much Father Gross has done for my husband and I and our four children!

As he went into surgery, I certainly felt the "power of prayer." The telephone operator at the hospital was amazed at the volume of calls coming in to check on Father's condition. It is incredible how many people have been influenced by Father's love and generosity!

As we enter Holy Week, let us not only thank God for His truly extraordinary Son but also for these amazing men who minister to us in His name. Happy Easter Father Gross! We miss you.

Bharti Dunne
West Bloomfield Road, Honeoye Falls
EDITORS' NOTE: A backlog of letters prevented earlier publication of this message.

Insulting charge may reduce help for poor

To the editors:

The March 13 article in the *Catholic Courier* regarding welfare reform ("Outreach experts criticize reforms") quotes Sister Grace Miller, RSM as saying, "It's about time that we as a people, did something about the wealthy and the powerful who run this land and make the rich richer and the poor poorer."

Such an all inclusive statement is biased, inaccurate, and non-Christian. I am surprised that a person who represents a fine religious order as the Sisters of Mercy perceives all leaders and successful people as non-caring people.

Working hard and success is not a crime. In fact most leaders and successful people are caring and sensitive to the needs of the poor.

Those who have time in their schedules to picket, while others are at work paying taxes to ensure money is available for the poor, need to be reminded that many leaders and successful people care about the poor and help in various ways.

If Sister Grace Miller, RSM, wishes to be a representative and role model of her religion and order, then I suggest she make accurate statements.

A proper Christian statement would be to appeal to all leaders and more fortunate people to help the less fortunate and needy as God would want us to do.

Sister Grace Miller, RSM, must think she is doing good in her current role. I believe she is doing just the opposite by irritating those many, many people who care and help.

Anne and Dr. Roger Ciccarelli
Hibiscus Drive, Rochester

Disputes Mass outline

To the editors:

I am writing you today regarding Margaret M. Joyn's letter to the editors of March 20 which is in grave error. She states: "The Mass — which has three main parts, Scripture, Consecration and Communion..."

As a believing Catholic I was always taught the Mass has four main Parts: Communion, In Him; Thanksgiving, from Him; Commemoration, of Him; and Sacrifice, by Him.

In Christ all four Mysteries of the Divine Liturgy are completed and accomplished. Read Pope John Paul II sequel to *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* which is called *Gift and Mystery*. This is what the world let go of, "Mystery." This book was another Gift He gave to us believing Catholics on His 50th Anniversary ordained a Priest Nov. 1st, 1946.

Bernice Kleinhammer
Laurelton Road, Rochester

Thank station for Mass

To the editors:

The Sunday Mass for shut-ins on television Channel 10 Sunday mornings is a longtime service of the Daily Mass League. This comforting weekly half hour is organized by Father Thomas Mull, who deserves much credit for this dedication to it.

Thanks are due to the various celebrants, deacons, lectors, cantors and servers who celebrate this Mass.

We must not take this program for granted. I suggest mailing a word of appreciation to the program director of Channel 10 WHEC-TV (191 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14604). As a recent temporary shut-in I have written my letter of thanks.

Father Raymond G. Heisel
Mt. Read Boulevard, Rochester