

# 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. Anonyms 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.

## A good neighbor celebrates 150 years

In the April 17 edition of the *Catholic Courier*, we honored priests, religious, deacons and married people celebrating jubilees this year.

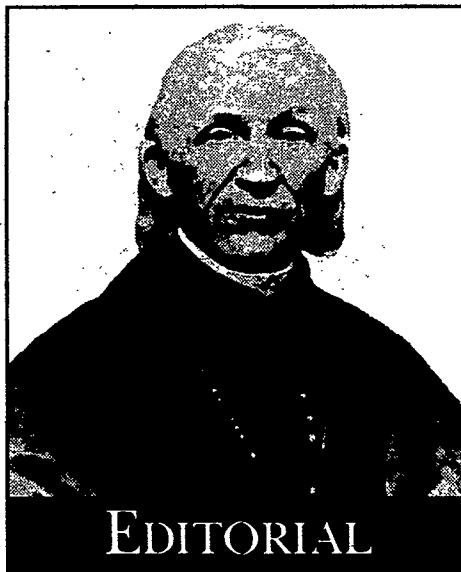
Now it's time we pay tribute to a neighbor.

On April 23, the Diocese of Buffalo celebrated its 150th anniversary.

Beyond neighborliness, the anniversary is significant to the Diocese of Rochester as our diocese was formed out of the Buffalo Diocese in 1868. And Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Tioga counties remained a part of the Buffalo Diocese until 1896. Thus we share some common history.

Bishop John Timon (1847-67), the first bishop of Buffalo, even stopped to visit Rochester before his official installation — celebrating Mass at the old St. Patrick's Church Oct. 22, 1847, while en route to Buffalo from New York City.

Bishop Timon was to return repeatedly to the future Rochester Diocese. He spoke, gave retreats and helped to dedicate new church buildings and parishes — some 34 parishes were formed here during his years. St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester was also established during his tenure as Buffalo's



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ordinary. In addition, he helped to bring the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Religious Sisters of Mercy and the School Sisters of Notre Dame to the diocese.

After Bishop Timon died in 1867 and the two dioceses were separated in 1868, the four Southern Tier counties remained part of Buffalo.

Under Bishop Timon's successor, Bishop Steven Ryan (1868-1896), a number of parishes were established in those counties and St. James Mercy Hospital opened in Hornell. The four counties finally joined the Diocese of Rochester in 1896.

Although the Buffalo and Rochester dioceses went their separate ways more than a century ago, they continue to cooperate. The two jointly provide ministry to migrant workers, for example. In fact, Buffalo's current leader, Bishop Henry J. Mansell, is scheduled to speak at St. Bernard's Institute April 26 as part of a three-day workshop on Hispanic ministry.

There are many other interactions and reminders of the years of connection — far too many to mention.

Instead, we simply thank the people of Buffalo Diocese — and wish them a hearty happy birthday.

## Some dioceses show how to draw vocations

### To the editors:

According to the traditional wisdom, the vitality of a Catholic diocese is measured by the vocations it generates, especially to the priesthood. In the U.S.A. there are dioceses comparable to Rochester in size and/or population which show remarkable vigor. Lincoln (Neb.) boasts 37 seminarians, Arlington (Va.) 33, Peoria (Ill.) 34. Moreover, in these dioceses the median age of the clergy is in the upper 30s. With an apparent surplus of vocations, Catholics in these dioceses can feel secure that their spiritual and sacramental needs will be met.

One cause for the vitality of these dioceses is their bishops. The uncritical media dub them conservative or traditional but they are, in fact, simply "Catholic." They adhere to the Catholic faith and without embarrassment profess it as objective, abiding truth which finds its proof in being lived. It is, therefore, the manly witness these bishops give to Catholic truth, unmuddled and uncompromised, which inspires candidates to preach it.

Peoria will ordain 12 priests this year. With 248 priests serving a rural Catholic population one-third less that of Catholic Rochester, Peoria actually lends priests to Rapid City (SD). In fact, to limit the flow of candidates, not only Peoria but Lincoln and Arlington have imposed age restrictions. Lincoln accepts no candidate above the age of 30 and Arlington ordains no one above 40. The telling point is that there are large numbers of men aspiring to the priesthood.

So far no one at the Pastoral Center has used the word "crisis" in reference to the

vocational situation here. "Critical" crisis may even be a more apt phrase when next year 12 priests retire...

While the bishop's office has undertaken many diocesan-wide initiatives, it has never lent its resources to a sustained apostolate or prayer for vocations. Arlington has such an apostolate. Surely a drive to beg the Lord of the harvest for more workers counts as much as the annual Thanksgiving Appeal or the present discussions surrounding the bishop's pastoral on the

Eucharist. For some unknown reason, the pastoral addresses the life but not the centrality of the priest for the Eucharist. How does one account for such an omission?

The success of other dioceses makes it clear that if Rochester is to be blessed with priests, its people must be committed to praying for them and its bishop unequivocally Catholic.

**Joseph Murray**  
Wyndover Road, Rochester

## Early Planned Parenthood leaflet stated that abortion 'kills' babies

### To the editors:

Margaret Higgins Sanger founded the National Birth Control League which later became the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Her goal was to control the world population through the use of birth control.

Ms. Sanger was born in 1883 in Corning, N.Y. and was the sixth of 11 children, and became a nurse in New York City after college. She believed that poverty, that resulted from large families, could best be controlled through the use of birth control and opened the first birth-control clinic in 1916. The National Birth Control League and clinics were combined in 1942 into the Planned Parenthood Association of America which was later expanded into the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Abortion became legal in 1973, and today Planned

Parenthood has become the largest abortion provider in the world.

A Planned Parenthood leaflet in 1964 stated that there was an absolute distinction between contraception, which prevents a child from existing, and abortion, which "kills a baby." This being the case, Planned Parenthood has a lot of explaining to do seeing that they promote abortion vigorously today.

Father Norman Weslin, founder of the Lambs of Christ, reminds us that Pope John Paul II on his trip to Denver, Colorado in 1993 stated: "America defend life. You must now come into the streets and into the public places." He was telling us to leave the comfort of our homes and come out to the various abortion sites and pray the rosary for the conversion of abortionists.

**Dianna Richmond Ives**  
Simpson Road, Rochester

## Columnist perpetuated misinformation about Divine Mercy Sunday

### To the editors:

I would like to make a correction to (Father Albert Shamon's April 3 column) concerning Divine Mercy Sunday and Confession.

The article stated "(Jesus) promised that the soul that will go to 'mercy' (within eight days before or after 'Mercy Sunday') and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment." That was misquoted.

The entry to Blessed Faustina's Diary #699 reads, "The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion will obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment." There is a great mistake that people make concerning Divine Mercy Sunday. We do not receive a plenary indulgence. Therefore it is not necessary to go to confession eight days before or eight days after Divine Mercy Sunday. "Francis Cardinal Macharski, Archbishop of Cra-

cow, Poland and protector of the Divine Mercy message and devotion, stresses that our confession in preparation for the Feast of Mercy should take place before the Feast itself preferably during Lent" (1994 issue of *The Marian Helpers Bulletin*).

In the book entitled *The Divine Mercy Message and Devotion* printed by the Marian Helpers at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass. on page 38 it states, "Not A Plenary Indulgence. Some have interpreted this special promise as a plenary indulgence. This is not accurate. 'Plenary indulgence' is a canonical term for the total remission — by the Church — of the punishment due to forgiven sins. The Church has not attached a plenary indulgence to the celebration of God's mercy on the Sunday after Easter, nor has it yet established that day as a Feast of Mercy. Only the Church can grant a plenary indulgence, and only the Church can

establish such a feast. Thus, while we certainly pray that this will happen soon, our celebration of Mercy Sunday, either privately or publicly with the permission of our local bishops, in no way anticipates the Church's judgment (to which we willingly and unreservedly submit).

"That this promise is not a plenary indulgence does not mean that the grace Our Lord is offering us is anything less than what we would receive through a plenary indulgence. Indeed, some theologians have declared that there is something far greater here."

If any one has any questions about the Divine Mercy Devotion call the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Mass. They have been given complete authority over this devotion in the United States.

**Sharon A. Norton**  
Boxwood Lane, Fairport