

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.

Relinquish rules, serve Rule Maker

To the editors:

I am concerned about the number of letters I have read on this page expressing a desire to rein in mercy and kindness. Let me share with you an insight I received on Good Friday. After the Passion was read, I began to wonder why Jesus was put to death. How could beings made in the image of God kill the Son of God when he came to live with them?

Several sins came to mind, attitudes and human reactions which cause blindness. There were jealousy and envy, of course. There was the preoccupation with prestige and power. People had misleading expectations of the Messiah. There was the deadly error of pragmatism: the end justifies the means. But most of all, what really stands out for me, and what Scripture recounts most frequently, was false religion.

The religion of the time, as with so many people of today, was a religion based on rules and principles. And Jesus broke the rules. He cured on the Sabbath. He touched the Unclean. He ate with Sinners. He told the Truth: that he was Messiah and Lord. Such things turned the leaders of this own religion against him. This was because his actions were based not on regulations, but on a relationship — his relationship with the Father.

One might say Jesus can do that. He is God's Son. But are we not members of His Body? Are we not filled with the same Holy Spirit? Are we not called to do the same as the Master, and even more?

We have all kinds of rules that let us marginalize certain people and claim the moral high ground: rules regarding private property, rules of economics, rules for homosexuals, rules governing marriage and the education of children.

And Jesus never said the rules were unimportant. He just demonstrated a higher principle. The needs and dignity of human beings come first. "Man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for Man." The call to let go of rules and walk with the Rule Maker is quite challenging.

The Son of God died for human beings. God is for human beings. Are we not invited to be for one another?

John F. Toth
Stonehill Drive
Rochester

Guild gives referrals to pro-life physicians

To the editors:

Many individuals seek physicians who are pro-life to take care of themselves, their families and loved ones. This has previously been difficult because the names of such doctors were not known to many people. The Catholic Physicians Guild has recently completed a survey of physicians in the diocese asking them if they supported the sanctity of life from conception to dying and did not support physician assisted suicide and abortion.

Over 140 physicians positively responded to our questionnaire. Their names have been given to pregnancy centers and parishes for the benefit of all in the diocese. Almost all the medical specialties are represented.

If anyone would like a reference to a pro-life physician please write: The Catholic Physicians Guild, 89 Genesee St., Rochester, N.Y. 14611, and indicate what specialty you are interested in having attend to your needs.

Dr. Michael R. Ajello, President
Catholic Physicians Guild



Articles depict continuing compromise in the church

To the editors:

I continue to receive and read the *Catholic Courier* since moving from Owego, N.Y. I have been both intrigued and saddened by the articles and letters over the past few months. My concern is over the obvious influence of society into the church. While the Catholic Church has, to its credit, held its ground on many issues in the past — abortion, homosexuality, creation, divorce — recent articles in the *Courier* reveal the impact of a compromising society that continues to invade the Body of Christ.

Someone once said that if you tell a lie often enough it becomes the truth. As with the lie of separation of Church and State, the lies that homosexuality is a genetic problem, that the "evidence" of evolution is without question, that women should have control over their bodies, that women should be allowed to become priests, etc., all come from an epidemic of compromise.

Compromise is a disease that starts

slowly, in simple ways, but spreads quickly. The beginning of compromise for a Christian is when we attempt to intellectualize the word of God to fit the belief system indoctrinated through the education system. Too many Christians are educated in the world and bring that secular junk into their spiritual thinking. Even Christian institutions have been invaded. "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

I am seeing an overwhelming amount of intellectual discussions of our faith and its relationship to God's word. In other words, people seeking their own version of the "intent" of God's word; the mind of man versus the spirit of God and His inerrant Word. It can only result in more compromise and dissension. "There is one body and one Spirit" — and ONE WORD OF GOD!!

Rich Lorán
Athens, Georgia

Adherence to evangelical counsels means sacrifice, spiritual rewards

To the editors:

Before reading Father McBrien's April 24 evaluation of the evangelical counsels of voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity and entire obedience, I was happy to have listened to an audio tape by Father John Colrapi concerning these same counsels. These two priests reached very different conclusions — and Father Colrapi's conclusions were in accord with the constant teaching of the Church regarding these charisms.

Father Colrapi points out that voluntary poverty in the material order — for example, simple community living, a habit, no personal belongings — is simply an exchange of things of a lower order for those of a higher order. Indeed material things do seem to squeeze out the spiritual even in the laity's life! Thus voluntary poverty makes sense — as well as makes holy!

The priest's and religious' vow of perpetual chastity is a gift given by God to help change the world — it is indeed a charisma. If it is willingly embraced it brings LIFE into the Church. By denying himself in the natural order, the priest/religious begets children in the spiritual order — not one or two, but hundreds! So why this denial? For a greater good — for the love of God and our fellow humans.

It seems so hard to deny ourselves anything these days. That's why marriages fail and religious drop out. We can't perceive a greater good than ourselves and what this world can offer us. So we end up destroying the beloved by our own Narcis-

sism. We make ourselves little gods, and as gods we have no need to sacrifice, rather we begin to believe others ought to sacrifice for us!

Lastly, obedience to the authority within the Church which Christ established is not comparable to blind obedience to Bo, Peep or any other humanly ordained "leader." The Church directs and guides not based on the vibes from a UFO but rather from the very Word of God Himself, Christ! And obedience to Christ, His Church is life giving.

Barbara A. Fredericks
Birr Street, Rochester

'Question Corner' is a welcome addition

To the editors:

I am writing to let you know that I find Father John Dietzen's column to be one of the better additions to the *Catholic Courier*. His column is well-balanced, practical and theologically sound. He has a pastoral sense that allows him to make his point gently yet effectively. I hope that you might consider increasing the frequency of his column in your newspaper.

I also wish to commend you on continuing the column of Sister Patricia Schoelles, SSJ. Hers is a refreshing presentation of moral principles.

Father Louis Sirianni
Ames Street
Rochester