

# 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  
<http://www.catholiccourier.com>

### President

**Bishop Matthew H. Clark**

### General Manager/Editor

**Karen M. Franz**

### Editorial Department

#### Associate Editor

**Lee Strong**

#### Copy Editor/Staff Writer

**Kathleen Schwar**

*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 Executive

**Loretta Lowans**

### Production Department

#### Graphics Manager

**Kim Parks**

#### Graphic Artist

**Zoe Maves**

## 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.

## Views McVeigh as product of culture

### To the editors:

I admire Bud Welch who lost his daughter in the Oklahoma City bombing. He said publicly that the death penalty for Timothy McVeigh would neither honor his daughter nor help him. He has a profound insight into this difficult tragedy.

Timothy McVeigh was portrayed in the trial as an ordinary boy growing up, but he was growing up in a culture of death. Before he graduated from high school, he saw over 50,000 acts of violence and killing on television, and that doesn't even count the violence in all the movies of the last couple of decades. He is a part of a generation in which abortion has always been legal. In other words, he grew up in a time when the solution to problem pregnancies was the violent killing of 33 million unborn children, resulting in the scarring of millions of women. He has been part of a society that wants to settle the very difficult issues of illness and pain by physician assisted suicide — as in abortion to turn doctors from healers to killers. He is part of a society where over 6,000 students brought in guns into their schools in the past year. He is a part of a country that is becoming the biggest exporter in the world of a killing drug, that we call tobacco. He is a part of a country that accounts for 56 percent of the total arms transfers of the world. While so many people, especially children, continue to die in third-world countries from the lack of food, clean water, vaccines, and the basic health care.

He is part of this country's double-standard. Timothy McVeigh was a soldier in Desert Storm, a war that 90 percent of Americans approved — 90 percent of those in Oklahoma City. He, along with Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf, was praised and glorified for Desert Storm, yet after the initial U.S. assault, there was little resistance from Iraqi aircraft, anti-aircraft or antimissile ground fire. Iraqis



were practically defenseless. The U.S. flew 110,000 air sorties and dropped 88,000 tons of bombs — nearly seven times the equivalent of the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. As a result of this bombing and the ground assault in which Timothy McVeigh was involved, over 100,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed. Many soldiers were so over matched that they were helpless and in disarray. In addition, the Red Cross of Jordan conservatively estimated that 113,000 civilians died and many more were left wounded or sick because of the destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure.

We were moved by the pictures of Oklahoma City firefighter Chris Fields carrying 1-year-old Baylee Almon who was killed along with 12 other children, but what about the estimated 67,000 children who were killed by our armed forces. At least the deaths have stopped from the Oklahoma City bombing, but thousands of children under 5 continue to die from the lack of food and medicine in Iraq because of our country's embargo. Weren't

these Iraqi children as innocent and defenseless as those killed in Oklahoma city? Did their families feel any less grief at their deaths? Timothy McVeigh was honored by our country for one act of violence, and now he is going to be put to death because of another act of violence. Who is getting the death penalty for the thousands of Iraqi children that were killed by our armed forces. I guess it is true that it is the victors who write the history of every war.

Violence is like a raging inferno that can only exist when it is fed by violence. The only way to overcome violence is to refuse to feed it by offering nonviolence, compassion, and forgiveness. Bud Welch is both strong and wise to oppose the death penalty for Timothy McVeigh. He knows that none of us as Americans are truly innocent. The only way to stop the cycle of violence is to stop the killing here and now.

**Father Jim Hewes**  
Becket Hall  
Rochester

## Asserts that Courier 'muzzled' lawyers guild

### To the editors:

The St. Thomas More Lawyers' Guild has been muzzled by the Catholic Press. When this Guild tried to present its views on homosexuality, the *Catholic Courier* would not print it: secular papers in the area did.

The *Catholic Courier* has published many views contrary to the teaching of the magisterium, most notably those of the columnist Father McBrien. Yet when a responsible group of Catholic lawyers present their side of a serious issue, they are throttled.

Granted that Bishop Clark is the power behind the *Catholic Courier*. Granted that the Lawyer's Guild's views are contrary to that of our Bishop. But Bishop Clark says that the Church should equate same-sex unions "in exactly the same place as the Sacrament of Marriage." And the Guild says marriage belongs only to a man and a woman.

The Guild's views are wholly supported by the church's writings: the Bishop's goals rest on flimsy foundations. The Guild's statement is life-affirming for strong families, the Bishop's attempts invite the Trojan horse of a moral cancer into the City of God.

No matter where one stands on this matter, the Catholics of Rochester have a right to learn all sides of the discussion. And the *Catholic Courier* is cutting off discussion. This does not improve good communication or healthy faith formation. As the Vatican II document on Social Communication, *Inter Mirifica* states:

"If public opinion is to be properly formed, it is necessary that, right from the start, the public be given free access to both the sources and the channels of information, and be allowed freely to express its own views. Freedom of opinion

and the right to be informed go hand in hand" (#33).

Since the Bishop initiated the discussion, he should in all fairness follow through. And the Diocesan press should communicate the discussion. The truth will set us free.

**Jan E. Fredericks**  
Birr Street  
Rochester

**EDITORS' NOTE:** The partial quotation Mr. Fredericks cites is part of a lengthy passage quoted in a conservative newspaper *The Wanderer* in a report of Bishop Clark's talk at the New Ways conference in Pittsburgh.

A reading of the entire passage indicates that Bishop Clark actually was expressing con-

cerns that efforts to recognize permanent gay unions in some way might lead to equating such unions with the sacrament of marriage.

Secondly, the *Catholic Courier* was open to publishing the guild's views, just not on the guild's terms. Our longstanding policy limits letters to the editors to 500 words. Guild leaders sought to evade that limitation by buying an advertisement. Since we do not believe advertisements provide the proper forum for discussions of this nature, we declined to publish an ad.

Finally, the document we received was not identical to the one published by the Messenger-Wolfe Newspapers. The version we received contained harsher language and an erroneous statement of "fact."

## Ordinand's family offers thanks, thoughts on increasing vocations

### To the editors:

My wife and I would like to thank all those involved in the Ordination ceremony of our son, Peter Michael DeBellis on May 31, 1997.

Bishop Clark has a great crew and everything went perfectly. I will mention Joan Workmaster as she was on top of everything that was going to happen. We had a great practice on Friday and when things started coming apart on Saturday, she was that steady, calm force that kept the ship on its course.

In answer to the question Flo and I have been asked, "How did you get a vocation in your family?" We can only say this, we as Catholic parents, have provided our family with the fertile ground for the seed of a vocation to grow. We know many other families who have done the

same thing and yet, there is no vocation in their family. So what it comes down to is: They, the children, must open their hearts to Christ.

At Peter's reception on Saturday, May 31, I was really worried about what I could say that would make a difference. Then Peter received a memento from one of his classmates. It was a picture of Christ, knocking at a door. I knew that would be my thought. The odd thing about this picture was, there was no handle on Christ's side. The door is our heart and we must open the door from the inside. Christ will not force that door open. That is what Peter did, and when he opened his heart to Christ, he never looked back.

Please continue to pray for vocations.  
**Peter and Flo DeBellis**  
Leavenworth Avenue, Auburn