

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.

Readers take issue with editorial, ad

To the editors:

The June 26 *Courier* editorial mentions that *Our Sunday Visitor* decided Disney's "Hunchback of Notre Dame" was "NC - not for Catholics." This beautiful movie upholds the teachings of Jesus and the Catholic Church by vigorously defending the humanity and rights of the disabled, the unattractive, the marginalized, and the poor. It shows the ugliness of ignorant prejudice and mob violence. It contrasts the gentle, non-violent priest who saves Quasimodo's life and gives sanctuary to Esmerelda with the evil greed of the city official who wants to murder all the gypsies. Since "Hunchback of Notre Dame" is pro-life from beginning to end, it is very hard for me to fathom what possible reasons *Our Sunday Visitor* had for its NC rating or why the *Courier* chose to reprint it.

But, then, the *Courier* editorial suggests the average Catholic kid thinks that "the Trinity consists of Mickey, Goofy and Donald Duck" and that the "originals" would be better for young children than Disney's versions. The good news is that kids know the difference between entertainment and religion. The bad news is that most of these "classics" are inappropriate for and inaccessible to young children. For example, the "classic" Mermaid dies in the end, the Greek legends are full of rape, incest, and senseless violence, and the "true" story of Pocahontas involves political and cultural situations that young children simply cannot understand.

Disney has just as much right to "take liberties" with stories as any other artist. If you're going to condemn Disney for creating a new and beautiful version of "Beauty and the Beast," then you also must condemn Michelangelo for carving yet another *Pieta*. And those creation and flood stories in *Genesis*? *Reworked* rip-offs; better get rid of them, too. Furthermore, if we must never simplify, abridge, or edit anything to make it more accessible to young children, then the sweet, animated "Saints' Lives" videos in my church library will have to go in the trash, along with the Mother Teresa comic books and "My First Bibles."

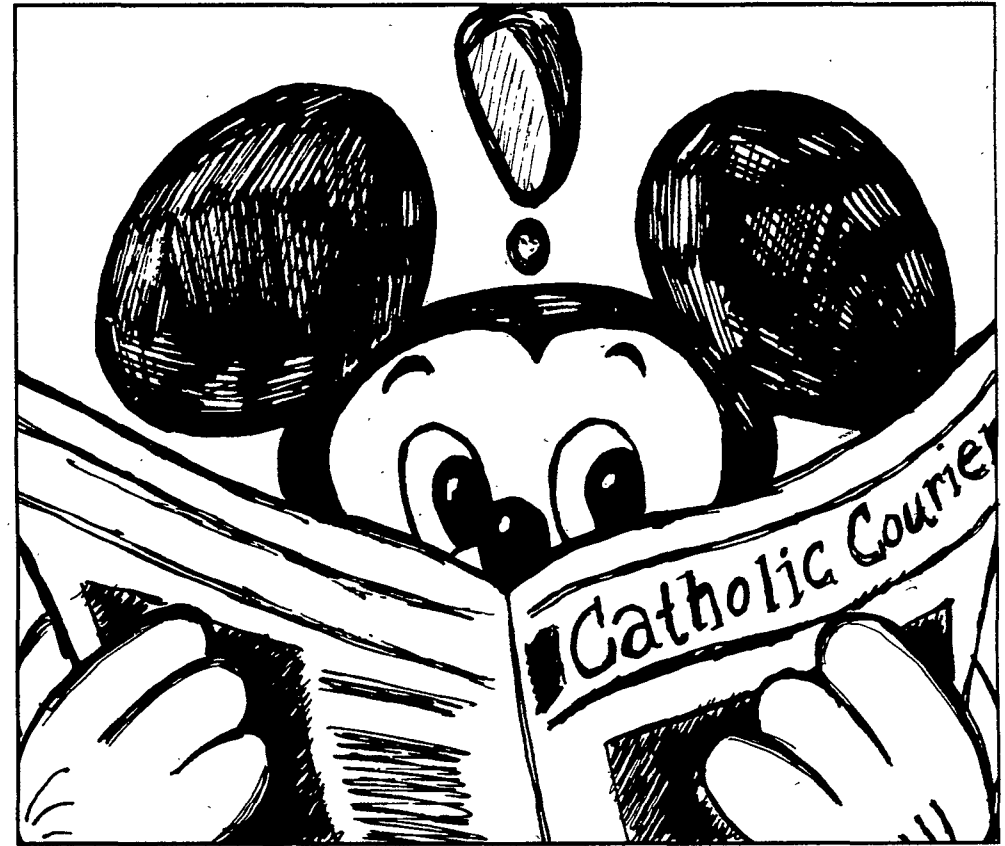
You can sniff in arrogant horror at Disney's success if you want to, but I am not about to deprive myself of the sheer pleasure of these visually and musically beautiful, well-crafted, uplifting and often funny movies. And consider this: as children grow older, they will be forced to study history and culture which to many will

seem dull, dry, and boring. Yet, for children who have watched Disney movies, dozens of these names, places, and images will be pleasantly familiar; maybe instead of "who cares about a bunch of dead

Greeks," teachers will hear, "Hey, cool, we get to read Hercules!"

Isn't that worth something?

Christine Bravo-Cullen
Lee Road, Dryden



'Poor editing' to publish Disney ad in same issue as editorial criticism

To the editors:

What is VERY WRONG with this picture?

On Page 15 of the June 26, 1997 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, the LEAD EDITORIAL is a vigorous exhortation to Catholics to follow the example of our Baptist brethren, "...to step back and consider their own Disney consumption..." The editorial presents many compelling reasons why a caring and responsible person of the Judeo-Christian moral tradition would want to "Do Disney Boycott One Better," so blatant and pervasive is the Disney contempt for that tradition and values.

THEN, on page 5 of the same issue of the *Catholic Courier* is a pricey 8" x 2.5" block ad urging your Catholic readership to - of all things - "SAIL on DISNEY MAGIC!" Such inconsistency! Such poor

editing! Didn't anyone on the *Courier* staff notice the glaring antithesis between the editorial and the ad?! Couldn't you at least have had the sensitivity to run them in separate issues of the *Courier*?

Not only has the *Courier* lost credibility about the sincerity of future hand wringing over Disney and other entities hostile to Judeo-Christian moral values. The *Courier* has lost the respect of readers who sense more than a little bending of the knee to the trinity of the Ad, the Au Courant and the Almighty Dollar.

Grace Corcoran Carson
Walker-Lake Ontario Road
Hilton

EDITORS' NOTE: We handled the ad and the editorial exactly as required by journalistic ethics. For an in-depth discussion of the subject, see Between the Lines, Page 8.

Why were women absent from ceremony?

To the editors:

On June 7 I attended the Mass for the ordination of deacons at Sacred Heart Cathedral. The liturgy was beautiful, joyful, exciting and indeed a special occasion. It was made even more special, in my opinion, by the presence of the Vietnamese community and their sharing of their cultural heritage. However, I could not help but be saddened to observe that our church continues to keep its women hidden, despite the fact that we are approaching the third millennium.

Where were the women? As I sat waiting for the processional to begin I glanced over to my right and wondered who the women were, a rather large group, sitting by themselves in a quiet corner of the Cathedral. I found the answer to my question shortly thereafter when the rather large group of ordained deacons who grandly processed in, went to join their wives in that quiet corner. No wife had joined her husband in the processional.

Where were the women when it came time to congratulate the newly ordained men and their wives? This was an even more significant part of the ritual in my estimation than the processional. However, at the appointed time, the deacons left

their wives sitting in the pews and went to congratulate the newly ordained and their wives who were standing at the foot of the altar. Not one woman joined her husband to share in the happiness of the couples at the altar. How sad! If they had had a choice to join their husbands, and chose not to, so be it, but if they were forbidden to do so, shame on us.

Visibility of the deacon's wife apparently is not a cause for concern in our church, despite the fact that all of them -

acknowledged or not - are giving of themselves to support their husband's ministry of service. Is this not seen as serving too? In my estimation these women are as much disciples of Christ as their husbands and should be given as much recognition.

So for all the women in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester who continue to remain invisible disciples, I say Bravo!

Patricia Klees
Buckland Avenue, Rochester

Writer misunderstood Bishop Gumbleton

To the editors:

Mary Melfi, referring to Bishop Thomas Gumbleton and his talk at the New Ways Ministry Symposium in her letter in the June 19 *Catholic Courier*, asks: "What in the world is a bishop doing telling other bishops and priests to publicly announce they are not simply homosexually oriented, but gay?!" In answer to her question there are three points to be made.

1) Announcing that one is gay is precisely the same as announcing that one is homosexually oriented.

2) Saying that a person is gay or lesbian

says nothing about his or her sexual activity. It was clear to the Symposium audience that Bishop Gumbleton's presumption about gay priests is the same as for any unmarried priests, that they are faithful to their vow of celibacy.

3) Bishop Gumbleton is simply following the Catechism which says: "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity" (#2333 and #2393).

Casey and Mary Ellen Lopata
Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry
Rochester