

# OPINIONS

## Catholic Courier

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1150 Buffalo Road  
P.O. Box 24379  
Rochester, NY 14624  
716/328-4340  
800/600-3628 outside Rochester  
<http://www.catholiccourier.com>  
e-mail: [cathcour@frontiernet.net](mailto:cathcour@frontiernet.net)

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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.

# Vengeance is way of diverting blame

### To the editors:

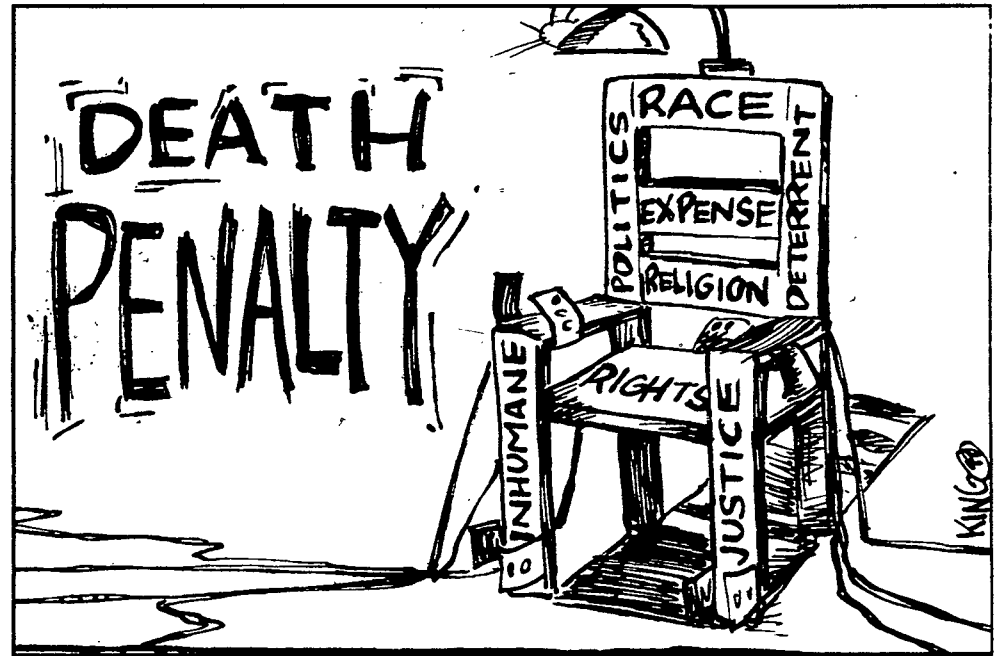
Thank you for publishing Father Jim Hewes exceptionally fine letter concerning Timothy McVeigh (*Courier*, July 10: "Views McVeigh as product of culture"). He said it all.

I remember that during the Desert Storm operation we were shown on TV a representative of the American high command explaining to the American public, with diagrams, that one "smart" bomb was able to hit exactly on target the Iraqi equivalent of the Pentagon. Everyone on the program conveyed the impression that this should be a matter of great pride and satisfaction to all of us. I instead got an image in my head of ordinary citizens in that building who had come to work for the day, people who had families, who had nothing to do with decision making, sitting at their computers — and then being blown away. No one in this country pronounced it a war crime to kill civilians — neither in this war nor in Vietnam, nor in Dresden, nor in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Yes, "we" created Timothy McVeigh and now we want to feel innocent by executing the shadow-side of our collective psyche. Malcolm X would have said, "The chicken has come home to roost."

If Gospel values are too much to hope in national politics and foreign policy, I wish we could return to a time when we could at least be proud of this nation, as I was during my childhood when we fought against Fascism and rebuilt Europe with the Marshall Plan. I taught history so I know that we have never been "innocent" — there was slavery and native American genocide for starters — but it does seem to me that in the course of my lifetime of 61 years, there has been a shameful deterioration of public morality and sensitivity in just about every aspect of life.

**Janet C. Reid**  
Highland Avenue, Rochester



## Death penalty won't 'even' score on Oklahoma deaths

### To the editors:

While I can sense the pain and loss of the families of so many of the victims of the Oklahoma bombing and the cry for vengeance, I believe we need as a society to be compassionate to them, but firm in not allowing that cry to be answered with more violence. At a time when violence and its effects touch more and more of us, we need to resist the ease of revenge as any answer to our pain and fears.

We, as a nation, and further as a Christian people, are not helped by the sentence of death for Timothy McVeigh. With this decision, we may have lowered ourselves to his level and the pain and loss will just continue on.

As Christians, have we drawn from the depth of the Gospel and of Jesus' own

life? For the Lord did not give up on anyone, whether the one nailed to the cross beside him or those who had joined in the act of crucifixion.

How do we as a Church speak out at times like this of the need for more than vengeance and getting even if anything can be "made even" in light of 168 deaths? Can we speak in faith of the sacredness of all life, including that of Timothy McVeigh? Can we indeed bring the cry of forgiveness and reconciliation to the ears of all people of our nation?

I pray for those who died in Oklahoma in such a tragic act of violence, but I pray too that we may rid ourselves of the legal form of violence that is the death penalty.

**Father Kevin P. Murphy**  
St. Joseph's Church, Penfield

## Certain God will provide ample vocations

### To the editors:

The Pastoral Planning Special Challenges and the declining number of priests sound ominous for the future of our parishes. It looks like Satan's personal Wish List for our future and he is succeeding in securing believers.

Let's not take Satan's word for the future. Let's believe Jesus, when he said "And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13) and "Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so your joy may be complete" (John 16:24).

Instead of accepting the projections of future numbers of priests, let's ask God, in Jesus' name, for an abundant supply of priests, who truly love Jesus and will serve Him as He wishes, with joy and in robust good health. While we are at it we can also ask for a great renaissance in our churches with increased faith and increased membership to love and serve our Lord, as He wishes.

We can ask that the love of God will shine in our lives as a beacon to others

searching for God, that we will have the courage to share our faith with others who don't know our Lord, bring them with us to church and make them welcome.

I have already started my crusade of prayer for our priests, religious and churches, and would suggest that many people of faith begin their own crusades. You don't need fancy prayers with elegant words to bring about miracles, all you

need is faith and sincerity.

I KNOW that Jesus always keeps His word and have put my trust in Him. We left the Rochester area last year for my husband's new job but will return when he retires in about eight years. When we return, I will find a larger number of priests and parishes, with a very vibrant faith community.

**Betty Bartok**  
Decatur, Illinois

## Urges reading of theological book

### To the editors:

I was favorably impressed by Father Richard McBrien's column appearing in the *Courier* of June 19 about the ecumenical spirit existing between Anglicanism and Catholicism. Heretofore, I had thought that the spirit of ecumenism had stalled. But according to Father McBrien on May 26, 1997 there was an ecumenical service at the highest levels in England.

On cassette tapes that I own, Catholic

Bishop Robert F. Morneau of Green Bay, Wisconsin, highly recommends the Anglican theologian John MacQuarrie's book "Principles of Christian Theology." In the book MacQuarrie lucidly writes of such things as the individual and society, truth, demons, atonement, the Holy Spirit, the papacy, and collegiality. It makes for very fascinating reading.

My copy, a paperback edition, cost me \$45. Quality does not come cheaply. St. Bernard's Institute library also has a copy of MacQuarrie's book. To keep the ecumenical spirit alive between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, I exhort grassroots readers of the *Courier* to obtain and read MacQuarrie's "Principles of Christian Theology." I guarantee that it will buttress your faith.

**Tom Fogarty**  
Walnut Street, Auburn

## Encourages assisting at pregnancy centers

### To the editors:

For every baby killing center — never call them "clinics," that's their own propaganda word used by Planned Parenthood in all their literature, press and TV and radio releases — there is a Problem Pregnancy Help Center or the same thing by a slightly different name.

I belong to one called the Crisis Pregnancy Centers of Greater Rochester; they are in the Rochester phone book on page 164. I know a lady who runs a garage sale

when she can and gives the proceeds from that!

Our Pope John Paul II wants us to follow the Gospel of Life to fight the present culture of death as we head for the year 2000!

So call or visit the Crisis Pregnancy Help Center near you and find out what your contribution can be. God bless you!

**Mary Rita Crowe**  
East Main Street  
Rochester

E-mail letters to  
[cathcour@frontiernet.net](mailto:cathcour@frontiernet.net) or  
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