

# 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.

## Traditionalist doesn't long for 'old days'

### To the editors:

I found the letter of Grace Carnes (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 7: "Church history, Jesus' humanity foster hope") interesting in that she seems to make some broad assumptions about traditional-minded Roman Catholics and changes in the Church.

If the term "traditional Catholic" indicates someone who accepts and tries to live by the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, then I guess I would fit into this category. However, since I am in my late 20s, I don't have any desire to return to the "old days" since the "old days" I remember were the 1970s and early 1980s when Catholics of my generation for the most part were being taught little or nothing about the Catholic faith in our religious education classes.

Much of what I know today about my faith I had to learn by taking courses during and after college in Catholic philosophy, theology, and Church history. It was in part, through these courses that I came to the conclusion that yes, the Catholic Church does teach the "fullness of truth" about human existence and our covenantal relationship with God. I also came to believe that part of being honest in my walk with Jesus Christ, if I claimed to be a follower of Christ, was to try to live up to the standards set forth by the teaching Church.

It was disappointing in my theological studies to encounter some Catholics who sincerely believed that they had reached a new level of "spiritual consciousness" which allowed them to dispense with following the teaching Church, especially in the area of moral theology. I could only hope that these Catholics would prayerfully discern whether their new level of "spiritual consciousness" was helping them to be closer followers of Christ.

I hope Ms. Carnes understands that traditional-minded Catholics love the Church because we love Jesus Christ. We know the Church is, as Ms. Carnes puts it, in "good hands," but it still is painful to see a lack of respect from some fellow Catholics for Catholic teachings. We don't need to "go back" to anything; rather, we all need to be more open to reading and studying recent Catholic encyclicals and the teachings of the Holy Father. If the Holy Spirit brings major changes to today's Church, it will happen as it has for almost 2,000 years: through the teaching authority established by Christ.

**Robert Pokalsky**  
Five Mile Line Road, Penfield

## Disappointed by choice of arguments in article

### To the editors:

I write in response to the article "Nurses warn about STDs," written by Mike Latona in the July 24 issue.

As youth minister, it is disheartening to see the official publication of the Catholic Church of the diocese of Rochester speak of avoidance of STDs as a compelling reason for sexual abstinence. While this consequence may result, it pales in comparison with the spiritual, moral and physical reasons for abstinence, chastity, and virginity as taught by the doctors of the Church.

For a complete discussion of this issue, I refer you to "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality - Guidelines for Education within the Family" issued by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family.

**Kathleen A. Donnelly**  
Youth Minister  
St. Mary's Church, Bath



## Consider other side of coin

### To the editors:

It is crucial that the truth be known before making a decision. In the instance of the Iraqi war Bernard J. Byrne was correct when he described the power of Saddam Hussein's military force. The other side of the coin is how could a country with the population of New York State become a Hitler? The answer has been in our media - The Reagan and Bush administrations financed the Hussein military power. Our European allies sold them the wherewithal as did the U.S.A.

A book has been written on how the White House illegally armed Iraq. The

book is "Spiders Web" by Alan Friedman, Bantam Press, 1993.

The Iraqi War was a massacre of 500,000 Iraqi children, when we bombed Iraqi water purification plants and then placed an embargo on Iraq including medications.

Secretary of State Albright is credited with saying the victory over Iraq was worth the loss of 500,000 Iraqi children.

We need the truth to understand but the truth can be sharply painful.

Did Jesus give us what we need to be able to respond to conflicts peacefully?

**Eugene C. Fuerst**  
Simpson Road, Rochester

## Can we learn from Fargo Diocese?

### To the editors:

In the current issue of the *Catholic World Report*, a magazine published by Ignatius Press, there is an interesting article about the Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota, which has a Catholic population of 100,000.

In 1997, the Diocese had 12 ordinations to the priesthood, with 12 to 15 expected in the next two years. At the present time, there are 47 men studying for the priesthood for the Diocese. This year's ordinations brought to 54 the number of men anointed by Bishop Sullivan in his 12

years as the Bishop of the Diocese. He has also asked all of the parishes in the Diocese to have at least one day of Eucharistic Adoration each month, and he has personally carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession for prayer services in front of the abortion mill in Fargo.

Perhaps no barometer is more indicative of a spirituality firmly anchored in solid Church Tradition than the number of ordinations in a Diocese. I think that the Diocese of Fargo can teach us something.

**Edward F. Lada**  
East Street, Pittsford

## Pastor augments call for prayers

### To the editors:

Parish liturgy committees should take to heart Frank Kinsky's perceptive suggestion (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 21: "Urges regular Mass intentions for vocations") that a petition for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life be included in the Prayer of the Faithful at all Sunday and weekday Masses throughout the diocese.

Let me further propose that, at least occasionally, we add something like: "That, guided by the Holy Spirit, the church may

remove any unnecessary requirements that could discourage or prevent vocations to the priesthood" and "That the Church, the People of God, may one day welcome qualified and willing priests who have resigned the active ministry to preside again at our Eucharistic assemblies."

Respectfully, patiently, persistently we pray to the Lord. We pray to the Lord.

**Rev. John J. Philipps**  
St. Bridget's/St. Joseph's Church  
East Bloomfield

## Appeals for angelic assistance resolved infant-preacher rivalry

### To the editors:

Thank you for Mike Latona's delightful discussion of the occasional rivalry at homily-time between the preacher and an infant in the pew.

I remember experiencing this bid for equal time on more than one occasion during my 39 years of preaching in St. Salome's Church. If my rival's cries were fitful, I didn't mind at all. This was a nice domestic sound. But if they became loud and relentless, I realized that something must be done.

Here was my solution. I said voicelessly to my guardian angel: "Please tell the child's angel guardian to tell him, politely, of course: 'Shaddup!'"

If I remember rightly, this usually worked. It might be added to the options offered in the Latona article. One of its merits is that it had no side effects.



Suddenly nothing could be heard but the deathless prose of the homilist. Nobody knew how it had been achieved but the preacher, a rather puzzled infant, and two very obliging guardian angels.

**Father Robert F. McNamara**  
Irondequoit