

OPINIONS

Catholics must heed the voice of Holy Father

To the editors:
 Re: "Respectful divergence: Can Catholics disagree with the pope?" (August 28) John Paul II, our holy, prophetic, and brilliant pope has said, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel."

Woe to us if we fail to heed his voice.
 Our beloved pope is one of the great teachers in the history of Christendom. Let us listen to him eagerly and attentively.

The *Catholic Courier's* plan for a monthly catechetical focus article is terrific.

We urge you to use these articles to proclaim the authentic teaching of the Church clearly, convincingly, and proudly. You will be helping us form true Catholic consciences as we try to lead lives pleasing to God.

Mary Lou and Ed McGarrell, Jr.
 Wall Street, Elmira

Bishop isn't CEO of entire 'company'

To the editors:
 In an article in the *Catholic Courier* entitled "Bishop Clark calls for greater local authority" (10-11-97) Ray Miller is quoted as saying "Can you imagine the president of Kodak trying to run a corporation if his hands were tied with everything he does?" I believe the situation has been convoluted. Kodak's C.E.O. is the supreme head of that corporation. Can you imagine Mr. Miller, one of his vice-presidents or board members writing an article and holding public meetings criticizing his corporate policies. I would assume complaints and suggestions would be reserved to board meetings in privacy.

Thomas G. Donohue
 Mission Road, Conesus

Pontiff holds sway

To the editors:
 Concerning the article "Respectful divergence: Can Catholics disagree with the Pope?" in the August 28 edition of the *Courier*, I agree with Bishop Clark. It is very possible not to agree with everything the Pope says. But as for teachings on faith and morals, he has a divine charge.

I think that while it's fair to say that the Pope can make mistakes about baseball, astrophysics and scores of other subjects about which he has no expertise, when it comes to steering his flock in the right direction, he's unbeatable.

Tom Marton
 Dibbles Trail, Webster

History offers view of papacy with warts

To the editors:
 In your lead article "Can Catholics disagree with the pope?" Fr. Joseph Hart admonishes the reader that major distortions have crept into the church even at the highest level. "Heretical popes have been a part of church history... There are popes who were murderers or raised a family while they were pope." I think he makes a good point in spite of himself. For there have been times in our Catholic history when the notion of a pope raising a family was considered almost as great an outrage to the faith as the notion of a murderer pope.

David B. Callan
 Cincinnati, Ohio

Vicar of Christ possesses supreme power

To the editors:
 Your article about dissent "Can Catholics disagree with the Pope?" wrongfully implied that Catholics are not bound by the teachings of the Popes.

Vatican II made it clear that the Pope's views "as a private person" are not what is at issue here. That's because the Pope "does not give his decision acting as a private person", but rather "by reason of his office as the vicar of Christ *** the Roman Pontiff possesses full, supreme and complete power over the Church." *Lumen Gentium* (L.G.) S25, S22. "For it was only Simon that the Lord made the bedrock foundation of the Church. L.G. S22.

Christ Himself promised that the Church would not err in faithfully teaching about the Truth of God's Revelation, whether it be about faith or morals. "The task of authentically interpreting the word of God has been entrusted to the living teaching authority of the Church alone." *Deum Verbi* S10.

Unlike the bishops, the Pope may exercise the Church's teaching authority on his own. L.G. S22, 25. Moreover, the Pope

may exercise this teaching authority even when no infallible declaration is made. L.G. S25. A "religious submission of the will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra infallibly*." id.

So, when one dissents from a matter on which the Pope has exercised his teaching authority, the disagreement is not with the Pope but with God because the authenticity of Pope's teaching has been guaranteed by Christ himself.

Therefore, the dissenters badly mislead Catholics in saying we need not obey non-infallible Papal teachings. The 25 year Vatican correspondent for *Time* magazine quotes Pope John Paul II as follows: "If you believe only in infallible declarations, you have very little left to believe. *** After all, no solemn declaration of infallibility ever was made regarding the Ten Commandments, or the commandment to love your neighbor. Does that mean you have the right to dissent on those teachings?" p. 257-8, *Keepers of the Keys*, by Wilton Wynn.

As the Pope later observed in his 1993

Encyclical "The Splendor of the Truth: "A new situation has come about in the Christian community itself. *** It is no longer a matter of occasional dissent but of an overall calling into question of traditional moral doctrine." No. 4 *emphasis in original*. It seems that the clamor for dissent is not a good faith desire to discuss the Pope's reiteration of traditional Catholic teachings, but rather an attempt to reject or totally change it.

The answer here is to trust God and His promise that the Holy Spirit will guide the Church and the Pope. Read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to learn God's plan for us and what He expects of us. Do not let the dissenters rob you of the beauty and saving power of the true Catholic Faith. Remember, this is not a battle between two competing human ideas. As Gamaliel once wisely counseled about the preaching of the Apostles: "If it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy it without fighting God Himself." Acts 5:38

James L. Gelormini
 Wood Run
 Rochester

Many controversies involve issues of trust

To the editors:
 I read with keen interest your monthly catechetical focus entitled "Respectful divergence: Can Catholics disagree with Pope?"

Throughout most of my life I very rarely followed the actions of our current Bishop or any of our Bishops. A decision by a Bishop did not usually make the list of the "top 40" for discussion at the dinner table. Maybe we were neglectful, but there were other concerns that took our attention - like raising a family, "putting food on the table", trying to make a marriage work and make our Sunday obligation, to name a few.

Now that my life is changing ("empty nest syndrome"), I follow with more intensity the pulse of our church. I attend church functions that I never thought of attending when I was raising my family. When I do attend, I hear lively conversations regarding our church today, especially our local diocese. Most of what I hear I like, but there are some that feel as though our diocese is going in the wrong direction. I find those comments disturbing.

As I go through life I know I have grown but in many ways I haven't changed. One thing that hasn't changed is my view of the church. I see a church united in faith. Attendance at daily Mass confirms that. I hear it at the consecration every day. I now read the *Courier* and what I read is usually uplifting. The Bishop's "Along the Way" column is a very



personal homily that I enjoy reading. He writes about things that are dear to my heart. One example of this is family. Outside of my attendance at Mass, my greatest encounter with God is through my family.

The larger issues of the church such as married priests and women in the priesthood, I have no comment or opinion. I leave those weightier subject matters with our Bishop and our Holy Father. I trust in them. The Holy Spirit put John Paul II in as Pope and the Holy Spirit put Bishop Clark in as our Bishop. Isn't it easier to

trust the Holy Spirit to work in them than to "look over one's shoulder" all the time? With trust I can be more attentive to those things that have been put in my care; such as the state of my soul. I can also devote my prayers to my family and friends and the church, in peace. I can devote more time to helping others as well.

Many of these controversies revolve around the issue of trust. When I grow in trust, I grow in peace. Thanks be to God!

Alfred J. Bello
 Kirkstone Pass
 Rochester

Finds delight in Bishop Clark's willingness to taking risks

To the editors:
 With interest I read the news reports about Bishop Clark's article in the *New Theology Review*. Since most people don't have access to this journal, would it be possible to reprint the Bishop's article in the *Courier*, or perhaps have it on the *Courier's* WWW page?

I am delighted that the Bishop is exercising leadership and taking the risk by bringing up topics for discussion which always provoke thought.

The Bishop's pastoral on the centrality of the Eucharist, his ministry to homosexuals, his article cited about, all invite us to look at some serious problems in our Church and to reflect more deeply on our Faith.

Many people are upset that our Bishop is stepping forward to discuss these issues. But, history tells us that controversial public discourse was very much a characteris-

tic of Rochester's first Bishop, Bernard McQuaid. Our Bishop is loyal to the Pope, as was McQuaid. Yet, McQuaid abruptly left Vatican Council I because of the infallibility doctrine - which he submitted to, by the way, but which he had strong opinions about. Likewise, our Bishop Clark has expressed his opinions about the role of

women, yet has been respectful regarding the Pope's opinion on the matter.

Donald L. Muench
 Smallwood Drive, Pittsford

EDITORS' NOTE: We have received permission to print the text of the article on our Website, and we should have it there shortly. We will let readers know when it is ready.

Wishes bishop would invest as much time and effort into vocations as he dedicates to controversial issues

To the editors:
 The Thanksgiving Appeal is well under way and my concern is the recruiting of priests (foreign) for the Rochester Diocese. Bishop Moynihan of Syracuse has recruited priests from South America, and Cardinal O'Connor has recruited over 200 priests.

I would hope that Bishop Clark would

concentrate as much effort and enthusiasm on the recruiting of priests as he does for controversial issues.

I will not, in good conscience, support the Thanksgiving appeal, unless the budget includes the costand provision of recruiting foreign priests.

Jane A. Compitello
 East Genesee Street, Clyde