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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.

'Heroes for life' merit recognition

EDITORIAL

One week after the 25th anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade* and *Doe vs. Bolton* — the U.S.

Supreme Court decisions that legalized abortion on demand — it would be easy to dwell on the dark aspects of abortion.

One could cite the more than 35 million babies who have been aborted since 1973, the millions of men and women left with emotional and physical scars, even the lies that helped to create and sustain the abortion industry.

But there's another side to the story.

For history has shown that God has a way of calling forth good in the midst of the most depraved of human activities.

Indeed, the Spirit has always moved women and men to take action, to risk their own lives and well-being, to be heroes in the fight for what is right. That's what led average people to help slaves escape and to harbor Jews from the Nazis.

Thus, as we consider the ravages of 25 years of legalized abortion, it is fitting to remember the efforts of those who have responded to God's call to work for life.

Two local initiatives come to mind.

Fifty volunteers contribute their time at the Problem Pregnancy Help Center in Rochester, working as counselors, receptionists and in other capacities. In addition, hundreds of others support the center through donations of cash and goods, and work on fundraising projects as well. Their efforts save lives and give women in desperate circumstances a sense of hope.

The Diocese of Rochester's Project Rachel, on the other hand, reaches out to men and women who suffer lingering effects from abortions that took place in their pasts. Through a hotline, these

individuals can seek help from six telephone counselors, 23 face-to-face counselors and spiritual advisers, 28 Catholic priests and one Episcopal priest. All of these volunteers help guide individuals troubled by bad decisions to find healing and peace.

These are but two examples. Many more people who have been called to counter abortion and its effects can readily be found throughout the diocese.

They work with such programs as Birthright, the Crisis Pregnancy Centers, Faith Haven and Melita House to provide alternatives for women in troubled pregnancies.

They labor for change through such groups as the Seamless Garment Network, Feminists for Life and Pax Christi.

They go to abortion sites to pray, reach out to women considering abortion, even nonviolently protest and face arrest and jail. They write letters to government officials to try to get this country's abortion policies changed. They donate money and material goods to help support others' efforts.

All told, thousands of individuals in this diocese — and millions across this nation — have listened to God's prompting to oppose abortion.

They are heroes for life.

Thus it seems fitting, after marking the *Roe* and *Doe* anniversaries, to praise these women and men for the good they do in the face of the moral confusion and blatant evil that abortion has wrought.

Perhaps through these heroes' efforts, we someday will no longer need to mark the tragic anniversaries of *Roe* and *Doe*. Instead, we will celebrate their reversals.

Give citizens real statistics about 'aliens'

To the editors:

Thanks for a balanced presentation ("Handcuffed Harvesters," Nov. 20) of an issue the secular media seems unable to get right.

I was rural employment supervisor for the New York State Department of Labor. Until retiring in 1995, I compiled statistics on farm employment for labor-supply states including Texas and Florida. Farmers and labor statisticians know the unemployment rate in rural areas drops to zero when there is work to be done. Western New York has suffered a farm labor deficit every growing season since the end of the Great Depression.

The just and reasonable solution is to tell the American people the truth about an unpopular issue: illegal aliens are not stealing good jobs away from U.S. citizens and other legal workers. In this era of full employment, with an unemployment rate of only 3 percent or so, the labor shortage is real not only in jobs that require hard-to-get skills but also in jobs that are undesirable or unpleasant. The problem has been addressed in the past by bringing in workers from outside our borders. Congress is prepared to act, but fears a large and vocal white-supremacist lobby.

I think your readers should also know



that INS enforcement hurts others than farmers and workers. It can hurt innocent children, American citizens, born here in our region. Last year, a farmer I know visited the home of one of his workers. The worker and his wife are Mexican but speak good English. Revealing that she and her husband did not have valid U.S. working papers even though they had lived and worked in the area for nearly 10 years, the worker's wife begged the farmer not to file Immigration and Naturalization Service reports on them. If she and her husband were deported, they would have to leave their children behind. They wanted the children, who are American citizens, to have a better life than the desperate poverty they would face back in Mexico.

Would these abandoned children — most who are under eight years of age —

spend their childhoods in foster care? Would they be deemed eligible for adoption? Would they ever see their parents again? We estimate a thousand of them in New York state alone — hundreds of thousands nationwide.

It is heart-warming, the acceptance farm-workers and their families receive in most locations in western New York these days. But, as your article says, they are now afraid to go to town to buy food, do the laundry or receive the sacraments. These people are not nameless and faceless "foreigners." They are God's beloved children and our brothers and sisters. They are one with us.

Diana Green
Parkwood Avenue
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

Brief comments did not offset offensive presentation

To the editors:

In all fairness, I would like to respond to the *Catholic Courier* letter by Father Curt Cadorette, Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Rochester (Jan. 8: "Supporting" talk offered opportunity for rebuttal). Father's letter attempted to explain why he was involved in bringing columnist Christopher Hitchens to the U of R, who openly attacked the character and good name of Mother Teresa.

I was present at the event in which Father claimed his "intervention" was supposed to "challenge (Hitchens') anti-Catholic perspective." His brief comments however, did not defend the many specific charges levied by Hitchens, such as describing Mother Teresa as "blasphemous," "fanatical" and a "woman who never really helped the poor." According to U of R spokesperson, John Sommers, this event was never designed to be a debate and the result was an anti-Catholic

feeding frenzy led by atheist Hitchens.

Father Cadorette clearly stated in his letter: "I am responsible for helping students at the University better understand who we Catholics are as believing people." However, in the very next paragraph, Father openly admits: "Hitchens entertained us with a hatchet job on all things Catholic." This did little to correct the concerns over Father's open admission of his financial contribution in bringing Hitchens to Rochester.

As one of the hundred protesters, I can assure you that we were far more offended than entertained! It was unfortunate that Father was not more considerate of his Catholic brothers and sisters, who were grieving over the recent death of our beloved Mother Teresa.

Michael McBride
Fillingham Drive, Rochester

Revised system may improve tenor of discourse

To the editors:

I want to commend the *Courier* for its new Opinion Page letters policy. It seems to be human nature to only take the time to write when we are unhappy about something. This tendency has lent to the Opin-

ion Page a negativity which is out of proportion with the true feelings of the people of our diocese. Perhaps I will find more reason to read this page from now on.

Christine Bravo-Cullen
Lee Road, Dryden