

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 ver-

Book shows early popes' opposition to slavery

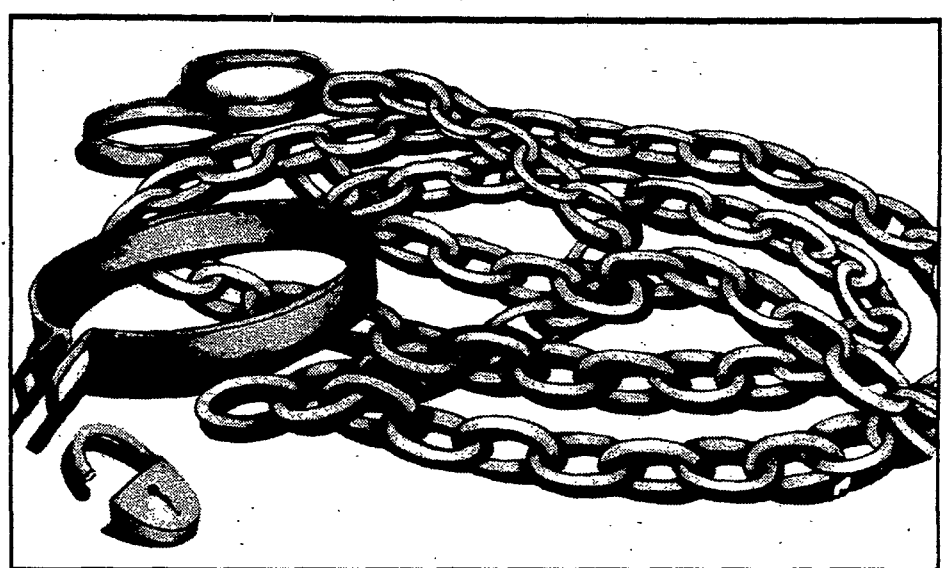
To the editors:

"Catholics will look with pride on the Church when they learn of all the popes' unwavering denunciation of racial slavery," states Father Joel Panzer, author of "The Popes and Slavery" (Alba House). Had the Catholic Courier included this resource as well as actual decrees and encyclicals of the early popes, "The Church and Slavery" report (Feb. 5) would have assumed a much different form.

Referring to the natives of the Canary Islands, Pope Eugene IV, January 1435, declared, "These people are to be totally and perpetually free and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of any money. If this is not done, they (the captors) incur the sentence of excommunication, ipso facto, from which they cannot be absolved except at the point of death, even by the Holy See or by any bishop unless they have first given freedom to those captive persons and restored their goods" (papal decree *Sicut Dudum* "Not Long Ago").

Racial slavery, like that portrayed in the movie "Amistad," commenced in the early 1400s with Spanish and Portuguese explorers venturing into the "New World." The capturing of indigenous people to sell into slavery was distinctly separate from earlier forms of slavery which involved prisoners of war, penal colonies and the concept of "just servitude." From Pope Eugene IV in 1435 protesting the capture of natives from the Canary Islands, through Leo XIII urging Brazilian bishops to work for the abolition of slavery, popes have strongly and consistently spoken out in condemnation of slavery.

W. Randolph Smith
Rochester



Sees parallels to health care

To the editors:

Kathleen Schwar's scholarly piece "The Church & Slavery" (Feb. 5) was very enlightening. That the American Catholic Church could have been anything but unanimous in condemnation of such a moral evil as slavery is hard to comprehend. But this fact has given me some insight into the U.S. Church's near silence on another abomination against human dignity known as managed care.

As the degradation of Rochester's health system ensues, I witness new shackles placed daily on the doctor's ability to properly care for the patient. The once sa-

cred doctor-patient relationship has been enslaved to our new rationing-of-care-for-profit system. Now, even our Catholic health institutions have willfully bowed before their masters, the managed care promoters.

Ms. Schwar's article quotes from the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, "...Human institutions, private or public, must serve man's ends and minister to his dignity." Hey, that sure makes sense to me. How come the silence?

Thomas F. Gambon, M.D.
Fall Meadow Drive
Pittsford

Glad for 'candor' of article

To the editors:

You are to be commended for your candor in your article "The Church and Slavery." It was interesting to learn that the Catholic Church in America accepted slavery and not only did not participate in the abolitionist movement, but that some Catholic laymen, clergy and hierarchy were owners of slaves.

When I was growing up a Catholic, many years ago this kind of candor would have been considered disloyal. It seemed

we were to defend "the Faith" even on issues which were indefensible - e.g. the inquisition and the persecution of Galileo. I think our present attitude is much healthier. After all, our faith in Jesus Christ and our love for His church are not based on the notion that the members, lay or clerical are immune to error. Truth is indeed freeing.

Arthur J. Connors
Middlesex Road
Rochester

Incredulous at writer's comments on Lewinsky case

To the editors:

Well, just when I thought I heard all the "spins" from the Clinton apologists, a really unbelievable one surfaces from Robert Drury in the Feb. 19 issue of the Courier. According to Mr. Drury, when the President testified before a grand jury, it became a "horrendous violation of our human rights." When I think of horrendous violation of human rights, I think of slavery or Stalin or Hitler. Mr. Drury may think it's none of our business to ask the President these questions, but it is our business because if the President lied under oath he is a criminal and doesn't de-

serve to be in office.

Plus, the President has a proven history of adultery and lying to cover it up. Remember Jennifer Flowers?

Mr. Drury also complains about the "FBI wire designed to entrap the victim." It was not entrapment. The wire was legally used and ordered by a panel of three Federal Judges, one of whom is a liberal from the LBJ administration. So much for the "vast right wing conspiracy."

Another hero of Mr. Drury is Susan McDougal. A "prisoner of conscience" and also a felon - that means she is a criminal. She was put in jail by a Judge,

not Mr. Starr. Even though she has "Immunity" she still will not answer one question: did the President tell the truth to the White Water Jury? It's obvious why she won't talk.

Finally, I can't believe the statement, "Whose life, externally, is more like that of Jesus of Nazareth than those in prison, especially those condemned to death?" The death row prisoners kill, rape & torture innocent men, women & children. Just like Jesus??? How absurd.

Joseph Smith
Walworth
via e-mail

Do not deride orthodox Catholics as 'foes of Vatican II'

To the editors:

I am sure that it is your wish as well as mine that we work to build up the Church of God rather than tear it down and fractionate it. In his most recent column, Father McBrien derides his self-proclaimed "foes of Vatican II." He holds up Mother Angelica, Father Fessio and the Hitchcocks to scorn.

Never in *Adoremus*, the Hitchcock publication, or *The Catholic Report* or from Mother Angelica was Cardinal Mahoney personally attacked. His writings on the liturgy were questioned so as to clarify what seemed to be discrepancies from the teachings of Vatican II. Are orthodox Catholics no longer allowed to question? Is that "privilege" or "freedom" only belonging to the heterodox? Questioning

ly get that one straight. There is no room in the Catholic press for pure and simple name calling. Therefore I would ask you once again to discontinue Father

McBrien's column or at least screen it better.

Barbara Fredericks
Birr Street, Rochester

'Scoreboard' says it all for Mother Angelica

To the editors:

As of late Mother Angelica has become the butt of ridicule from the "Progressive" faction of the Catholic Church. Father McBrien as well as other Progressive Catholics make her a useful target for her traditionalist stands on Catholicism.

A local priest recently referred in his homily to her positions as "Mickey Mouse" referring to her objections as to tabernacle placement, etc.

capped. As she walked her face grimaced in pain. Several weeks ago while praying the rosary she was completely cured of her infirmity. I saw her dancing on television, no more braces or crutches. I hardly think that she did this with computers or magic, midnight micro surgery.

I can only contend that we have Mother Angelica, traditional - Miracles: 1
Progressives - Miracles: ???