

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.

Column too soft on U.S. plans in Iraq

To the editors:
Sister Patricia Schoelles feels the government has loose ends to tie up before her sense of patriotism might accept another bombing of Iraq (Feb. 19 column, "Reasons for potential war on Iraq are not just").
Does patriotism make us forget that we first developed and used nuclear weapons of mass destruction, tested their effects on our own people, contaminated earth with countless tests, threatened to use them again and deployed them everywhere, and that we spend billions developing new and "better" weapons?
Not mentioned is the terrible extent of the counter population warfare of '91 that continued as an embargo and reduced Iraqi cities to the worst of slums. Over 500,000 children under five have suffered the cruelest of deaths. I find it morally offensive to even mention just war criteria in relation to a people already so brutalized. Of course, any bombing inevitably produces abortions. Thankfully, Sister spares us a reflection on how many might be proportionate with U.S. "national interests." If military propagandists receive no more scrutiny than this, just war will remain irrelevant in resisting war.
Years ago, Sister Schoelles wrote about a unique situation. The Church holds two opposed positions on war, just war and nonviolence. She was optimistic that this acceptance of choice would spread to other issues and we could tolerate differing positions by focusing on our unity in Jesus.

Now, she appreciates that Catholic moral theology, with its acceptance of just war, "...resists ... efforts to reduce the moral life to a one dimensional set of rules ..." She applies only just war to our present crisis, implying that nonviolence is too "monolithic" to be considered, but it is she who appears one dimensional.
As always, Jesus finds no place in this just war theorizing. The rational ethics of just war and the eternal life ethics of Jesus are simply worlds apart. February's Sunday Gospels reveal clearly there is no unity in or with Jesus without the practice of nonviolent love of enemies. Even enemy military leaders (Noaman) are included by Jesus! After telling us twice to love our enemies, Jesus asks, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I say?" (Luke 6)

Jesus does not give one standard for individuals and another for those who kill with government sanction. To establish this definitively, St. Mark was compelled to write the first Gospel. A reading of "Binding the Strong Man" by Ched Myers would convince even moral theologians of this! In any case, Jesus said his followers would be hated by all nations, not appreciated for patriotism.
"Questioning? Jesus' multi-dimensional nonviolence" will be covered by Father Charles McCarthy in his famous weekend retreats being offered at St. Monica's, March 6-7 and at Sacred Heart, Auburn, March 27-29.
Mark Scibilia-Carver
Cold Springs Road, Trumansburg



Biological, divine interplay may underlay human caring

To the editors:
I'm responding to Pat Federowicz's question to me regarding "male or female" in her letter of January 8. Like humans, animals were also created male and female, but significantly no mention is made of their being made in God's image. Since animals are male and female, but apparently not in God's image, that which makes us in God's image may be independent of "male and female."
Recently a scientist announced the discovery of a gene that may influence mothering. The female animals with the gene cared for their offspring; those without the gene did not. The gene is present in humans, but it is not yet known how it operates. If confirmed, perhaps this finding will give insight to Isaiah 49:15. Perhaps human caring is, in part, biological — women relatively more so?; perhaps it is

such biological components that are sex differentiated. However, God's caring is not influenced by biology — it is totally an act of will. This forms the non-male, non-female common image — God's image — of which both human sexes are equally endowed. The common divine and the sex-differentiated biological both reside in humans and their interplay forms uniquely human father/mother characteristics.
God's Name is "I Am," but to Jesus, who is the fullness of God's revelation, God is Father. Moreover, He invites us to address God as Father. Male and female refer to biology not to the relationships within the Trinity that form the basis for allowing us to call God, through Christ, Father. I believe in the God revealed in His Word.
James A. Urda
Strawhill Road, Barton

Witty priest's life offered example

To the editors:
This past week we all shared a great loss with the death of Father Bob Collins. This intelligent, kind man was a friend to many. The infectious grin which typically followed a subtle, witty remark was contagious. He never had a bad word to say about anyone.
During one of his first assignments as a priest in 1966, he opened a coffee house for teenagers in St. Monica's School gym. This act kept many of us off the streets and out of mischief. He was individually responsible for keeping many connected to the church at a time when it was easier to drift away. He officiated at our weddings, baptized our children and buried our parents.
Never once did he turn down a request for help. Never once did he ask for something in return. He often had the courage to write letters to this newspaper on sen-



sitive and controversial topics. He didn't judge others based on their attendance in church or their contributions to the collection. He showed what it was to be a Catholic simply by the way he lived his life.
There will be a new twinkling star in the sky replacing the twinkle in this Irish priest's eye. Thank you, Father Collins.
Frank P. Geraci Jr.
Yarmouth Road, Rochester

Will miss Fr. Collins' openness and humor

To the editors:
Father Bob Collins was one of the most beautiful men I've ever met.
He managed to balance keen insight with genuine openness, perception with curiosity, and gentleness with strength. Especially in recent years, he published opinions in this paper that modeled both vision and passion without dogmatism or vitriol. He was often challenging, direct, even blunt, without being judgmental, arrogant or violent.
In person, he was continually a bright, affirming and humorous presence, con-

Group deserved to be included in editorial