

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.

Politician sheds light on lamps

To the editors:

An article in the Jan. 29 *Courier* addressed a Jan. 22 meeting regarding strategies for neighborhood improvements on Chili Avenue, specifically near St. Augustine's Church. That meeting was a follow-up to a November meeting at which participants raised a desire for increased levels of street lighting in the area. I promised to look into the matter and try to expedite implementation of such an approach.

As your article indicates, the matter was fraught with complexity. The city has a hybrid system in which the government owns some street lights and Rochester Gas & Electric owns others, which it rents to the city. Installing brighter lighting on city owned lights is a relatively simple matter, although it increases electricity charges. But with RG&E-owned lights, we incur both higher electricity costs and higher rental fees. As a result, the city has created special tax-assessment districts to pass on to property owners the cost of increased lighting in such areas as Lyell Avenue and Wilson Boulevard.

Obviously, we did not want to add additional costs to property owners, including St. Augustine's, if we could avoid doing so. Therefore, we asked RG&E to sell us the poles in the area so we could install brighter bulbs without incurring higher rental costs. RG&E declined our offer, although we will replace all the lights — and take ownership of the new ones — in three years. At that time, Chili Avenue will receive a full reconstruction, at a cost of \$6



million.

I present this information to indicate how a simple request for brighter lights was caught up in a series of broader issues. Although the question is not yet resolved, we at City Hall will continue to work toward a solution, focusing on one that will not add to the financial burdens of the commercial areas of Chili Avenue.

I am deeply committed to ongoing efforts to make whatever improvements are feasible to address community concerns. I have met repeatedly with members of Interfaith Action to address those concerns. Further, I have urged Interfaith to work cooperatively with such other community groups as the 19th Ward Community Association and the Sector 4 Common Council to achieve maximum impact on these difficult problems.

Your reporter quoted someone at the meeting as saying she was "getting tired of

all the promises that people make to us, saying they're going to make it a better place to live." If that quote was accurate, it suggests a naive belief that simply telling government officials about a problem is enough to solve that problem. Government alone cannot solve such problems; solutions are not possible without the concerted efforts of all our citizens working together toward a common goal.

As the South District Councilmember, a member of St. Augustine's, a dues-paying member of Interfaith Action, and a resident of Chili Avenue, I will continue to be in the forefront of efforts toward community revitalization. If we are to be successful, however, we will do so through broad community coalitions that we build to solve problems that confront us as a society.

Maxine Childress Brown
Councilmember, South District

Consider practical aspects of meatlessness

To the editors:

Recently there has been discussion of going back to "meatless" Fridays. I have given considerable thought to this and would like to make some comments on it.

Originally, the idea of fish on Friday was to ensure that those who are fisher-

men would be assured of jobs in providing the fish. That no longer seems to be the case. Also, there has been a generation growing up who have not been ordered to follow this rule, except for Lent. It is a man-made rule, not a law of God. Our son says he enjoys fish on occasion,

but not when told he must eat it. That causes resentment on his part, as I'm sure it does to many others, particularly the younger generation. If there is resentment, then there is no good for the soul to make the sacrifice.

From another angle: the cost of fish. Last week's grocery flyer had haddock for \$3.99 a pound. Save \$3.00 it said. That makes haddock cost as much as filet mignon. Those of us on a fixed income cannot afford to pay that much for our dinner entree. OK, so there's tuna. Personally, I'd rather eat worms than tuna it so revolts me.

Many of us older persons have blood pressure problems and are on salt restricted diets. That means we shouldn't eat cheese, which is full of salt. On Ash Wednesday we had pancakes for lunch. I made a tuna, noodle and cheese casserole for dinner. That meal cost about what I could buy sirloin steak for, besides being full of salt from the fish, soup and cheese. We had the same menu on Friday.

Yesterday we shopped for groceries. I bought a roast on sale that cost the same as a pound of haddock. We will have three meals from it, but because tomorrow is Friday, I must freeze the remainder. There is enough left to make a large pot of beef stew, good for at least two more meals. All this for the price of one haddock meal!

I beg you, consider the economics of fish vs. meat before a decision that is difficult for many to live with is made.

While the intention is commendable, the ultimate goal is not practical. I'd rather read a few pages of the Bible instead of have to struggle with meatless Fridays. It would surely do me more good than the cost outlay to "follow the rules."

Rose R. Harshbarger
Fairlea Drive, Rochester

Believes pacifism 'invites' warfare

To the editors:

In his ongoing crusade against the U.S. military, Mark Scibilia-Carver criticized nuclear weapons and the embargo on Iraq (March 5: "Column too soft on U.S. plans in Iraq").

While the loss of life in any armed confrontation is likely, it is evident that pacifism can result in even greater loss of life. Witness Vietnam in 1975 after the pacifists helped the communists to victory that led to genocide — 3 million dead — in Cambodia and thousands of Vietnamese boat people.

As for the use of nuclear weapons, it widely has been estimated that about one million lives were saved by bombing Japan in 1945. After the war the U.S. nuclear arsenal deterred aggression and helped in the demise of the Soviet Union.

President Reagan's strategic defense initiative (SDI) was also a major factor.

Now on a smaller scale we are threatened by a cruel dictator in Iraq who has no scruples about using weapons of mass destruction, having used them on his own people. This unfortunately led to an embargo that has also led to the loss of life.

Relaxing the embargo and postponing an attack on Iraq might be the best strategy for now. However, we have a President that has pledged support around the world while cutting the defense budget substantially.

We need military but more importantly moral strength to deter the Saddams of the world. Pacifism is not the answer. In my opinion, it invites war.

Robert Bart
Ithaca

What would Jesus do about bingo reliance?

To the editors:

If (state Catholic Conference lobbyist) Richard Barnes thinks that Bingo is still the "St. Mary's down the street Bingo," he should visit the Bingo Halls in and around the Rochester area.

Bingo has become Big Business for many churches. Since most churches are unable to hold regular bingo in their schools due to the strict county smoking laws, Bingo Halls have provided the necessary space. It is no longer a \$1 charge ci-

ther. Most patrons will spend on an average between \$30 and \$40 a night. These Bingo Halls run two sessions a day and are open seven days a week, even Christmas and Easter. I am sorry to say that adds up to a lot more than a dollar. It is a sad situation the churches find themselves in when to pay for teacher salaries, maintenance and proper upkeep, and students' tuition, they need to rely on Bingo. "WWJD?"

Lucille Monti
Courtly Circle, Rochester