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## 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 verification.

# Planning process only temporary fix

## To the editors:

Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium may be a necessary process in our diocese today, but the results of this process must be looked at as temporary solutions to the underlying problem of the shortage of priests. The lack of vocations to the priesthood is the greatest crisis in our diocese today. The community life of our church is essentially Eucharistic. The priesthood, therefore, is essential to our faith, full community life, and its governance.

Contrary to Planning Director Pickett's quote (in "Planning Process Stretches Resources," March 12), we should be frightened with the prospect of priestless parishes, especially if we have no plan to address the heart of the problem. Although lay leadership is critical during this crisis, the laity must always see their role in light of assisting and not replacing the pastoral role of the priest.

In reading the article, I saw no mention of what is being done by the diocese to address the heart of the problem. What is the diocese's pastoral plan to increase vocations to the priesthood? One suggestion is that each planning team involved in the process should be required to include in their pastoral plan recommendations to foster vocations in their region. The article states that the number of priests will decline by 18 in the next five years in our diocese. Maybe a reasonable goal of the pastoral planning process should be to foster and nurture 18 new vocations to the priesthood in the next five years.

Christ is sowing the seeds of vocations throughout our diocese. We should be disturbed that the ground is not fertile enough to nurture and grow these vocations into the priests that are essential to the lives of our faith communities. His call goes out everyday to young men in our diocese to follow him like the 12 apostles. We should be heartened that Christ assured us his Church will survive until the end of time. But the laity must be diligent and fulfill one of our most important roles in the Church, to build strong Catholic families, schools, and faith communities that will nurture vocations to the priesthood.

John Maurer

Washington Avenue, Rochester

## Whither McBrien?

### To the editors:

Please consider following the lead of the *Catholic Sun* and suspend publication of Father McBrien's column.

The statement by the Diocese of Syracuse Chancery that "...Father McBrien's column frequently displays an attitude that is ... distressingly hostile to the Holy See," seems accurate to this reader and such an attitude is "... unhealthy in a Catholic newspaper."

If the column is retained, why not title it accurately? Rarely is it an "essay in theology," but usually an essay on church politics from the point of view of a dissident.

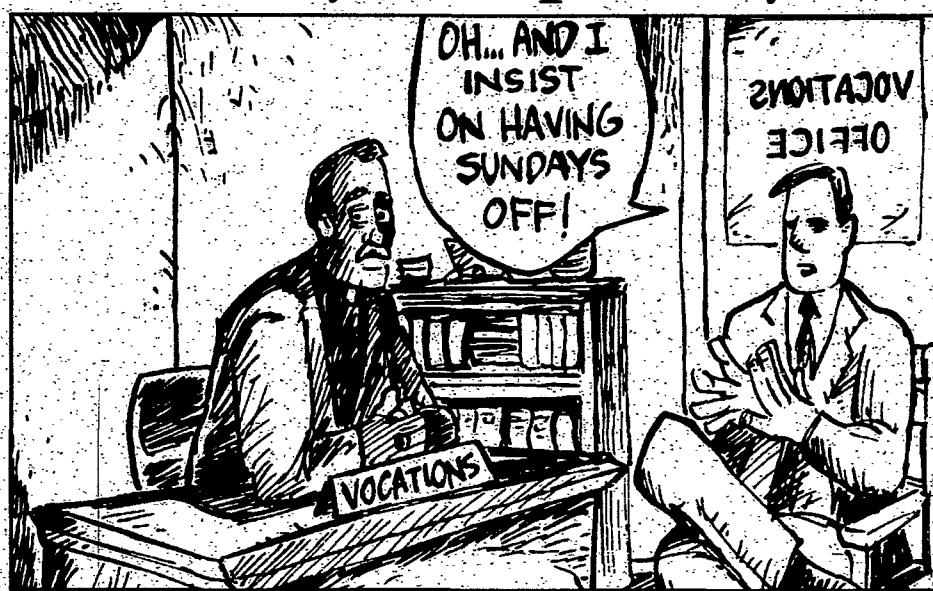
Richard C. Shipley  
Mumford Street, Seneca Falls

### To the editors:

Regarding your issue of March 5: Father McBrien's "History reveals varied beliefs about Popes" is an excellent essay in theology. I wish more Catholics knew the history of our church. Its changes have been many and its struggles great, and for me, confidence in its future.

Joseph P. Leabeys  
Valois

**EDITORS' NOTE:** We believe our current slate of columnists is very well balanced and have every intention of continuing Father McBrien's column.



## Help ease priests' burdens

### To the editors:

We have heard much about the shortage of priests in our diocese, probably more than many of us like to think about. We also know that the diocese is in the process of planning to react to the shortage of priests. Shared services and mutual cooperation among neighboring parishes will be the norm in the future of the local church.

However, we have not heard about just exactly how the shortage is affecting our priests today. I must admit that I never dreamed I'd see the day that the cathedral of the diocese had only a pastor and no parochial vicar or assistant pastor. Although our pastor is a wonderful man whose dedication is second to none, the sad reality of the shortage strikes home. I know our pastor has a grueling schedule, but he never complains. I know that he awakes to middle of the night emergencies often and cheerfully gets dressed and

goes where he's needed, even in the dead of winter.

My point in writing is to offer some suggestions to help ease the burden of our priests even in some small ways. If you have free time on your hands, ask your pastor if there are some clerical tasks he could use a hand with. Maybe he could use a hand with a few things over in the church. If you arrive at an early morning Mass after a snowfall, grab the shovel and clear the steps to the church. Invite Father over for a meal and some friendly conversation. Let Father know he's appreciated and that he's a friend as well as a priest. If nothing else, offer a few kind words of support. Nothing uplifts our pastor more than knowing he was truly of service to people, even at 3 a.m. The demands on our priests are great. Let's help ease the burden if we can!

Alan Rector  
Flower City Park, Rochester

## Update on Chili Ave. lighting issue

### To the editors:

This is in response to a March 12 letter from Rochester City Councilwoman Maxine Childress Brown regarding street lighting improvements on Chili Avenue between Bulls Head and the canal.

On September 25, 1997 and again January 22, 1998, the Roman Catholic Community 19th Ward/Interfaith Action held public actions involving a total of 265 people. One issue addressed was the lighting upgrade intended to improve safety, a move supported by our cluster, our community, the Genesee police section and the Sector 4 NET office.

At both actions, Councilwoman Brown made unequivocal public commitments to improve the lighting. Between the first and the second action, a period of some four months, the councilwoman had the opportunity to explore all of the "complexities" of lighting improvements. She then came to the second action and pledged that the lights would be upgraded within two weeks!

We are aware of the dispute between the city and Rochester Gas and Electric

regarding street lighting. It is hard to understand how the councilwoman could come to two events, make unequivocal public commitments, and then not follow through, or even know the program was in jeopardy the evening she announced the two week goal.

It is not naive to believe that our elected officials must be accountable to citizens — and that commitments made must be kept. Unfortunately, Councilwoman Brown doesn't get it. Since our second action she has refused to meet with us and work together to resolve this situation.

On March 4, our local organizing committee met with Edward Doherty, city Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Services. He agreed to upgrade the lighting, and RG&E has a schedule of installation in two phases. Phase one being Woodbine Avenue to Salina Street on Friday, March 20, and phase two to begin shortly thereafter on Chili Avenue.

Eileen Dillio, for the committee  
Melrose Street  
Rochester

## Bingo volunteer believes Jesus is at her side

### To the editors:

This is in response to Lucille Monti's letter of March 12 regarding reliance on bingo revenue. Yes, times have changed. Bingo is a necessity — but a patron also can relax and play bingo for under \$10, not \$30 to \$40. The amount spent is their choice. Nowadays, parishioners are unable to take care of the funds necessary to: repair a leaky church ceiling; repair a church or school boiler; repair and make safe the steps, parking lot, etc. for the people to come to worship together and for our children who come to our schools.

Since state aid is not allocated appropriately to Catholic schools, we do have to furnish a source of revenue to enable our young children — the future of America — the education they do so deserve in our schools.

As an every week bingo volunteer, I proudly look upon my volunteering as my ministry toward helping the church, school, and all people. What would Jesus do about bingo reliance? You know what? Jesus is at my side with me.

Shirley Shwamle Kobisch  
Delamaine Drive, Rochester