

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.

Auburnites may press legitimate complaints

To the editors:

I read with interest the April 9 article on the actions taken by Father Robert Belgotti in Auburn ("Auburn priest points out laws to deal with dissent"). While I agree as Catholics we have a responsibility to honor and respect the office and person of our Bishop, I also believe that perhaps some of those in Auburn upset with diocesan policies have legitimate complaints that have not been addressed. A lack of charity is, of course, wrong but there is nothing wrong with respectfully and charitably calling attention to areas where improvements can be made.

Catholics in the Rochester diocese have a right to wonder why certain teachings of the Church are not fully implemented. For example, the recent instruction on lay ministry from the Vatican is being ignored because it is supposedly "under study." What does the further study of this teaching have to do with its implementation? Other dioceses seem to be trying to cooperate with this instruction. As Greg Burke writes in the Knights of Columbus magazine *Columbia*, "The instruction lays down the law pretty clearly, and asks pastors and bishops to put it into effect" (Feb. 1998 issue). Are Rochester diocesan officials so afraid of appearing pharisaical that they will simply ignore any Vatican teachings that might be difficult or unpopular?

One only has to look at the vast number of non-Catholic Christian denominations to see what happens when the legitimate teaching authority given by Christ is rejected. Protestant denominations continue to splinter into groups as each group interprets the Word of God according to personal preference. Christ gave Peter the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 16:18-19) and the hierarchical nature of the Church is still clearly taught today (Catechism 882-885). We are unified under the Lordship of Jesus Christ whose will is expressed in the teaching of the Holy Father who has, "full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church" (Catechism 882 and see also *Lumen Gentium* 22). Each bishop's authority comes from his unity with the Bishop of Rome. If we don't trust Church teaching, what we are really saying is that we don't trust God's guidance of the Church.

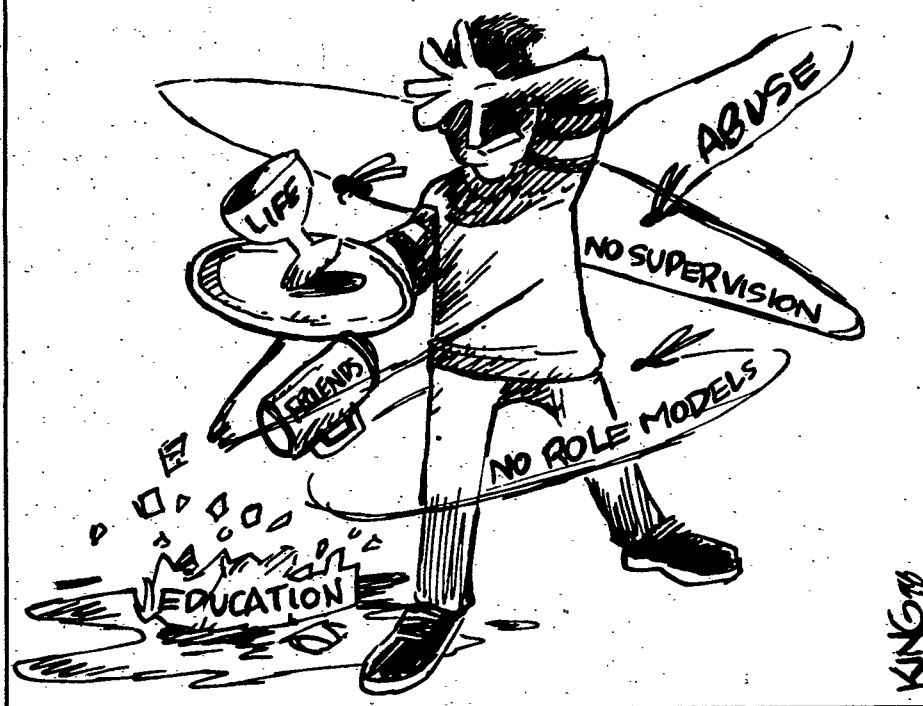
I would hope that those who critique diocesan policies will do so with charity, humility, and accuracy and only because of a desire to see the local Church more greatly united with the universal, worldwide Catholic Church. I would also hope that those who take note of such criticisms would look beyond what could be interpreted as, and sometimes is, unfortunately, a "harshness" of tone to see the very real merit and substance of such criticisms. Then together, guided by the Holy Spirit, we can continue to grow in faith, hope, and charity as one, united People of God.

Robert Pokalsky
Five Mile Line Road, Penfield

Permit quiet meditation after Communion

To the editors:

Let me start by saying I love church music and sang in choirs most of my life. But I have a bone to pick with organists. Please don't play and sing during the passing of the Eucharist to parishioners. Just play quietly if you must but never sing a hymn.



Priest makes best of his trials

To the editors:

A priest acquaintance from outside New York State tells me of some of his trials and tribulations after open-heart surgery. To my suggestion that he ask his Bishop for an extended vacation, with pay, he wrote:

"I am greatly amused by your suggestion that our Diocese fund my recuperation period. The Bishop might be receptive, but his advisers would probably persuade him otherwise. We are now just tiny cogs in the machinery of church administration. Most priests plow rather solitary furrows."

He continued: "I feel a sense of duty

and responsibility for our parish. I do not think myself indispensable, but I know that many rely on me as someone they can trust. Our parish is a difficult one, being full of newcomers and low-income people, the majority of whom seldom come to Mass."

"It would be easy to feel bitter, resentful and ill-used but what would that serve? I presume the Lord has good reasons for having me here, and I must do the best with what there is. A priest is needed and I happen to be the one."

Theodore R. Behm
Jefferson Tower
Syracuse

Urges aid to pregnancy center

To the editors:

Pope John Paul II said, "Each person has a unique and unrepeatable personality." And Mother Teresa said, "It's a poverty that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."

These two quotations show two big reasons why abortion is always so wrong!

Think of all the world problems that could have been solved by the talents of all the unborn, aborted babies who are being killed, at least 4,000 a day in our big great land!

So the next time you get time, call the Crises Pregnancy Center near you and offer to help them with the talent you do now have in whatever form it takes, office work, counseling after training or running garage sales etc.

Let's get our country back to where it was before abortion became legal! God bless you for trying. We can each find a way to help.

Mary Rita Crowe
Main Street East
Rochester

Youths need symbols of vocation

To the editors:

I pray for the increase in vocations. I also pray for the return to the wearing of clerics and habits. I feel that the return to traditional dress will bring a stronger sense of dignity and respect to the vocation of priest and nun.

Too many young adults have no visible sign of the people who have devoted themselves to Christ. This younger generation is saturated with signs of what a lesbian is, how to identify a serial killer,

and what young person doesn't know what a Power Ranger looks like? Yet in these same children's churches, the Mass is over and the priest changes into street clothes. In schools, the sisters show no signs of being the brides of Christ that they are. How is the child to know the vows are special?

One day my own mother was mistaken for a nun. How is a person to know?

Grace Adams
Hamlin

Preach virtue of chastity from the housetops

To the editors:

In these wildly permissive times — with AIDS, abortion, unwed parenthood and broken homes rampant everywhere — the beautiful virtue of chastity should be

preached from the housetops!

If chastity were the norm, not only would there be substantial savings for the taxpayer, but the spiritual benefits are enormous!

In "Sister Faustina's Diary" Our Lord tells Sister Faustina that "pure souls have INCONCEIVABLE power before God." In another article on chastity it states that those who observe perfect chastity in thought, word and deed win the martyr's crown!

It is definitely a virtue worth striving for!

Arlene O'Connor
Haddon Road, Rochester

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