

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.

Applauds magazine for noting the 'facts'

To the editors:

Father Richard McBrien writes of the demise of liberal Catholicism (*Catholic Courier*, March 19: "Is Liberal Catholicism Exhausted?"), and of course, denies that there has been any demise whatsoever. The fact that he had to try and convince his readers that liberalism is alive and well is already a point against him since if there was no question on the matter, there would be no reasonable person to challenge it.

But, in fact, we've read an article in the Jesuit *America* magazine that confirms that liberal Catholicism is indeed not only in decline, but is undoubtedly moribund. The article points out that traditionalist and conservative religious orders and diocesan seminary programs are booming with vocations while the remainder of liberal dioceses are suffering from an extreme shortage.

We can simply look at the situation in the Diocese of Rochester to verify this fact. Known as one of the most liberal dioceses in America, we project a 75 percent loss of priests in the next 25 years. The vocations shortage will also cripple our orders of religious women so badly that it is likely that none will remain in the diocese by 2,025.

I commend the editors of *America* magazine for bravely admitting that the so-called renewal has been a horrendous failure and that the only hope for the church is a return to orthodox Catholic teaching and practice. This is a point that is painfully obvious to most young Catholics who stand to inherit the rubble of liberal Catholicism when indeed they should have been given the full richness of Catholic tradition. It must have been difficult for *America* magazine to offer this admission to its readership after so many years of championing the liberal "renewal." But it is a credit to the Jesuits that, perhaps through their years of study, they can at least recognize in a scientific manner, the facts of reality, and whether they like what they see or not, they are willing to admit what most of the Catholic world continues to deny.

Joseph J. Murray
Wyndover Road, Rochester

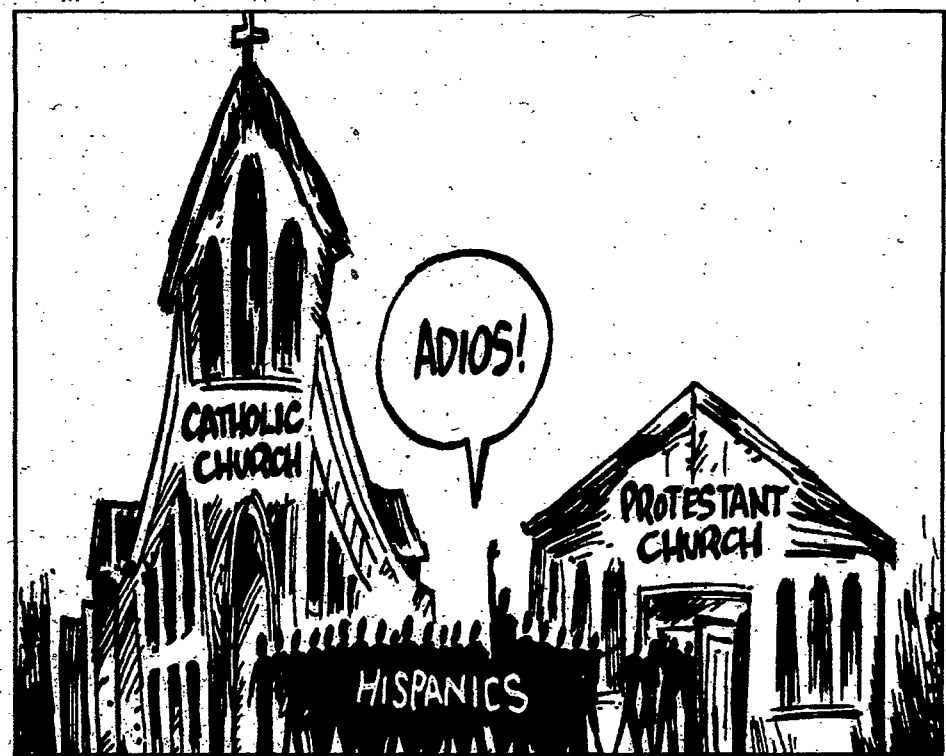
Pharmacists may become assistants in new abortions

To the editors:

The new trend in abortion is terminating early pregnancies through chemical means. This goes against many pharmacists' religious beliefs and therefore they cannot, in good conscience, comply with customers' wishes when asked to fill prescriptions for such drugs as the "morning-after pill" and birth control pills which have abortion-causing effects.

A pharmacist in the State of Wisconsin is pushing for passage of the conscience clause legislation for pharmacists that would protect pharmacists from being forced to dispense any drug that may end the life of an unborn child. For more information on conscience clause legislation for pharmacists contact Pharmacists for Life International, PO Box 1281, Powell, Ohio 43065 or call 800-227-8359.

Dianna Richmond Ives
Simpson Road, Rochester



Urges ban on donkey games

To the editors:

In Numbers, Chapter 22, we find a description of how God permitted a donkey to see an angel, how God opened the donkey's mouth to rebuke Balaam for striking the donkey, and how God's angel reprimanded Balaam for mistreating the animal.

I was reminded of this Biblical view of God's compassion for all His creations when I learned that the Bishop Kearney High School hosted a "donkey basketball" game in March. Faculty and staff played against students. The players rode on the backs of donkeys.

There is nothing funny about a "sport" which places donkeys in an unnatural and anxiety-provoking situation and which subjects them to hardwood floors, to humiliation and to the fears aroused by yelling crowds.

Coincidental to my reading about this matter in the current newsletter of the

Rochester-based Animal Advocates of Upstate New York, I had the previous day reviewed some letters to the editor that were published five years ago by the *Newtown Bee*, a newspaper in Newtown, Connecticut. Readers protested against a donkey basketball game at a local high school. The father of one student wrote that "my daughter has been taught to respect all living beings. Abusing or exploiting any living creature is unacceptable. In my view, this event was an exhibition which was humiliating and degrading to our school and town."

Since then, there have been no more high school donkey basketball games in Newtown. I hope that Bishop Matthew Clark will take the initiative in urging a prohibition against future donkey basketball events at all schools in the Rochester Diocese.

Joel Freedman
North Main Street, Canandaigua

Recognizes volunteers' long effort

To the editors:

I would like to pay an overdue tribute to the Adult Folk Group of St. Joseph's Church in Penfield for its 24 years of providing liturgical folk music biweekly for the congregation attending the 5 p.m. Masses on Saturdays.

The group, which consists of 30-35 members, is also well-known in the wider Rochester community. The group has performed its repertoire at many nursing homes, hospitals, service groups, prisons, festivals, funerals, parish picnics, and variety shows.

Because of a difference of opinion between the pastor, Father Kevin Murphy, and the Folk Group concerning the style and content of the music at this Mass, the group has decided to take an early sum-

mer recess from participation in its regular music ministry. However, the group will continue sharing its gift of song at community events.

The Folk Group was started in 1974 by Sister Diane Branch. Six years later Judy Hendrickson, one of the original members, took over as director and continues in that post. Other original members are Mary Alexander, Jim and Mary Cassano, and Bob and Flo Mooney.

The music that the group sings reflects its own style and tempo. It blends trained as well as untrained voices. Some of the instrumentalists are self-taught. We are told that some members can't read music. However, most parishioners like the result.

Charles E. Lyons
Woodside Drive, Penfield

Another vote for post-Communion quiet

To the editors:

On the April 30, 1997 *Courier* Opinion page, Joan Lindeman asked for time to meditate after receiving the Eucharist. I too would appreciate some quiet time after Communion, at least while people are still receiving. But it seems that the church buildings have become a social gathering any more.

Before Mass, right inside the church proper, conversations are being conducted that can be heard all over. During the Celebration of the Mass, there are other distractions. Then hardly before half the people have received the Eucharist — well Joan, you said it all. Although we have one of the best choirs in the Diocese, I am also distracted. As soon as Mass is over, it's back to socializing once again. What happened to the place where we could go and

meditate, not only on off days and hours, but before, during and after the Sunday Masses? Then again, what ever happened to all the candles we used to light and then say a few prayers? Too many traditions are lost!

Michael Mumma
Dickinson Road, Webster

Glad for straight talk

To the editors:

Put me down as a fan of Father McBrien. He knows what he is talking about and is not afraid of calling a spade a spade. It is nice to see a straight talker in print on a regular basis.

Patrick J. Ferriter
Bristol Avenue, Rochester