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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 enelling only.

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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.

Urge Congress to end SOA funding

To the editors:

On March 23 of this year, 18 of us — including four nuns, five clergy, World War II veterans, college students, retired college professors and grandparents — reported to federal prisons around the country. We are all serving six-month sentences for participating in a peaceful protest against the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA), located at Fort Benning military base in Georgia.

The SOA trains hundreds of soldiers from Latin America each year in combat skills — all paid for by the U.S. taxpayers. Hundreds of graduates of this school have returned to their home countries and have caused untold suffering and death

According to the United Nations Truth Commission Report on El Salvador, soldiers trained at the SOA were responsible for the rape and murder of four U.S. church women; the massacre of six Jesuit priests, their co-worker and her 15-year-old daughter; the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero; the massacre at El Mozote, where more than 900 civilians were killed; and many other atrocities.

As a missionary priest with the Maryknoll Order, I worked in Latin America for six years and witnessed the horrific violence toward the poor by the military. The vast majority of our sisters and brothers there are struggling for food, adequate housing, schools and medicines for their children.

Having their militaries spend millions each year on sophisticated weapons and learning deadly combat skills at the School of the Americas will in no way improve the quality of life for the poor. It only perpetuates their suffering.

As people of faith, I believe God calls us to be peacemakers and healers in our world. Within the next few weeks, Congress will be voting on a bill calling for the cut-off of funding for the School of the Americas. Letters to your members of Congress requesting that they support this bill are very important at this time. Closing the School of the Americas can help bring about peace and healing in Latin America,

I recommend as an excellent resource the newly released video, "School of the Americas: An Insider Speaks Out!" To order call Maryknoll World Products at 1-800-227-8523. For more information please contact: SOA WATCH, PO Box 4566, Washington, DC 20017.

Shortly before Archbishop Romero was killed, he said, "We who have a voice must speak for the voiceless." From the solitude of prison I pray that together we will speak clearly and boldly on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Latin America. In the peace of Christ,

Father Roy Bourgeois, MM #83274-020 Federal Prison Estill, SC

Laws permit murder to fix one's problem

To the editors:

Did you "come from" a human baby? No! You once were a baby. Did you "come from" a fertilized ovum? No. You once were a fertilized ovum. A fertilized ovum. Yes! You were then everything you really are today. Nothing has been added to the fertilized ovum who you once were except nutrition!

And abortion-on-demand laws give to one person – the mother – the legal right to kill another – the baby – in order to solve the first person's social problem.

Have we ever really done this in a civilized society?

Should we start now?

Mary Rita Crowe East Main Street Rochester



Some mysticism has value

To the editors:

I'm writing in hopes that Sister Patricia Schoelles will clarify at some future point her column on "finding spirituality" (June 4).

I agree that a lot of people trying to "find spirituality" are looking for some ego-centered magical state in which control and sensuality are the defining qualities of "spiritual awareness." I think that's the sort of thing she was referring to, but she seemed to be disparaging Christian mystical experiences as well, which are not "achieved" but given. And the purpose of them isn't to leave the world behind, but to allow us to draw on the strength of God's Kingdom within us. It's as if He allows us a peek beneath the surface, to know there are reasons for everything and that He's in control.

The unspeakable joy and wonder that are experienced are simply the result of being in His presence. It's true these aren't maintained in everyday life, but they do help us to keep perspective in a world where evil seems to gain new

ground every day. At the center of the enveloping storm is the light and love of Our Lord, and all who surrender to Him are alive in that light.

I don't think He ever means for these experiences to be an end in themselves. It's more like "Do you feel the healing power of My holy love? Tell the world about it! Do you feel the freedom of My all-sufficient grace? Tell the world about it!"

I know we don't need mystical states to understand these things, but such experiences do seem to create implacable witnesses for the necessity of knowing Him and the truth of His Word.

Mystical states don't give rise to "parallel worlds." They show us that beneath the cares and sorrows of these passing lives we live, there is a Delightful Mystery unfolding His will and asking us to surrender our own wills to His shaping and purpose. And they impel us to urgently, adamantly proclaim that HE LIVES!

Sandra Dunn Mattie Street, Auburn

Takes issue with 'facts' of letters

To the editors:

This letter is to correct some misinformation appearing in the Opinion section of the May 28 issue.

Mr. Gublo stated that the Pope must exercise his teachings in collegiality with the other bishops. However, in the Documents of Vatican II, The Dogmatic Constitution On The Church (Lumen Gentium), paragraphs 22 through 25 spell out how the episcopal college has no authority unless united with the Pope. The reverse is not the case however, because as Christ's Vicar, the Pope is pastor of the whole church and possesses full, supreme and universal power over it.

The second point I would correct is his comment that Mother Angelica never apologized for her criticism of Cardinal Mahony. On her next week's program she did make her apology.

My final comment is regarding Mr. Weltzer's judgment about the quality of seminarians being accepted in those dioceses that have good numbers of vocations. I have heard this and read this many times, but no one has presented any facts or statistics to back up their allegations. As far as I am concerned, comments like these are just "sour grapes." If you were to look at the dioceses with good numbers of vocations, you would find some common threads in all of them; loyalty to the Pope and Magisterium, a belief in the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, the exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; just to name a few.

Edward F. Lada East Street Pittsford

Happy Courier carries insightful column

To the editors:

An old adage addressed to public speakers, "Be bright; be brief; be gone!" is exemplified week after week in Father Shamon's (columns). They are models of clarity, depth, succinctness and wisdom.

His June 4 (column) on the Blessed Trinity is a masterpiece. Never have I heard or read anything in over 70 years that puts so graphically what this supreme mystery of our faith is in itself and in its relevance for each of us. This is a profound and beautiful piece which deserves to be read, reread and pondered over, especially when we make the Sign of the Cross.

The Courier is to be congratulated on having a regular contributor in Father Shamon. Long may he enlighten us all with his wisdom, his humor and his holiness

Margaret Vincent North Street Caledonia