

OPINIONS

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.

Retired priest gave parish roots, wings

To the editors:

At the end of this month, a true friend of our communities will be retiring, Rev. Paul Schnacky. He will be taking up residence at the rectory of St. Ann's Church in Hornell. On June 9 almost 300 people gathered for a celebration of his 19 years as pastor of St. Joseph's in Wayland. I was honored to be asked to speak of Father's gifts to us: those of roots and wings. Since I believe my thoughts echo those of many, I would like to share the following with the readers.

When my family and I moved to Wayland 16 years ago and began to worship at St. Joseph's, we were immediately struck by a sense of warmth, a sense of peace, a sense of the presence of the Lord. We soon learned that this sense of belonging had its roots in a humble, gentle man, one who would become my second father, a priest named Reverend Paul.

As I thought of the gifts he had left us, my mind touched on a hundred different things. At a baptism, Father telling us that each child is a gift from God: treasure this child, treasure all life. At Masses, he would always begin by welcoming young families: telling parents to relax, understanding of a young child's restlessness at mass, supportive of a family worshipping together. The celebration of first communion and the Eucharist: Father's reverent, unshakable belief that the body and blood of Christ are present. His homilies: challenging each of us to listen to the Word of God and lead a Christian life each day of the week.

During the confirmation process, Father speaking of the rich history and evolution of the Catholic church and encouraging each candidate to understand the inherent responsibility that comes with confirmation — that of service and discipleship. His marriage blessing — not a wish of continual harmony and bliss, but one of realism. Times will be difficult, but with sacrificial love and hands joined under God's care, you will endure. The sacrament of reconciliation and his understanding that we are all weak, we all stumble. His belief that it is only through forgiving and being forgiven that we can gain the wings to move ahead.

Father's presence when a death occurs within his community family: the lessons he taught about the grieving process, the importance of the wake and the beauty of the funeral mass itself. His message that every person's life has dignity and a purpose — no matter what his or her station.

Father's belief in the ecumenical movement, the need for unity and the partnerships he formed with all area clergy. Finally, special to me, his unwavering support of both Catholic and public schools: his understanding of the enormous responsibility and influence each teacher possesses and the important role parents play in the effectiveness of a child's education.

Words are far too limiting to fully express my love and appreciation of Father Schnacky. Perhaps the best way is to persevere in the daily struggle to live as he has taught — through his words and example, then rededicate my life as a servant to others — as a servant of God.

Not an easy task. But with roots and wings, how can I fail? How can we fail?

Thank you, Father, for the gift of your presence. God bless you — we love you.

Bob Cornie

Pleasantville Drive, Wayland



CCHD grateful for support

To the editors:

On behalf of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, I am writing to thank Bishop Matthew H. Clark and all of the faithful of the Diocese of Rochester for your most generous contribution of \$72,983. This significant support represents the strong commitment of Catholics in the United States to bring the Church's social teaching to life by addressing the root causes of poverty in this country.

Through your generous support of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, community-based groups in dioceses across this country have created long-term solutions to poverty. CCHD-funded projects are busily engaged in creating jobs, housing, businesses, and better schools. Examples of such projects include:

School-to-work programs that match low-income, at-risk high school students with job training and placement, giving them real opportunities and a future.

Economic Development projects, including micro enterprises and worker-owned cooperatives, that bring living wages and job training to low income communities.

Congregation-based organizations that address the full spectrum of neighborhood renewal: housing, jobs, education, and solutions to crime.

In his 1998 World Day of Peace message, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II reflected on the deep connection between the sanctity of life and justice, and the importance of community to human development — values upon which the bishops founded CCHD:

"Justice is an active and life-giving virtue: it defends and promotes the inestimable dignity of every human person and is concerned for the common good...From the first moment of life, each human being exists in relationship to others, in such a way that the good of the individual and the good of society go hand in hand."

The Church in your Diocese has responded courageously to our Lord's mandate to give priority to the needs of the poor and to join Him in "building a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1). We are grateful for your support and for the invaluable cooperation of your Diocesan Director, Mr. Jack Balinsky, whose fine working partnership with us brings the Catholic Campaign for Human Development's mission to life. Many thanks to your clergy, religious and laity for this increase which is so vital to meeting the needs of the poor.

Rev. Robert J. Vitillo
Executive Director
Catholic Campaign
for Human Development
Washington, D.C.

Shame on paper for juxtaposing coverage of happy, sad news items

To the editors:

I opened the *Catholic Courier* to page 3 and saw the three new priests who were celebrating their first Mass with Bishop Clark. I recognized Eric Phillips and was very happy. This bright spot of my day was quickly ruined by the bold black headlines under their picture about Father Charles Mulligan to leave priesthood. You certainly were not thinking when you formatted your news, pictures for the *Courier*.

Needless to say, at a time when we're crying for vocations to the priesthood, you certainly have not helped the priesthood vocations with your display on page 3.

How much more tasteful it would've been had you written about the picture of our newly ordained priests. Shame on you and your newspaper.

I think that Bishop Clark should've

talked about the newly ordained priests in his editorial on page 2.

I'm convinced that you have hurt the cause of praying and seeking vocations to the priesthood.

I'll pray for you for guidance when you write your articles.

Maryann Mineo
Sunset Drive, Corning

EDITORS' NOTE: It is standard journalistic practice to publish on the first news page of any edition the most significant news that occurred in the period being covered. Subsequent news pages are used to report news of lesser significance. We regret that juxtaposition of the ordination pictures with the story about Father Charles Mulligan upset some readers, but these clearly were the top news stories of the week. "Burying" the Mulligan story elsewhere in the edition would have been unethical.

Expected better coverage of priest ordinations in June 11 edition

To the editors:

You blew it! We got better coverage for our three newly ordained priests in the secular papers! A lead caption on the front of our June 11 edition read "Bishop ordains three priests — Page 3." I expected at least a half page coverage of this special event, but all you ran was a picture! The joy these men were feeling about entering the priesthood was lost to an article about a priest leaving to get married. There were no interviews with the new priests or comments

about the beautiful ordination ceremony and no hint of enthusiasm of the congregation attending. The people in our diocese who do not know these outstanding men still don't know them. This was a great day for God and the three who were ordained; too bad you missed it!

I have great understanding and compassion for Charles Mulligan. This had to be an agonizing decision and ultimately the proper one for him. His story needed to be told, but on a different page. It "stole the

thunder" of the three who through a long discernment process made a choice to follow God's call INTO the priesthood.

Congratulations to each of you, Mike Mayer, Tim Niven and Eric Phillips. May you know the Spirit's blessing on your special gifts.

Harriet Beiter
Butler Drive, Pittsford

EDITORS' NOTE: "Half-page coverage" — including interviews with the ordinands — appeared on page 3 of our June 4 edition.