

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.

Avoid labels in outreach on abortion

To the editors:

In her letter to the *Courier* of June 11, Mary Rita Crowe makes some good points about the language used to describe the beginnings of life and the laws which ought to protect it. However, after reading her piece entitled "Laws permit murder to fix one's problem," the unwary reader may conclude that women who have abortions are murderers.

Such a conclusion is a commonly made judgment reflecting an over simplification of the tragedy of abortion. The law which permits a woman to abort her child opens women who are at risk to coercion by family members, friends, and medical professionals; ill-informed and unsupported, vulnerable women often feel that they have no choice but to abort.

Along with the breakdown of the family, we have more women at risk because of "education" programs that treat fertility as a contraceptive problem and undermine the sacred value of human sexuality. This conditions youths to think of pregnancy as failed contraception. Before she has ever been given the chance to learn the truth about life and love, a woman may find herself a victim of abortion, along with the unborn.

Those who abort purely for the sake of convenience are far less common. Yet, even most of them suffer remorse and guilt. It is the truly hardened who are the most pitiable, because they have not felt the tragic loss of life, nor perceived the damage done to their vital maternal self.

Project Rachel, a healing ministry for those who have had abortions, 1-888-972-2435, hears nothing but the most profound heartache from those who call for help. Our pope reminds us in his encyclical on mercy, that "the church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy ... when she brings people close to the sources of the Savior's mercy, of which she is the trustee and dispenser."

In order to do this for men and women who have been wounded by abortion, we must be careful not to condemn with labels like "murderer," but to respond with compassion to those in need of healing. Let us be united in this effort by the language of love.

Patricia M. Wheeler
River Road
Piffard

EDITORS' NOTE: The word "murder" was introduced in the headline written by the *Courier* staff. Ms. Crowe's letter used the word "kill."

Why polarize church on innocuous issue?

To the editors:

In "Naming of Monsignors violates spirit of Vatican II," Father Richard McBrien voices his personal distaste for the title "monsignor." Fair enough. However, it should be pointed out that this is merely his personal opinion. Vatican II did not abolish the title.

More importantly, Father McBrien's piece is divisive, because he publicly claims that the many bishops who appoint monsignors are out of step with Vatican II and the Church. In a Church that already is in need of reconciliation and healing, it is unfortunate that Father McBrien would want to foster polarization on an issue as innocuous as the use of the title "monsignor."

Leon J. Suprenant Jr.
Vice President
Catholics United for the Faith
Stuebenville, Ohio



Praise, honor Christ at Mass

To the editors:

The following is quoted from the Gospel of St. John (6:54-59): "Jesus therefore said to them, 'Amen, Amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, abides in Me and I in him ... He who eats this bread shall live forever.'"

The following is taken from Father Shannon's column in the *Catholic Courier* of June 11, 1998: A Basilian monk of Lanciano, Italy, had doubts that the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ when he said the words of consecration in the Mass.

"One day, as he was offering Mass, at the consecration the bread literally changed into flesh and the wine into blood, which later coagulated into five irregular globules ... In 1713 the flesh and blood were enshrined in a silver monstrance preserved today in the Church of St. Francis in Lanciano."

The following is my conclusion: Jesus Christ, Our Savior, has commanded His followers to eat His flesh and drink His blood if they want to be accepted into eternal life. How can a Catholic go weeks, months or even years without witnessing and participating in the consecration of the Mass?

In view of what is quoted in the Bible: "Do this in memory of Me," it doesn't seem unreasonable to expect every able-bodied Catholic to attend Mass once in every seven days in order to fulfill Christ's promise of everlasting life. What little honor and praise is given by those who do not receive the Eucharist regularly to the One who made everlasting life possible.

If you are one who has neglected Christ's admonition by not going to Mass, God is waiting at your church with open loving arms to greet you. You only have to show Him that you love Him and that you believe in every word Christ said by attending Mass and receiving Communion regularly.

Enjoy this life! Don't lose the next!

John H. Nolan
Brooks Avenue, Rochester

China story among 'finest' efforts; why graphic connection to Korea?

To the editors:

In my estimation, your cover story in the issue of June 18, "Exiles share stories of besieged faithful," was the finest and most edifying front-page story you have run in recent years. When so many people are working to make a buck or three in the burgeoning market of China, it is instructive to remember that the persecution of Catholics in that country is not a thing of the past, but rather the fruit of a continuing policy. While the Chinese State has opened the country to the commerce of the West, it still harasses and imprisons Catholics. As the article suggests, the people — past and present — who have suffered in China serve as a model for all of us. So thank you for the informative article.

There is an ever-so small brickbat I'd like to enclose with this bouquet: The accompanying artwork on the first page displayed the title: "Exiles share story of besieged faithful" along with an outline of China. In fact, the implied "Korea Connection" was what drew my attention to the article — I wondered what Korea had to do with this. As it turns out, the article didn't mention any "Korea Connection." I know you don't consider Korea and China indistinguishable. So I'm left a bit confused. This does not, however, detract from my appreciation of the article. Good job.

Deacon Gregory Sampson
Thomas Avenue, Rochester
via e-mail

EDITORS' NOTE: We were so preoccupied with debating whether Tibet — which is incorporated in most modern maps of China — should be included in our illustration that we failed to notice the artist's accidental inclusion of Korea. We regret the error.

Enjoyed June 4 issue

To the editors:

Regarding the June 4 edition: I'm a fan of "our" fine weekly paper. Just wanted to tell you that and that Bishop Matthew's and Sister Pat's (Schoelles) columns will be clipped for sharing and for future reference. I liked the cover story too as that is of key concern to many folks who are threatened by change. Communication helps defray the anxiety! Keep up the good work!

Sheila Cody
Naples
via e-mail

Note to e-mailers:

We are glad to note an increasing percentage of letters arriving via e-mail. However, many of our electronic correspondents are neglecting to provide their geographical addresses in the body of their messages. Since the origin of a letter within the diocese often is important to the letter's context — and to a sense of representativeness — we would like to remind all e-mailers to include their street names and cities/towns in their messages.