

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.

Columnist doesn't have clue on love

To the editors:

In Richard McBrien's column of June 25, he points out that "in only one instance St. Paul identified homosexuality as a vice." He must have overlooked 1 Corinthians 6:9. But the mere repetition of a fact does not increase its veracity; moreover, as the entire passage (Romans 1:18-32) makes clear, the practice of homosexuality is no mere "vice" but a grave evil, and by "God's decree ... those who do such things deserve to die" — i.e. be condemned to hell. McBrien says "we will be judged on love, not sexuality." While it is heartening to know that he does actually believe in final judgment, his subsequent assertions prove that he understands neither love nor sexuality, and he fails to mention that our attitudes about sexuality deeply affect how we love.

As St. Paul points out in the above-cited passage, active homosexuals exchange the truth about God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator (cf. Romans 1:15). What is the truth about God? God is love; God is also, through the infinite love between the Father and the Son, eternally generating life in the Person of the Holy Spirit. As we are created in God's image, it follows that human sexual love must mirror the divine love and be able to generate life to be true. Homosexual activity, because it is always sterile, is therefore "a lie" and the opposite of the divine model which we are all created to follow.

Jesus is the means by which we grasp the mystery of God's love. We have only to look at our Savior on the cross to see love in its most perfect expression — and again this must be the standard by which we judge any human love, including its expression in sexuality and "intimacy." On that cross, Jesus shows what all true love must be willing to practice: obedience and sacrifice. Asserting that the "erotic dimensions" of a homosexual relationship don't matter makes a mockery of the cross.

Ironically, McBrien contradicts himself in his conclusion by saying that we will be judged "by our capacity to forget ourselves and our own needs." How important it is, then, for homosexuals to "hold back" in obedience to their faith, sacrificing their sexual "needs" for the glory of God! McBrien is correct that we will be judged by our love — he just doesn't have a clue what love is.

Catherine A. Lawson
Arrowhead Way South, Fairport

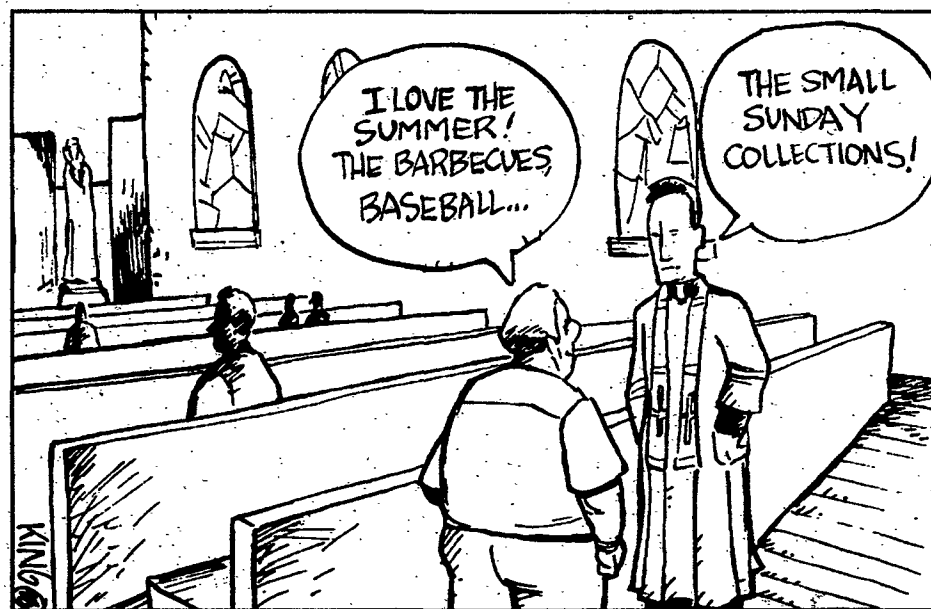
Group aims to foster 'decent' community; yet fliers are indecent

To the editors:

I was disappointed and slightly shocked to read about the fliers attacking Bishop Clark and the upcoming National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian & Gay Ministries conference (diocesan news in the June 25 issue). I would accept both the bishop's and Father Tyman's statements about the inaccuracy of the information in the fliers.

NACDLGM lists five purposes for their existence in their brochures publicizing the conference. None of these purposes contradicts the teaching of the church. Catholics in our diocese will benefit far more from thinking and praying about Bishop Clark's wise words on vocations in the same issue of the *Catholic Courier* than we will if we pay any attention to the fliers attacking him. The people behind these fliers claim to seek a decent community, but if the fliers contain what the *Courier* article says they do, they are themselves indecent.

Sheryl B. Zabel
Lyndon Road, Fairport
via e-mail



Ever-changing church will withstand change, conflict

To the editors:

Your readers should have heard the July 5 homily given by one of our newly ordained. It was eloquent. While I cannot possibly repeat it in his thoughtful words, I think the sense of it needs greater witness.

He talked about how the secular and Catholic media portray us as a house divided, with much in-fighting and some downright meanness, with name calling; and he read from a list of topics that raise red flags — euthanasia, capital punishment, contraception, homosexuality, women priests, celibacy, liturgical practices and more. We all laughed when he ended: "If you expect me to give you my two-cents worth on these topics, you're crazy!"

Then, he repeated from Paul's letter to the Galatians (6:14-18), "May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... All that matters is

that one is created anew. Peace and mercy on all who follow this rule..." How beautiful! How true! And he elaborated, saying this should be our boast and that we must abide in peace and mercy with each other — whether our thinking is conservative, liberal, or in the middle.

My own thoughts: the church is ever changing and there have been times in our history when our actions have been shameful, such as the Inquisition, the treatment of slavery, our attitude toward the Jews etc., and we have admitted and tried to make restitution for our wrongs. We cannot always say that Rome does not err! I guess I have said it in many previous letters and I'll say it again: Be not afraid. The church is NOT going to fall apart! God is in charge; not we! Listen to Him. His voice will not be stilled!

Peace and love and mercy to all.

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle, Rochester

Sharing is another name for love

To the editors:

Several years ago David Frost used to conclude his talk shows with the question, "What is another name for 'love'?" My answer would have been "sharing." Sharing is the outward expression of love. Such love is shown above all in Jesus' sharing of His own Body and Blood with our own body and blood. He found a way to be incorporated with us physically as well as spiritually by taking on the appearance of bread and wine, chief source of our nature's sustenance.

Only a God could imagine such condescension out of love for those He created, but to whom He gave the awesome power of free will — to believe or not to believe that a consecrated Host, though broken into fragments, contains in every part the Lord of Lords and King of Kings whom choirs of angels unceasingly adore.

If we marvel at the condescension of the Son of God to have taken up residence in the virgin womb of Mary, how infinitely greater it is for Jesus to take up Eucharistic abode within us. The priest identifies with Christ when he speaks the words that Jesus spoke over bread and wine, "This is my Body. This is my Blood." Only the validity of priesthood in the Catholic Church makes the miracle happen. There is another sacrament which renders a Catholic priest unique, viz., "By the power vested in me, I absolve you from your sins." This sacrament must be approached by a communicant who has seriously sinned, for all must have on the wedding garment of divine grace before partaking of our Eucharistic King, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Mary R. Locke
Pinnacle Place, Rochester

It's time to wake up, pray and support bishop

To the editors:

If I were Bishop Clark, I'm afraid I would have tossed in the towel and given up by this time.

A leader today who tries to open our Church doors and bring God's love to the world as Jesus did is so often criticized and condemned — as Jesus was.

Yes, I must confess that when I was young, I was quite prejudiced and at times made fun of Jews, gays, alcoholics and others who did not talk and walk as I did.

In the past five decades I have grown up a bit and realize that God doesn't make junk. St. Paul also changed his thinking and ways: "When I was a child,

my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways. These three remain faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:11-13).

Jesus reached out and gave His message to all willing to listen and love.

I believe Bishop Clark is carrying out this message and mission for our Church.

May we wake up, open up, and shape up in the Church today and let us pray and support our bishop.

Father Elmer J. Schmidt
Blossom Road, Rochester
Pastor Emeritus, St. Ann's, Hornell