

Catholic Courier

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1150 Buffalo Road
P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340
800/600-3628 outside Rochester
http://www.catholiccourier.com
e-mail: cathcour@frontiernet.net

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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.

Role is far more than paperwork

To the editors:

Let me offer a few thoughts on the July 2 article, "Leaders chart new waters." It seemed to me that there was much factual truth in the article, but I questioned the strong emphasis on administration. What is the vision of this new role?

In my spring 1993 experience as Temporary Pastoral Administrator with the Catholic Community of the Blessed Trinity in Wolcott and Red Creek, I discovered a warm, "down to earth," and hospitable community. I discovered people who knew that they were community and who wrestled with all that meant. I discovered a gifted people with gifts just waiting to be tapped, who thirsted for meaningful celebrations of God's presence among us, who looked for more enrichment.

Out of that and other experiences in pastoral ministry, let me offer some hopes about this new form of leadership. That the pastoral leader be about the transforming work of the Gospel within the community. Listening deeply and being genuinely present to people. Offering an inspirational vision of how things might be. Helping people in the midst of change to name and grieve losses. Being an instrument of celebrating both losses and moments of great joy. Being an instrument of life, of calling forth and supporting the many gifts found in any community. Being an instrument of Gospel peace, not unnecessarily afraid of inevitable conflict, but skilled at moving toward genuine healing and reconciliation.

I know that this is a challenging list, and that all leaders fall short. But my hope is that this new form of leadership will help move us as Church into a place where everyone's gifts are valued and can be used fully for the sake of the Gospel. Administration is important, but is that where the emphasis should lie? And if not, perhaps the title of this new role needs to be changed, as well.

Gloria Ulterino
Stone Road, Pittsford

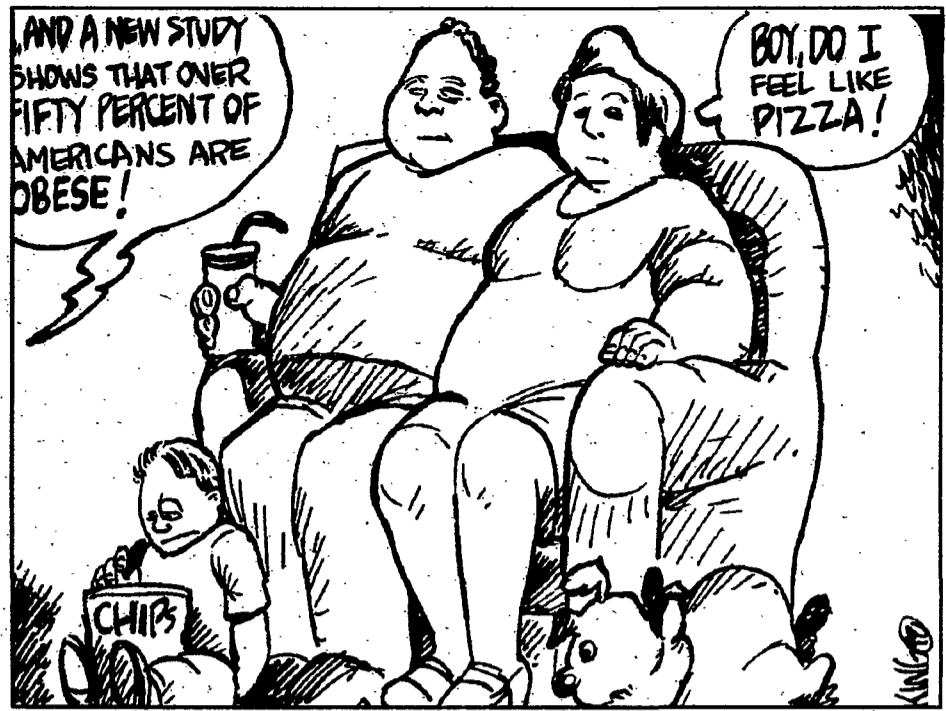
Courier missed significant gala at St. Monica's

To the editors:

To the person that wondered why nothing was written about the unity of Tioga County Churches; don't feel bad, the school I went to in Rochester, St. Monica, celebrated its 100th anniversary and nothing was in the paper. People came from all over; a priest alumnus came up from Louisiana. Many young people and older ones in their late 80s were there. Extra chairs were brought in because it was standing room only. The Bishop was there also. Father Bob (Werth) has three parishes, the neighborhood is run down, but it still stays a beautiful place of worship.

Dorothy Smyles Vandermark
Class of '42
Monroe Street, Endicott

EDITORS' NOTE: To reiterate, something WAS written about the unity of Tioga County parishes; the story simply was published prior to the event commemorating their achievement. As for St. Monica's, we had a scheduling conflict on the date of the Mass Ms. Vandermark describes, as was explained to the individual who called from the parish about the event. The Mass was promoted in the Courier's calendar, however, and we intend to publish a story about the 100th anniversary of St. Monica's Parish in the fall.



Keep church out of obesity issues; why can't priest do two weddings?

To the editors:

I am writing in reply to the (health section) in my *Catholic Courier* issue I received today: "Should church speak up on weight issues?"

My reply: An EMPHATIC NO! I cannot see why the church must get involved in someone's weight. I am not obese but I was quite angry with the thought of the church getting involved in this issue. There are enough issues that the Church must straighten out because of parishioner loss, that we don't need to offend any more people and lose them as parishioners.

On another item in the paper: "Church should prepare for priest shortage" by Father Hemrick. He states that he is restricting himself to one wedding on a Sat-

urday. My question: Are weddings so much work that he couldn't at least do two on Saturday? Perhaps that is why so many young people are waning away from the Church, there are too many restrictions.

I understand the priest shortage, but we all have to work sometimes twice as much as we'd like, and I can't see why the clergy can't do the same without complaining all the time.

Ann Bonsignore
North Main Street, Elmira
EDITORS' NOTE: Father Hemrick's July 16 column began with a quote from a priest of Father Hemrick's acquaintance who limits himself to one wedding per Saturday. We do not know whether Father Hemrick does likewise.

Talk about options ignores baby

To the editors:

A recent (secular) newspaper article about a merger of two hospitals states that physicians should neither be gagged nor restricted in offering the full range of care sought by their patients — individuals should be able to receive various services and abortions as needed.

The Hippocratic Oath, which I believe is administered to medical school graduates, speaks of entering a house for the good of the sick to the utmost of your power, holding yourselves far aloof from wrong and exercising your art solely for the cure of your patients. Does an abortionist violate this oath when a normal, healthy pregnancy is violently terminated? Someone with organ failure, a broken limb, cancer, a muscular disease, etc., is

sick and needs curing. Pregnancy is a blessing, a gift from God and not a sickness that needs curing. When in the womb, the baby is part of the mother and should be protected. We don't intentionally allow our limbs to be severed and thrown out, nor our organs destroyed with a saline solution and vacuumed out. Why do we allow doctors to commit abortions on God's innocent miracles of creation?

The article suggests that women's health care will suffer due to the merger. What about the baby's health care? Abortion kills the baby and destroys part of the mother — this is health care? This doesn't sound like good health care, this sounds like a violation of the Hippocratic Oath.

Steve DeLucia Jr.
Webster

Tone of critical letter was unfair

To the editors:

You'll likely get a variety of response to Catherine Lawson's 16 July opinion of Father Richard McBrien's 25 June column on homosexuality. It's a volatile topic, but not why I write. I want to take exception to the tonality of Ms. Lawson's letter itself. I do so because your Letters Policy refers to "a sense of fair play." I would suggest that Ms. Lawson's letter has anything but.

The most obvious slight is how she refers to the priest — Richard McBrien once, and simply McBrien thereafter. While Ms. Lawson has every right to hold an opinion different from Father McBrien's, her refusal to acknowledge his office is petty at best. Two of Ms. Lawson's statements reinforce her disdain. Early on, she says "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..." Later, she concludes "McBrien is correct that we will be judged by our love — he just doesn't have a clue what love is." How sad.

To my mind, Father Richard McBrien is an articulate, thoughtful, compassionate, and fair minded writer as well as a respected theologian. Ms. Lawson should be so blessed.

Charles P. Myers
Tait Avenue, Rochester

Expected Ireland story

To the editors:

Regarding Northern Ireland: I was very upset there was not a mention of the church burnings in last week's (July 9) edition of the *Courier*. For once, I hope the church speaks out about the violence.

Gail Sweeney
Elmira, via e-mail