

## 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.

# Kneeling would increase reverence

### To the editors:

In the past year I have attended several Masses at St. Patrick's in Owego. At none of these Masses did kneeling occur. There is a large-scale disbelief or ignorance in the Eucharistic presence of Christ. Given this condition, I find not kneeling to be a curious practice.

We are not only part of a community gathered at a particular Mass but part of a greater community — the universal Church celebrating a common rite. The "sacrament of unity" unites the whole Church and that is why important Liturgy changes, such as not kneeling, shouldn't depend on one parish or Diocese but the whole Church. The gathered parish faith community is not the center of the Liturgy; we should be careful we don't over-celebrate human actions at Mass and end up worshipping ourselves.

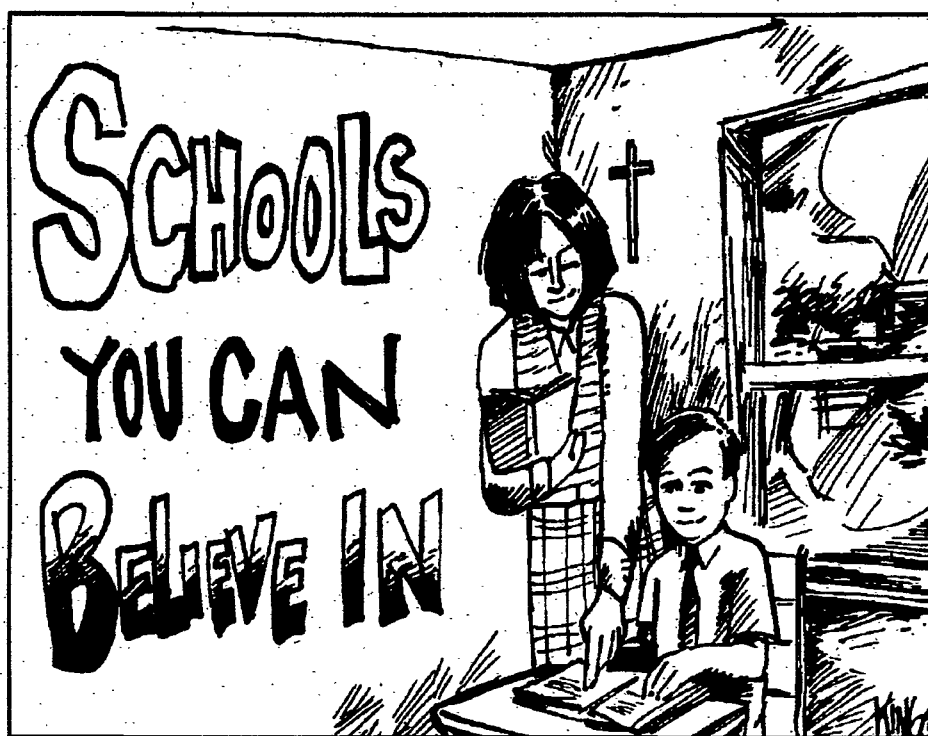
According to Church teaching even if the gathered faith community is absent, if a priest prays the Eucharistic Prayer, bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. No community prayer can do this. The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a primary reason for kneeling. I suspect downplaying the Real Presence to make us more conscious of other ways Christ is present will actually make us less conscious of Christ's presence at all. Besides, how does kneeling for a few minutes distract us from any type of "Christ-presence?"

An argument used to support not kneeling includes the Orthodox Church's lack of kneeling, but it should be mentioned that in the Orthodox Church the Eucharist is "hidden" from view of the people — the people are entirely separated from the sanctuary out of a sense of mystery. Shall Catholics institute this also? Another argument used is the fact that the early Church did not kneel. However, the early Church had a deep belief in the Real Presence — something very much lacking in present society. Perhaps after belief in the Real Presence is regained, the "not kneeling" practice can be looked at, but perhaps then people would prefer kneeling.

An important part of Mass is praise and thanksgiving. Is kneeling incompatible with praise and thanksgiving? In Dn 6:11 it reads "And I knelt down on my knees three times a day to give praise and thanksgiving." Interestingly, this passage is considered by Jews to be the basis for the three regular times of prayer at synagogue. Also, the Eucharist is rooted in the Jewish *Berakah*. The Hebrew word of *Berakah* means to genuflect or kneel.

There are many examples of kneeling in Scripture that involve intercessory prayer, part of Eucharistic Prayer I: Acts 9:40, Acts 20:36, Acts 21:5, Eph 3:14 just to name a few. If Paul exhorts us to bend our knee at the mere name of Jesus (Phil 2:10), why not kneel before His Real Presence? To the people at St. Patrick's who would dearly like to kneel — please do so. I would also suggest reading *Adoremus Bulletin* for more information.

**James A. Urda**  
Straw Hill Road, Barton



## Pro-life activists' struggles parallel those endured by noted suffragists

### To the editors:

Regarding Hillary Rodham Clinton's speech on July 16th in Seneca Falls, New York, for the 150th Anniversary of Women's Rights:

As keynote speaker at the opening ceremonies, Mrs. Clinton recounted the struggles of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the village's most famous resident, and other 19th century women who started the women's rights movement in America. She also mentioned that oftentimes these women were labeled as fanatics. Through the tireless efforts of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and others, women were finally granted the right to vote.

The anti-abortion movement today is experiencing many of the same hardships and struggles that many women faced in

their fight for women's rights. Today, pro-lifers are labeled as fanatics as were the women who dared to attend the first women's rights convention in 1848. Also some suffragists were put in jail for protesting the unfair treatment of women. The same holds true today for anti-abortion supporters who have been jailed for their cause.

Susan B. Anthony was a woman of vision and knew that through hard work and perseverance one day women would be granted the right to vote. The same holds true for the anti-abortion movement that will continue in its struggles until abortion once again becomes illegal in America.

**Dianna Richmond Ives**  
Simpson Road  
Rochester

## Reasons columnist offered for Mass going didn't address writer's personal attraction

### To the editors:

At the end of Father Hemrick's column on Mass attendance (July 30) he asks the question "Why do you come to Mass?"

I thought about the reasons given in the article, and none seemed to quite articulate what I experience personally in the Mass, what draws me there every week, no matter what.

I think the heart of it is a sense of connecting. In the atmosphere of holy ground and in the liturgy, I'm connecting with 2,000-year old roots, and it's almost as if those two millennia weren't Church history but present experience, sort of a timeless core of living faith.

There's also a sense of connecting with the Church worldwide. The same read-

ings, responses and prayers are shared by our brothers and sisters on distant shores and in unfamiliar cultures, and the one Body and Blood of Christ enters each of us, allowing us to touch each others' souls in Him.

Finally, there's the greatest and grandest connecting of all, that being the wonder of the Holy Eucharist. It feeds our spirits in a very particular way, a tangible way, and I just can't be without it. It strengthens us to walk in His ways, it magnifies His love in us, it is a deeply intimate grace. His Body and Blood are life in us, just as He said.

**Sandra Dunn**  
Mattie Street  
Auburn

## Letter criticizing columnist was petty and disdainful of his position

### 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

Send your opinions electronically — e-mail them to [cathcour@frontiernet.net](mailto:cathcour@frontiernet.net)!