

Teach all of Christ, not just His love

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.

To the editors:

I've never met Father James Callan nor attended Corpus Christi Church, but reading the letters from his supporters — and interviews elsewhere — I was a bit concerned that they'd be so quick to label those who might disagree as threatened reactionaries.

At any rate, considering there are many false prophets in the world, and a terrible loss of spiritual discernment among both sheep and shepherds, I've several questions in my heart concerning the matter.

Father Callan's love for the least of us sounds truly heart-warming, but aren't all of us who are alive in Christ the same? Can any of us hold back His love in us? I'm just wondering if Father Callan brings the broken ones all the way into the fold. Does he teach repentance and conversion, the turning from sin to be made holy by the Spirit? Does he teach surrender and sacrifice along with love and compassion?

From what I understand, there are three issues at the core of this controversy: the sharing of the Blessed Sacrament with those of the Protestant faith, condoning homosexual unions and promoting the ordination of women.

Now, our Protestant brothers and sisters generally don't believe in Christ's real presence in the Holy Eucharist, but that it merely represents His body. Does Father Callan at the very least ask those who don't acknowledge His precious body to refrain from receiving?

Secondly, I've no idea what Father Callan has actually said and done concerning gay couples, but does he at all times teach the necessity of celibacy in their relationships?

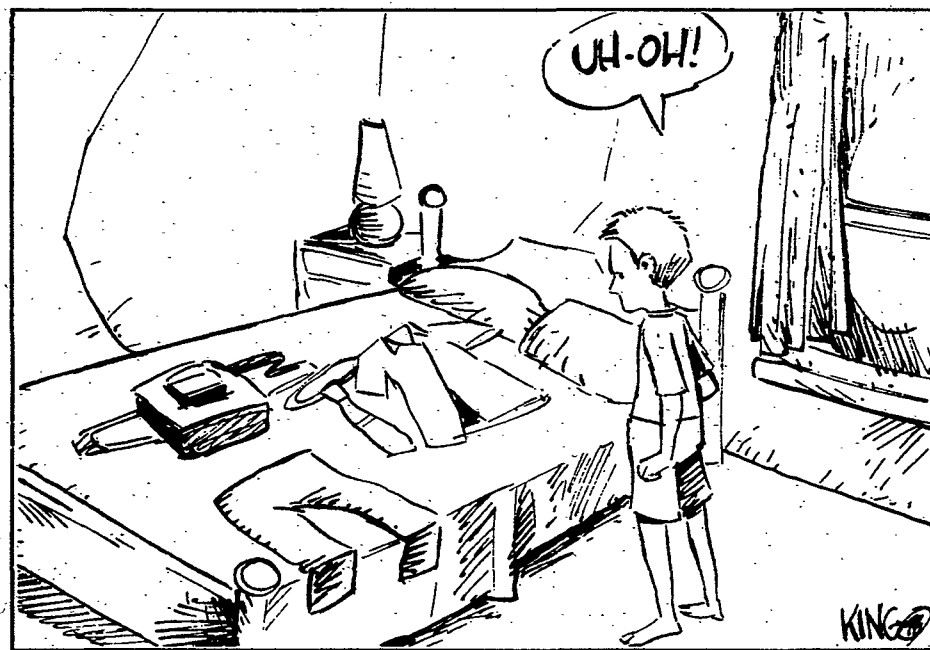
Lastly, and I know it's a hard thing for some to accept, but Jesus had valid reasons for instituting an all-male priesthood, and we can be sure they had nothing to do with cultural norms or expediency. Doesn't Father Callan trust Jesus in this?

Father Callan has chosen to follow his conscience in these matters, even though Church teaching is firmly grounded in Scripture where they're concerned. Is personal conscience to be given primacy over submission to Apostolic teaching, the very foundations of Christianity? Should what feels right be trusted over the inspired Word of God?

Father Callan's parishioners have several times referred to him as a persecuted prophet. But is he not surrounded by loving supporters in their hundreds? Isn't he encouraged and praised and validated by them? Doesn't he speak a message that makes people feel comfortable? Jeremiah should have had it so good!

I believe in the power of Christ's holy love, but it doesn't end there. The beauty of Christ is that He is love, holiness, joy, grace, righteousness, peace and all things pure and wondrous, permeating each other like a rainbow returned to the white light of its beginning. We need to hear about all of it, and to test all teaching against the sound doctrine of Holy Scripture. Would Father Callan agree?

**Sandra Dunn
Mattie Street
Auburn**



Conflict over parish shows perils of 'cafeteria' thinking

To the editors:

Father Callan and his followers at Corpus Christi have taken cafeteria Catholicism to a new height — or should we say low? While I am impressed by the much-touted renaissance that has occurred at Corpus Christi and its many wonderful ministries, I am deeply troubled by Father Callan's belief — endemic among American Catholics in particular — that you can pick and choose from among the Church's teachings and traditions with the faith that the Holy Spirit is guiding the Church in good times and in bad. Being Catholic also means knowing that change has occurred, continues to occur, and will occur within the Church at the proper time. Vatican II is a prime example of this process in the Church.

Change is not something that can be forced upon the Church by one individual or one parish. Most disturbing is the fact that Father Callan has openly incited his parishioners to flout Church teachings. I find disingenuous Father Callan's

claim that he will obey Bishop Clark when at the same time he refuses to curb in his parish practices that are not allowed. In his actions and in his rhetoric Father Callan has shown a reckless willingness to let his own interests supersede his vows as a priest and his duty to the Church. There is a good reason priests are routinely re-assigned: so that our faith in Christ and the Church does not become too closely bound up with the vision, opinions, or interests of any one individual.

The sad truth is that Father Callan may well play a major role in tearing down the very parish — and the many ministries — he has worked so hard to build up. As parishioners rally behind him and threaten to leave the church if they cannot continue to pick and choose what aspects of church teachings they wish to uphold, the harmful consequences of cafeteria Catholicism become plain for us all to see.

**John Givens
Kent Park
Rochester**

Unfolding events changed her view

To the editors:

This is a follow-up to the letter I wrote on August 16 when I first heard about Father Callan.

I applauded him for the audacity of his faith and I still believe that his action will somehow strengthen our church. As the news unfolds, however, I am disappointed in his seeming lack of humility, and his disobedience. It hurts terribly that he said he is being sent to "St. Purgatory's in the Boonies." Ouch! There are sophisticated people "in the boonies." They are not "hicks" and it's not Hell or Purgatory. Further, there are poor and marginalized in the country and small towns, too, and they need love and compassion.

Will no one come to the defense of our good and saintly bishop, Matthew Clark? Those on the right who condemn him for being "soft" on homosexuals and on

women who desire greater recognition within the church? Or, those on the left who condemn him for not completely and immediately following their radical agenda?

Please. Let wise heads prevail! It is understandable that Father Callan wants to dramatize his position, and I believe that good will ultimately come from calling attention to the need for change. But, to my own way of thinking, change should come from within, through prayer and dialogue. We get impatient, yes, but we must pull together as family, not through dissension and alienation.

Please listen to our wise and gentle shepherd, Bishop Clark.

Blessed are the Peacemakers!

**Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester**

'Disappointed' by embarrassing behavior of priest he once admired

To the editors:

Seldom have I been so disappointed in someone whom I once admired as I am presently disappointed in the Rev. James Callan. His behavior is the source of that disappointment.

In attempting to describe that behavior, words come to mind such as inappropriate, immature, disobedient, self-serving, ungrateful, childish, self-defeating, embarrassing, and scandalous.

It is time for the Rev. Callan to recog-

nize and honor the legitimately established authority of the Bishop's office. It is time for him to put this personal agenda aside. It is time to abandon the "I know best" attitude. It is time for him to stop trying to force the Bishop into untenable positions.

It is time for him to keep his ordination promise of obedience. It is time for him to stop teaching children how to disobey. It is time to shed the martyr mantle.

Unless he is inviting suspension, Rev. Callan must bend a little. He knows that the Bishop cannot sanction practices which contravene church doctrine. It is Rev. Callan who must change if the situation is not to deteriorate further. It is the Rev. Callan who will be responsible if the Corpus Christi parish and outreach ministries fall apart.

**Tom McCarty
Judson Street
Webster**