

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.

Grateful for patience of other women

To the editors:

I find it difficult to be an intelligent and thinking woman in the Catholic church. The Western world has seen tremendous progress for women's role in society. Sadly, the Roman Catholic Church has lagged this progress by at least several decades. Exclusion of women from ordained ministry and therefore all the important decision-making hierarchy of the church is the most obvious. In this climate it has been painful and difficult to continue worshipping as a Catholic. When I moved to Rochester I was pleased to be able to return to church knowing that Bishop Clark's leadership was encouraging women in ministry.

There is nothing in Jesus' teachings which leads me to believe women are inferior. Jesus was truly radical in his time, refusing to condemn the prostitute woman (John 8:1-11) and talking to women who were seen as "other." Jesus valued the company and contributions of women as evidenced by women accompanying him throughout his ministry, to his death, and as primary witnesses to his resurrection. This respect which Jesus showed women was contrary to the prevalent themes of Jesus' era, and is a fundamental part of the radical shift Christianity brought to the world.

I believe that insofar as women are excluded from the full life of the church, we have not yet achieved the "kin-dom" which Jesus came to develop. Two millennia later we find the struggle continues. Under the leadership of Bishop Clark, one of the diocesan goals is to recognize and support the role of women in Church. Sadly, our whole Church is not yet ready to ordain women, but this must change. In the meantime, women called to church service are taking active roles in ministry. Women lead the liturgy of the word, conduct youth and family ministries, and assist in sacramental preparation and teaching. These are all appropriate activities, and ones which I believe JESUS WOULD ENDORSE!

At Eucharist, the sacrament of sharing, women ministers may assist the priest. If ordination is the sacrament which grants a priest the authority to preside at the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, then we need to extend this responsibility and privilege to women. In the meantime, a woman minister is not acting in any theologically or morally incorrect manner by assisting with prayers and preparation of the Eucharist. The raising of hands toward heaven in prayer is not a forbidden activity.

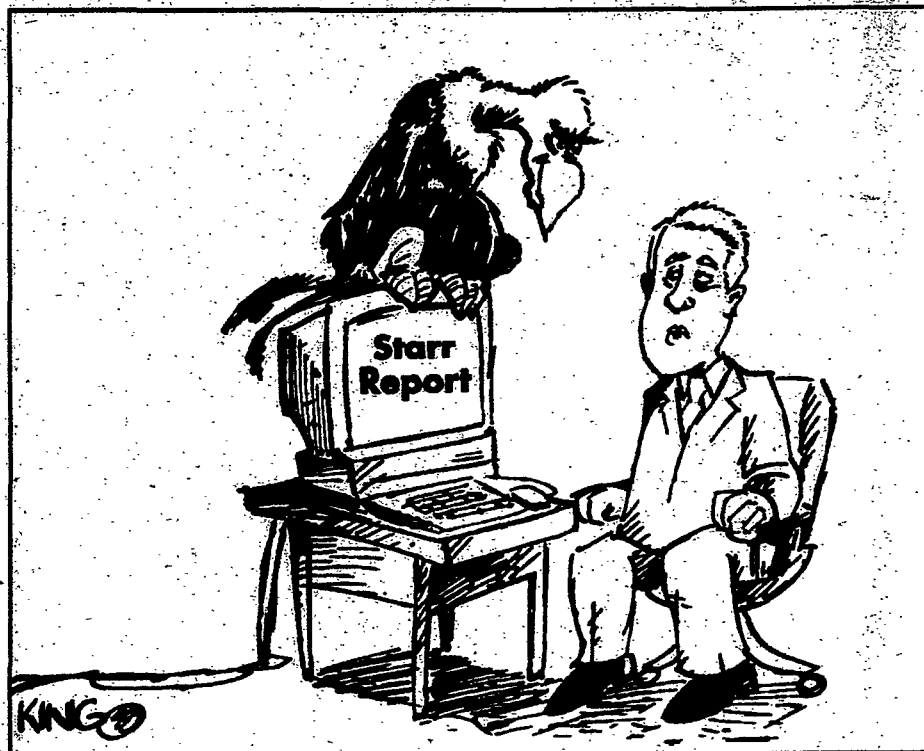
As a woman who struggled with the decision about entering ministry and opted instead for work as a physician, I feel connected with many women over time who have left ministry in the Catholic church for ordination in other churches. I acutely feel the struggle of those women who remain to work in Our Church, to struggle for justice, and to deal with the frustration of an institution stuck in a centuries-old paradigm. I would not have the patience, so I am grateful to those women who do. Let us go forth together to bring Jesus' work to fruition, at long last!

Colleen T. Fogarty
 Lake Road North
 Brockport

Emeritus pastor looks back gratefully on changes throughout career

To the editors:

Being a friend and fan of Father Jim Callan, I wrote Jim last week: "Upon spending seven happy and fulfilling years in Corning, nine years in Apalachin, and the last 15 years in Hornell, I did not ask



Church often lags behind when leadership is needed

To the editors:

Father Shamon's column "Are you willing to take up your cross?" (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 3) is a wonderful witness to the cost of discipleship, the cost of truly following Jesus. When I read it I thought of Father Jim Callan. I do have one problem. What do you do when the disciplines of the church become obstacles to following Jesus. Jesus comes before us on the cross, in weakness, showing us the power of powerlessness and we are called to follow. But Christ on a cross certainly speaks out against any misguided power that puts people on crosses.

After Jesus had been taken prisoner and was led off to Caiaphas we read some of the saddest words in Scripture. "Peter followed at a distance" (Matt. 27:57ff). Peter, the first pope symbolizing the church, should have been with Jesus. Instead he followed "at a distance." We as a church have never followed Jesus very closely. Sadly, we even discipline those who do.

After Mary Magdalene discovered the empty tomb (John 20), she ran to tell Peter. Simon Peter and the disciple Jesus loved ran to the tomb. Peter got to the tomb second. Love got there first. In so

many of the major issues of history, especially in areas relating to justice the church is slow at embracing the issue. Love gets there first. Then the church follows. Defending the rights of labor, the rights of the poor, women's rights, speaking out against slavery, against racism and sexism are a few examples. The church should have exercised moral leadership in these areas but like Peter got there second.

Sometimes the church needs a jump start or a gentle push if it is to live in prophetic faithfulness to Christ's teachings and actions. Orthopraxy (right practice) is just as important as orthodoxy (right teachings) if we are to live our lives in imitation of Christ.

We need to be a church that follows Jesus more closely both in word and deed. Let us pray that we as church can exercise the unconditional, universal, inclusive love demonstrated by Jesus. May we truly be followers of Jesus and witnesses of the power of his love, celebrating diversity and equality for all who are united in Christ, Jesus.

Emmett and Janet Neary
 Bakerdale Road, Rochester

Sees former Corpus administrator as 'prophet' preaching joy of faith

To the editors:

We have heard a lot about Father Jim Callan, Corpus Christi and the Roman Catholic Church these last few weeks. We have heard about his inclusive ministry and the objections of the more traditional or conservative members of the Catholic Church. We have heard about the wonderful ministries to the poor, homeless, sick and dying, etc. But as someone who knows Father Jim, I don't think enough has been said about this priest and the way he shows people the way to Jesus and the Father.

When you first meet Father Jim he has a warm smile and looks right into your eyes. Everything about him says, "Hey, I know who God is and I want to show you how to love him and be close to him." He doesn't want you to go to Church on Sun-

day because it is an obligation, he wants you to be there to connect with God. He wants all of us to realize that our faith is a whole lot more than a series of rules, regulations and dogmas. Our faith can be and should be a great joy. We can experience an intimacy with God that is truly wonderful. He showed me the way and I will be forever grateful.

The truth is I believe that Father Jim Callan is a prophet. He is someone who teaches in a new and illuminating light. If you don't believe me, go see for yourself. If you are looking for more out of your religion than tradition, rules, regulations and dogma, then seek him out. If you open your heart, you will be forever changed.

Tom Curtin
 Groveland Road, Genesee

prayer: For all that has been — thanks; for all that will be — yes! It works, Jim. Try it and you'll like it.

Fr. Elmer Schmidt, Pastor Emeritus
 St. Ann's Church, Hornell
 Blossom Road, Rochester

or wish to leave any of 'my' pastorates. However, with tears I said I would move on, for my motto was: When God guides, He provides."

Now I am very satisfied and pleased with my decisions and transfers. My