

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.

Children pay price for efforts to 'convert'

To the editors:

In responding to the ironic conflict of observing a Catholic priest, who successfully ministered to non-Catholics along with Catholics, on a collision course with an ecumenical bishop, who's been extraordinarily successful in promoting Jewish-Catholic relations, I see a tragic irony for others.

Both of these men, in my opinion, have more in common with each other and with most Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, in general, than they do with stalwart defenders of the religious status quo — be they Catholic, Protestant or Jewish. I decided to write this letter after reading a statement in a letter to the editor of the *Catholic Courier* to the effect that any controversy as to inter-Christian Communion can be solved by converting any Protestant, who would like to take Catholic Communion, into a Catholic. I'm afraid that it's this very traditional attitude that has not only contributed to this very inter-religious and intra-religious conflict, but it is also one that has seriously weakened the very Catholicism that it purports to defend.

I find it most ironic that anyone in a church, wherein attendance is declining in this country and heading toward a European situation wherein less than 20 percent of Catholics in France or Germany attend Mass, would feel threatened by a priest who has increased attendance. These same critics of Father Callan must either not know or care that close to 40 percent of Catholics marry non-Catholics, with millions of their children growing up in non-traditional religious family situations. Should those traditionalists succeed in imposing their view of Catholicism on others, they will see fewer and fewer of those children in their churches.

I am quite personally aware of this mostly unaddressed and ignored problem as a Catholic with a Protestant wife. There are many Protestants, like my wife, who do not wish to be Catholic, under any circumstances, but who agree to raise their children as Catholics, if the circumstances are right for themselves. Very simply, if the particular priest and church is exclusively conservative and traditional, the children of approximately 40 percent of Catholic families in that parish might cease to be Catholic. These children are on the verge of having no religion at all, because the result of inter-intra-religious conflict for them is not that of one religious position winning over another, but, rather, that of there being no religion — in the religions of both of their parents going under.

I would recommend a moratorium on conservative-liberal religious conflict, and recommend that we all concern ourselves with more important religious concerns in keeping the needs of those children in mind. Rather than worrying about whether someone is more or less traditional, we should worry about how does one keep God in the picture, how do Christians keep Christ in the picture, and how do Catholics keep the Church in the picture when more and more parents of Catholic children are not Catholic. If the church can nourish more Father Callans with more inter-faith ministries, they just might keep those children. If not, look around your church and try to see if any of those children are still there.

Dr. E. Scott Ryan
West Water Street
Elmira



Article's lack of clarity led to confusion and concern

To the editors:

My husband of 34 years and I are in need of some serious guidance as a result of the article, "Officials affirm Viagra validity," published in the July 16 edition of the *Courier*.

Is the church really teaching, as Father Edgar Holden states that, if my husband becomes impotent, he must take Viagra or our marriage becomes invalid? What if he has a heart condition? What if I become ill? Can it really be that Father Holden has discovered the answer to annulment? Just wait awhile, and our marriages will become invalid because of aging or illness.

Over the many years during which we have read the *Courier*, we have found many articles and columns to be interesting, provocative, and sometimes infuriating, but rarely so incredibly insensitive and likely to mislead.

Please be more careful to attend to the

implications of the articles you choose to print.

Cecily K. Bodnar

North Main Street, Canandaigua
EDITORS' NOTE: The *Catholic News Service* article in question was intended to assure Catholics that the use of Viagra within marriage is morally acceptable, and the quote from Father Holden pointed out that the drug might even remove an impediment to marriage for some couples. Unfortunately, however, that quote was worded ambiguously, and our editing process failed to correct it.

According to Canon 1084, "antecedent and perpetual impotence... invalidates marriage." The key points are that to invalidate a marriage the impotence must: 1) have existed prior to the marriage, 2) continue throughout and 3) be incurable by human means. If impotence occurs after a marriage has been consummated, the marriage is — and remains — valid. We regret any confusion this ambiguous story may have caused.

Catholicism holds fullness of truth

To the editors:

Regarding his recent trip to Israel, Deacon McNulty stated: "The Vatican Council reminded us there is truth in not just the Roman Catholic faith, but there is truth to be found in other faiths as well."

The second part of his statement is accurate, but the first requires clarification. The Roman Catholic faith is the only one which contains the fullness of truth, because it was founded by Christ who IS the truth. Any faith not based on Him and His Church can ultimately give only glimpses of truth in varying degrees.

The Vatican Council also warned

against religious indifferentism in *Dignitatis Humanae*. "The social duty of Christians... requires them to make known the worship of the one true religion which subsists in the Catholic and apostolic church" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, par. 2105).

Catherine A. Lawson

Arrowhead Way South, Fairport
EDITORS' NOTE: The quotation to which Ms. Lawson refers, which appeared in our Aug. 20 cover story, "A journey of faiths: Pilgrims celebrate common roots," came from Bishop Matthew H. Clark, not Deacon Brian McNulty.

Applauds editorial for hitting proper balance

To the editors:

In your Aug. 27 issue, there is an editorial entitled, "Nothing private about it." I don't know who the author is, but I would like to say to him or her, "Well done!" Too often, our society seems to imply that if we are not to judge the sinner, we must ignore the sin. This attitude even seems to have infiltrated some areas of our Church.

The author of this article however has found, in my opinion, the Christian bal-

ance. John the Baptist rightfully accused the leaders of his time of improper actions, and Jesus had some complimentary words to say about John. I think Jesus would also applaud the author of this editorial. Thank you.

Robert P. Cirre

West Meadows Drive, Rochester
EDITORS' NOTE: Our editorials are written by Associate Editor Lee Strong, but are published unsigned because they reflect the input of all three editors.

Parish's daily evening Mass a blessing for workers

To the editors:

Bravo to the Church of the Annunciation! I understand that they are offering a daily 5:30 p.m. Mass for parishioners and visitors. This is an excellent idea especially as this will allow working persons

the opportunity to attend daily Mass which they may not otherwise be able to and those among us who are not necessarily early risers. Keep up the good work.

Mrs. Patricia Batz
Leonard Road, Rochester