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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.

'Ordinary' woman likes church role

To the editors:

If I understand C. Fogarty correctly, I am not an intelligent woman. I don't know how I've survived all these years and worked as a registered nurse in various critical care areas being as unable to think as I am. "Why?" you ask? Well, for some reason, I am able to find completeness in my role in the Church without needing to be a priest. I can evangelize, console, pray, worship and teach just as I am as an "ordinary" woman. I also manage to remain relatively intelligent even though I choose to put my family ahead of my own desires and stay home with my children to be their mom.

How it can be difficult and painful to worship in the Church is beyond me. There is no lack of opportunity to be thinking and steeped in the glory of our faith. That is probably why we have so many women who have been canonized. They have managed to get beyond the confines of their womanhood to be great in our faith. It is even more remarkable when you consider the fact that they were constrained by the social atmosphere that was prevalent from the time of Our Lord to the recent past.

What made them saints? Could it be the fact that they were not so self-absorbed that their only concern was about what they were getting for their pride from the Church as an organization? I believe their concern was for what they were getting for their souls from the repository of our faith. Women had more influence on the Church and were more instrumental in ministering to people and encouraging vocations in times when they were "repressed" than they do now as a ... group bent on

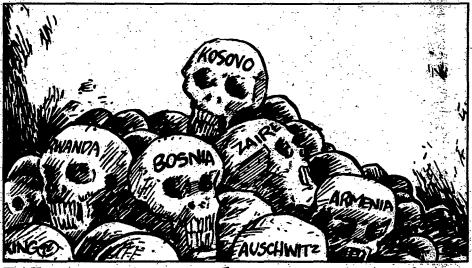
equality." Christ gave the gift of showing Himself to the women first because of their faithfulness. He never offered them a position as an apostle and the women didn't need that to minister and evangelize. He CHOSE to be born in that era. He chose to give the keys to the KINGDOM (not KIN-DOM) to Peter, not to Mary his mother, Mary Magdalene, Mary or Martha. He knew full well what our world would be like now, yet he chose to come at a time when women were not given the freedom to pursue their hearts desires. Why did He do that? Maybe because He knew that the women in our world WOULD be like they are today and wanted to see whether we would follow Him and be "humble of heart" or if "we would not serve." How we choose to live our lives, either as beings consumed with pride or people content in our station is very important. Pride is the sin that divided heaven and now it is dividing our world and our Church. Jesus would have endorsed what women do, sharing of our faith to our children and ministering to people as nurturers of our faith. We tend to it so it will grow and flourish. It is not theologically or morally incorrect for women to assist at Mass. By offering our prayers while the priest celebrates the Mass, we HAVE assisted with bring-

ing all of us closer to Christ.

Having a woman at the altar in priest-like dress is not what is required to assist at Mass. The desire to dress as such shows the vocation the Lord chose for us is not satisfactory. We are the nurturers and the perpetuators of our faith. In doing that we do, more is done for the long term perpetuation and dissemination of our faith than is done by standing in front of a group of people feeding our self-importance.

Pray to find contentment in life as it is. Don't waste time chasing things that are inconsequential, life is too short. What your position is in the Church is not as important as living your life the way Jesus taught us.

Margaret A. Cutt, R.N. Rochester



Women need to recognize who has spiritual authority

To the editors

I agree with Colleen Fogarty about how difficult it is for a thinking woman in our church. The impression I get is that the church would have us look to the authority for all our answers and of course the authority is comprised of all men. They make decisions that will affect the lives of women in the church without having women participate in the decision making process. To look to tradition is not always the best thing as tradition has not always been kind to women. I think it is important for women to discern who she will allow to have spiritual authority over her

Theresa of Avila, for example, had many spiritual advisors. This way, chances are, a few would confirm how the Spirit was really guiding her and she was empowered to act. I sense that her patience was sorely tried as she dodged inquisitors but she was so creative.

When I think of quitting ministry because of disillusionment with the church I step back, pray and engage in some other creative activity before I go back in and take another stab at it. I feel like my roots are all tangled up with the lives of other women of faith. I love to read about Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Dorothy Day, and others. I think of Jesus and how He was with women. For once in history there was right relationship ... one of love. Love never exists where there is dominance over others or where one group defines who another is to be or what they can or cannot do.

Sometimes I think our church does not believe a woman can image Christ to others. I think our language and our liturgies are very imbalanced and exclusive of women and this results in a very imbalanced image of who God is ... the God who loves and accepts us all. I really think that it is God who ordains all of life anyway. Divisions and separations and hierarchies don't exist in the Kingdom where the first shall be last and the last shall be first. I'm sure canon lawyers won't be necessary and women will be dressed in beautiful robes in the Kingdom to come. I think Jesus will let her raise a cup at His table too and no one will be surprised. Our business as Christians is to bring about the Kingdom in the here and now and this does not mean to keep things the way they always were.

Sissy Mahoney St. Ann's, Hornell

Change usually takes time, prayer

To the editors:

In struggle we win. As I read my Couriers, I see varying opinions of Father Jim Callan and his terrific work at Corpus Christi Church. You know, when I converted to Catholicism, my chaplain in the Navy told me, "We're a group who loves the Lord but has a wide degree of diverse opinions when it comes to church doctrine. That's why we have a diocese to help stay bonded together."

I have met Father Jim and agree fully in my heart that he truly believes as I do that all have an absolute right to full access to the Lord and people who perform his works. This does not mean that we have to ignore church doctrine in achieving this.

Bishop Clark has been slowly and methodically incorporating all into our parishes in a way that is acceptable to Papal Law and doctrine also. Examples of such are his gay Masses which I fully support. Changes takes time and "prayer". Asking God for help and wisdom will help us make changes necessary for all to be one in our parishes. Remember, "Give it time and give it prayer" and it will come. Thank you, Father Jim, for your courage to ask for change.

Jim Berry Pardee Hollow Road, Wayland

Questions purpose of paper's survey

To the editors:

Thank you for the fine article Mike Latona wrote in the most recent issue concerning homosexual teenagers. This thoughtful and sensitive piece was however followed by a scandalous side-bar in which you call for a poll on whether teenagers who happen to be homosexual are worthy of the Church's ministry. I am trying to recall an account in the Gospels in which Jesus asked people whether or not he should minister to this or that person. I cannot recall such a request on his part. Rather he seems to have intentionally reached out to precisely the people others told him to ignore. I hope that this is a momentary lapse on the part of the Catholic Courier editors, and that you will not be taking further polls on who is worthy of pastoral concern and ministry.

Rev. Gary Tyman Chaplain, Newman Community University of Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: The "poll" in question was not intended to gather opinion on whether gay and lesbian teens are worthy of the church's ministry; their worthiness is a given. The question related to whether high schools, the church and the community need to establish ministries specifically for gay and lesbian teens. That seems an entirely valid question, since – to our knowledge – none of the Catholic high schools in our diocese have yet created such ministries.