

## 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.

## Defining justice for President

To the editors:

None of us can disagree with any of the arguments which Father McBrien makes in his column of Oct. 15. We can wonder, however, why he chose to fill a column with them. The first half of the column is devoted to questioning whether the President's behavior in his affair with the then 23-year-old Ms. Lewinsky was necessarily sinful. Most Catholics already know that decision is God's, not the Congress's, or the voters', or ours.

The second half switches abruptly to a complaint that William Bennett, an admitted conservative, omitted "justice" from the virtues, and discusses in his "book of Virtues," and implies that people who have worked, earned and saved "on the backs of the poor and the powerless" are greater sinners because they have not given it all away to the poor.

I believe that the whole national budget is set, and spent, on our collective sense of justice. There was a time when the only support of the "poor and powerless" was alms from the wealthy; now it is alms from the taxpayers, and the tax code determines the involuntary part of the contribution of the wealthy.

We have been richly endowed by our Creator with many diverse abilities. I believe that justice also requires each of us to use those abilities, and the earnings they produce, for the support of ourselves and our families, as well as others less fortunate

## Support vigil against SOA

To the editors:

The U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) has trained 60,000 Latin American soldiers in over 50 years. SOA graduates have been cited for some of the worst human rights abuses throughout Central and South America. Human rights violations attributed to SOA alumni include the El Mozote massacre, the rape and murder of four U.S. church women, and recent atrocities in Chiapas, Mexico. The SOA originally was established in Panama at U.S. taxpayer expenses but since 1984 has made its home at Fort Benning, Georgia. A Panamanian newspaper dubbed it "The School of Assassins."

On Monday, November 16, which is the 9th anniversary of the massacre of six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter, there will be a vigil at the Federal Building in Rochester at 4 p.m. I would urge you to show up and denounce the U.S. support for such an institution that promotes murder, torture, rape, disappearances and fear throughout Latin America. Contact me at (716) 964-7982 if you would like more information.

There will be a vigil at Ft. Benning to protest the SOA on November 21-22. I would call on any who can go to attend. Call SOA Watch at (202) 234-3440 or [www.soaw.org](http://www.soaw.org) for more details. I will be there, as I was last year, and I hope more can join the 4,000 to 5,000 expected there this year.

Why should you care? Because as followers of the Prince of Peace we are called to be peacemakers. Also we should question how we benefit from a system that represses Latin Americans and others around the world to maintain the lifestyle we enjoy.

Peace be with you.

**John Honeck**  
Bankside Drive, Hamlin



than we. I believe that justice also requires those who are able, to use their God-given abilities to support themselves, rather than expecting the State to do so.

The structure of Father McBrien's column leads to the suspicion that he is a hereditary Democrat. I can only remind him that President Clinton's troubles are remarkably like those of President Nixon. They were both accused of lying; Clinton in a sworn deposition to a court of law, and Nixon to Congress. They both encouraged friends and staff to lie; at least one Nixon aide spent a year in prison. Clinton's personal lawyer felt it necessary to write a letter to the court where Clinton's affidavit went, saying that he believed his client had

lied. He faced disbarment if he had not done so. Another interesting sidelight is that a young lawyer named Ms. Hillary Rodham helped prepare the impeachment charges against President Nixon.

I believe justice demands that they both be treated equally. Nixon admitted his lies and resigned. Clinton has admitted his, also, but refuses to save the nation the acrimonious struggle which the impeachment process will produce.

I will continue to read Father McBrien and will probably agree with most of his words. I do not feel that the last piece was worthy of him.

**Richard J. Erbelding**  
Bay Village Drive, Rochester

## Columnist lied, reader says

To the editors:

I write to inquire as to why our diocesan newspaper would print a boldface lie written by Rev. Richard P. McBrien in his column in the 10/22/98 edition of the *Catholic Courier*.

It is absolutely untrue that the Church discourages adoration of the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass. In fact, the title of the official Roman ritual ENCOURAGING IT is: *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*. My copy was published by the Catholic Book Publishing Company of New York and carries a copyright date of 1976. The translation was the work of the International Committee on English in the Litur-

gy, Inc., and it was published by authority of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Once again, the faithful of the Diocese of Rochester have been subjected to the devious and shallow ruminations of this disgruntled academician and cynic. But then, no doubt Rev. McBrien is still angry with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops because they banned (as well they should have!) his highly problematical opus: *Catholicism*.

"How long, O Lord, how long...?"

**Deacon William F. Schmitz**  
Cedargrove Drive, Rochester

## No problems with pilgrimages

To the editors:

In his column of Oct. 22, Father Richard McBrien writes about the "outlandish and bizarre happenings" in Worcester, Massachusetts. While claiming to cast "no aspersions on the good will and sincerity of those who have traveled" there, he does make it very clear that he thinks these individuals are pathetically ignorant of what "real" Catholic spirituality is all about.

I know nothing about Worcester, but I do know that the concept of "pilgrimage" is an ancient and venerable one, which is mentioned in the earliest records of the Old Testament. And, I know that when

people traveled long distances (or ripped off the roof) in search of healing, Jesus neither sent them to a "health-care facility" nor belittled them for seeking a miracle. Apparently the Pharisees were like Father McBrien in thinking it would be much better if such ignorant and excessively emotional individuals would just see their doctors and pray to God quietly at the ordinary Temple services. Thankfully, God never has and never will allow such pompous pundits to dictate how, when, and where He will heal.

**Christine Bravo-Cullen**  
Lee Road, Dryden

## Make penance a part of the Mass

To the editors:

In his Oct. 22 column, Fr. McBrien addresses the question, we have the Mass, why celebrate Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament? A similar question can be debated. The Mass is a communal penance service. Why celebrate a communal penance service (cf. Sr. Schoelles' column of July 2) different from the Mass?

What distinguishes the Catholic Church is the Mass and the Sacraments. A distinguishing mark of Catholicism in the 20th century is the trend to incorporate the celebration of the Sacraments within the Mass. This is more appropriate, since the grace of all of the Sacraments, as all grace, derives from the sacrifice of Calvary, the sacrifice of the Mass. In this century we

have witnessed the trend to celebrate the Sacraments of Matrimony, Baptism, and the Anointing of the Sick within the Mass. Oddly, one Sacrament left out in the cold is the Sacrament of Penance, which is rightly, and, in early church practice, was an integral part of the Mass. Happily, the restoration of the full power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to the penitential rite of the Mass would require no change in the liturgy, but simply the fiat of the Pope. I hope that the laity, clergy, and episcopate petition our holy father, Pope John Paul II, to effect this restoration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to the Mass in this coming, final year of the 20th century.

**Robert E. Drury**  
Pre-Emption Road, Geneva