

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.

Reforms arise from grassroots

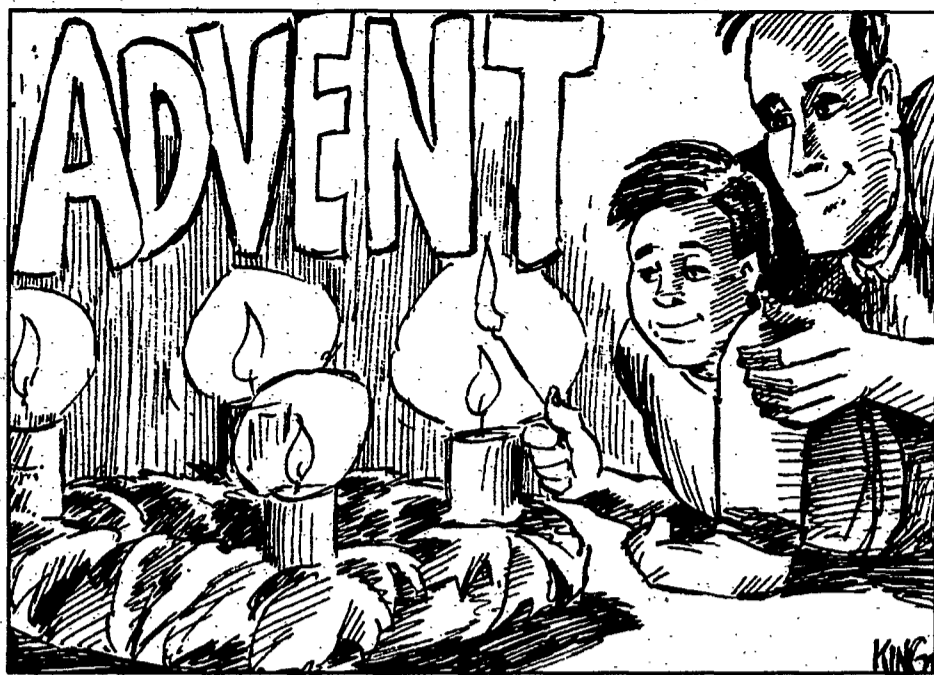
To the editors:

Recently I read, reflected and prayed about Bishop Clark's column, "Bishop explains limits on independent actions," in the Nov. 12 issue of the *Catholic Courier*. I respect and love Bishop Clark as my Bishop and have considered myself fortunate to live in the Diocese of Rochester. As some people are aware, I am a parishioner of Corpus Christi Church. Regrettably, I disagree with Bishop Clark's comments.

Please note that I have the right to disagree with his comments, because the Roman Catholic Church recognizes primacy of conscience above its own rules. In addition, the Second Vatican Council clearly stated that all people of the Roman Catholic Church have the right and a sacred duty to speak when we have concerns about pastoral leadership in our Church. I have concerns about the pastoral leadership (or the lack thereof) in the current Roman Catholic Church.

In my opinion, the views expressed by Father James Callan, Ms. Mary Ramerman, and Father Enrique Cadena regarding

1. Pastoral ministry by women so that all people may know that both women and men are called by God to the voca-



tion of pastoral ministry,

2. The offer of the Eucharist to non-Catholics who love Jesus and believe Jesus is their Savior and have come voluntarily to Corpus Christi, and

3. The private blessing of a homosexual couple committed to a lifelong union, more closely reflect where God (Creator, Jesus our Savior, and the Holy Spirit) is calling us to be as individuals and as a Church than the current official Roman Catholic Church "norms." In my two short years as a parishioner at Corpus Christi, I have heard countless stories from other parishioners of suffering and alienation from the Roman Catholic Church followed by joy and reunion with God when they found Corpus Christi. I believe God is calling the Roman Catholic

Church to make some changes in its norms.

Change in our Church does not occur by all bishops and all pastors always following all "norms that protect our unity." Change in the Church has frequently happened from the bottom up when the pope, cardinals and bishops eventually recognize that God, the people and individual bishops and pastors support a particular change. In this type of change, unfortunately, the institutional Church lags behind God and the people instead of providing proactive leadership. I believe our Church will eventually make these and other changes so that more people may come to know and love God.

C. Michael Reimringer
Sperry Drive, Henrietta

Vatican, Corpus both intolerant of dissent

To the editors:

After reading about the Corpus Christi saga for some time now, I wonder if there is a curious similarity between that parish and the authorities in Rome. The content of their theology is different but they seem to approach their doctrines in much the same way.

For several years now, the Vatican has become less tolerant of discussion and dissent. For example, to even discuss the possibility of women's ordination is no longer permitted. Likewise, to even discuss the possibility of Mary Ramerman removing her celebrated liturgical garment is not permitted.

Bishop Clark's attempts to impose any sort of limits are seen as unacceptable. I suppose if you believe that you possess per-

fect truth, it is illogical and even absurd to admit of any limits. Why listen to anyone who does not agree with you? That person can be dismissed as having a "blind spot." On the other hand, perhaps your normal mode of dismissal is excommunication. I cannot recall any papal encyclicals dealing with the limits of ecclesiastical authority.

If you could ever get the Vatican authorities and the Corpus Christi zealots together on a purely social basis, not allowing any theological discussion, they might find they have a lot in common. I, however, would rather not attend that party. I freely admit I do not possess clear and perfect truth. The world usually confronts me not in black and white, but in various shades of gray. It is a more subtle, and definitely

more quiet color. It may not bring me closer to truth, but somehow I feel I am more in touch with reality.

While I certainly would not want to "hold back the spring," I must admit I'm looking forward to an early arrival of winter this year.

Ronald Stacy
Eden Lane, Rochester

Opponents live by letter of law

To the editors:

I recently heard Fr. Callan and Mary Ramerman speak for the first time. What a courageous and faithful team we have thrown to the winds.

I think I understand the order of events. A priest is assigned to an inner-city parish with very few parishioners remaining in an area fraught with problems. The priest, being a true believer and a charismatic personality, prays his way through the development of ministries to the sick, the homeless, the ex-convicts, the aids victims and the drug abusers.

He and his army of volunteers (I wonder if this is a translation of Soldiers of Christ) serve two decades. They see the altar as the table of the Lord. They believe women as well as men are called to minister and they recognize differences among people.

Along come the people with the rule books. They monitor events, take pictures, make tapes and make lists of all the rules that have been broken. There's no mention of bringing salvation to God's people — only a list of rules that need to be followed. Those with the rule books harass the hierarchy until the ministers to the poor and disenfranchised are pushed out.

Where are we now? Broken hearts, broken spirits, disillusioned parishioners, but we have those rule books. Will the ministries survive? Do we care whether the ministries survive? After all — they're poor people. They're probably not even Catholic!!!

Marylouise Young
West First Street, Elmira

Women serve through love

To the editors:

Many letters and articles are written in regard to women's role in the church today. With sincere respect for the opinion of others, I would like to share a few thoughts on this subject.

As a woman, I feel I best serve God in simple ways. For me, it is the constant challenge to be able to love unconditionally and to be faithful to God's word, whatever it means to me in my everyday life and circumstances. This is a lifelong commitment, one that is a source of joy and at times, a struggle.

I was blessed with two angel mothers, who I am certain both now wear "the crown," the prize they won for their courageous commitment to marriage, motherhood and family. I am single, so I do not claim motherhood as my vocation. However, I do claim 12 very special Godchildren and a wonderful family. Several years ago, I had the privilege of caring for my beloved parents, a role I embrace as a special gift. There are so many ways we can be spiritual women.

We are spiritual when we say yes to God's plan for us; we are spiritual when we are willing to be all that we can be to one an-

other. If we can practice a positive, caring, loving attitude in whatever role we have as women today, if we do not lose our connection with others, then we truly become church. For church, after all, is and always will be God's people. Men, women and children worshipping and coming together in community, we bring our fears and failures to the altar, and go forth in faith with our hopes and dreams for the future.

Our Bishop, Matthew Clark, knows what he's about. He is aware and open to the needs of the church, he listens, and he leads, but I also believe he has a keen sense of balance. This is so important in times of controversy and transition. It is good to remember that while certain changes are necessary to keep the church alive, vibrant and growing, we move forward on the journey slowly. In the meantime, let us prayerfully keep our eyes on the present, do what we can today, be open to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us, and be at peace with ourselves and one another.

As Catholic, Christian women, we can each, in our own way, do "something beautiful for God."

Leona J. Dessena
Hornell