

# OPINIONS

## 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.

## Real point: Euthanasia is sinful act

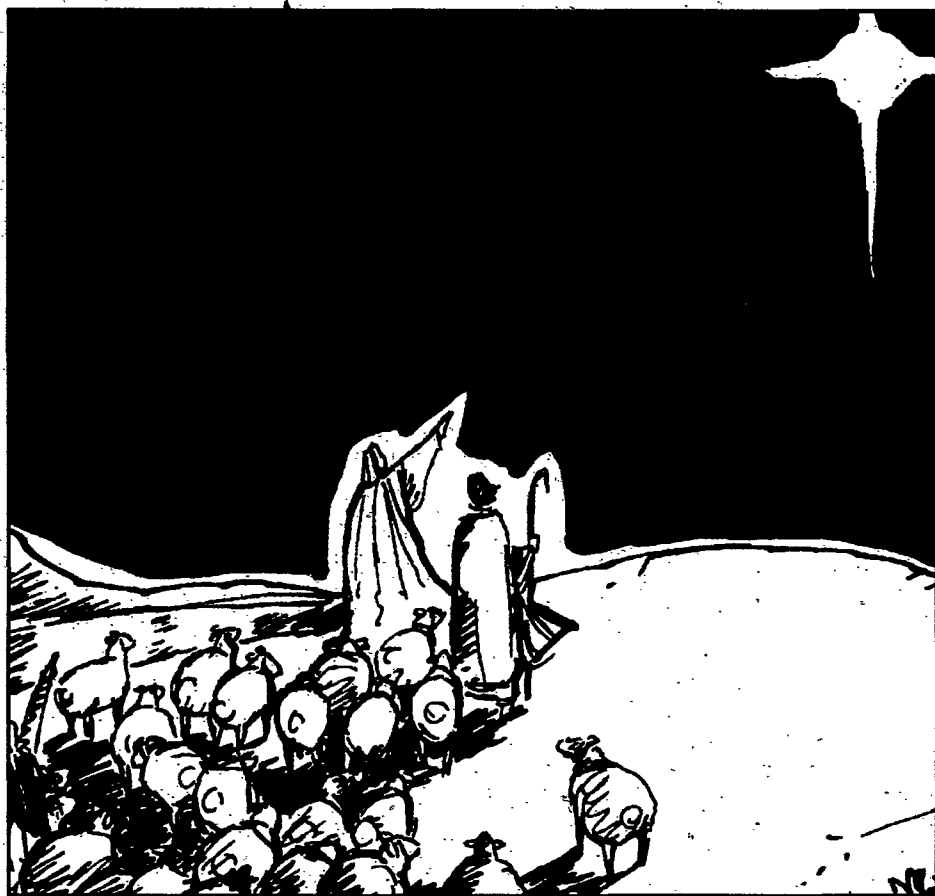
To the editors:

Sister Patricia Schoelles' article on Dr. Kevorkian (*Catholic Courier*, Dec. 3) disturbs me.

First, Sister Schoelles asserts that what Kevorkian did on "60 Minutes" was "physician-assisted suicide." It was not, and the difference is critically important. Kevorkian didn't assist the guy in taking his life. He took it! Kevorkian has already been tried and exonerated *ad nauseum* for physician-assisted suicide; at least in Michigan, it's pretty much a dead issue. Arguably, the dark doc committed murder during that TV segment, a crime for which he'll probably be tried. This, in fact, was the whole point of Kevorkian's "60 Minutes" stint: to challenge the law and see whether or not a jury would convict him of murder.

What most astonishes me about Sister Schoelles' piece, however, is its failure to make the single, simple, and — for Catholics — unassailable argument against euthanasia: It's a sin! What should have been the ground and foundation of her essay — the central Christian belief that life is God's to give and God's to take away — is nowhere to be found in it. Thus, from a Christian/Catholic perspective, her argument is trivial at best, irrelevant at worst.

And vulnerable. Lacking this Fifth-Commandment foundation, and absent legal obstruction, one is simply left to one's preferences in the matter. Indeed, if I were living out the short balance of my life in terminal agony I might quite reasonably resent the meddling of some stranger who, feeling pretty good herself, miles



away, in her easy chair, can presume to tell me, a free American citizen, what I may and may not do with my misery. As the movie title goes, whose life is it, anyway? If, as Christians are supposed to believe, the will is free, then it would be reasonable for me to demand the right to exercise my free will and accept the consequences, here and hereafter.

Within the humanistic context which she has embraced, Sister Schoelles evokes the familiar Orwellian bad=good inversions that this argument inevitably produces: Euthanasia annihilates "caring," which becomes implicitly defined as the willingness to stand by and watch passively as a loved one writhes in unremitting pain. If you "care," you won't interfere.

Even if he pleads. The sufferer worries, she thinks, not about ending his unending pain but rather about whether he's sufficiently "attractive and independent" to those around him. Extreme suffering and the passive witnessing of it breed, in Sister Schoelles' view, "true intimacy and genuine acceptance." God spare us all such intimacy!

If one wants to argue against physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, and the Kevorkianization of American life, one does best to stick with the ancient wisdom of the Church: God's will — not man's — be done. And be done with it.

Peter Dzwonkoski  
Westmoreland Drive, Rochester

## Thank you for supporting Brazil mission

To the editors:

During this past year, the economic crisis in so many parts of our world has shown us how interconnected we are. Problems in one country become problems for others. Last month the U.S. government, IMF and others, were willing to loan money to Brazil in an attempt to prevent more serious economic problems from spreading to the U.S. and elsewhere.

As Sisters of St. Joseph, ministering in Brazil, we experience the interconnectedness of the people and places where we live and minister and the people and places of the Rochester diocese. Your generous do-

nations through the Diocesan Mission Collection have enabled us to work here in Brazil among the poor for almost 35 years. This past August, the visits of six young college women from the Rochester diocese gave us special joy and a sense of our shared mission. In January, Bishop Clark's visit to the Mercy Sisters in Chile and to us in Brazil will strengthen our bonds with you. We thank you for your support of our missions in Brazil: for your prayers, interest, financial donations and concern.

As we enter a new year and prepare for the new Millennium, may we listen to God's call through our Bishops to hunger

and thirst for Justice. May the needy close at home and global issues of Justice and Charity call us to live our faith in the concrete situations of our lives.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester  
in Brazil:

Sandra Silva Arantes, Jean Bellini, Christel Burgmaier, Janet Connerton, Maureen Finn, Elizabeth Alves Gama, Ellen Kuhl, Anne Marvin, Joana Dalva Alves Mendes, Maria José Monteiro de Oliveira, Barbara Orczyk, Katherine Popowich, Marlena Roeger, Ireny Rosa da Silva, Dolores Turner, Suzanne Wills

## Solution to controversy should be an example

To the editors:

I have refrained from writing about the conflict at Corpus Christi Church because Fr. Jim Callan, one of the protagonists, is my brother. On the other hand, Bishop Clark is also my brother — as is Cardinal Ratzinger. And that is my purpose in writing.

When events unfolded initially, I had thought Corpus Christi and Bishop Clark were going to show the wider community how conflicts can be handled differently in a Christian setting from what we see in most secular conflicts — for example, the Bosnians against the Serbs, the racial tensions in our own neighborhoods and even family conflicts of every description. Much of the posturing between Bishop Clark and Corpus Christi, in the beginning, involved repeated affirmations of the other's good character and record of good deeds. But as the conflict has gotten old it seems headed toward a merely secular conclusion, based on the politics of power. I think the Christian imagination

can do better than that, based on such texts as "If someone takes your cloak give him your tunic ... Turn the other cheek ... Let the weeds and wheat grow together until the harvest ..." If Scriptures like these don't have practical applications in the real world, by what authority can believers claim to be a beacon for the world?

I personally think the opportunity to show the world an alternative method of conflict resolution is a more urgent matter than the original differences over which these brothers and sisters disagreed. This is because violence is a root

problem in our society. We are prone to resolving differences by power. I don't wish to underestimate the importance of the issues at stake in the stand-off between Bishop Clark and Corpus Christi. But I wish to remind them that they have a golden opportunity to work out, before the public, an imaginative solution to their differences that can truly inspire others to attempt something similar in their marriages, in racial relations, and even in stand-offs between nations.

Dave Callan  
Cincinnati, Ohio

## May Father Ventura never retire

To the editors:

Fr. Gennaro Ventura (*Catholic Courier*, Dec. 3) is one of the finest priests I have ever known, and I'm almost 75 years old.

When assigned to another parish, we felt deeply our loss, but knew that for the love of Our Lord, the blessing of Fr. Ven-

tura's example should touch as many lives as possible. We felt we were sharing.

A priest like Fr. Ventura should never retire, nor will his example in our hearts and lives.

Georgette M. Murphy  
Cortland Street, Geneva