

# 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.

## Women find fulfilled lives in the church

### To the editors:

Recently much has been written about the position of women in the Catholic Church. As Catholic women, we would like to respond.

Not all women in the Catholic Church feel "oppressed" or "devalued" as is often implied or stated in the newspapers. Many, if not most women, find fulfillment in the Church and its ministries. We do not find "faith" in words such as "oppression, equality, progressive, aggressive, recognition and discrimination." These are words about power and ego, not faith; they are words used in relation to a 200-year-old American constitution, not a 2000-year-old church founded by Jesus Christ. To us, these are words of anger and bitterness.

Conspicuously absent from recent newspaper articles are words like acceptance, trust, humility, selflessness and obedience. The great women of our Church, Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux, Catherine of Siena, Mother Teresa, among a few, would never have worried about equality in the eyes of the world.

In one article written about Corpus Christi, Ms. Ramerman said she would not relinquish her half stole. Before leaving Corpus Christi, she went on to say "when I think of this stole being ripped off me," she connotes the message of be-



ing violated, abused and hurt. We would like to suggest that these may be personal issues and not necessarily the issues of other Catholic women.

The Scriptures clearly show that the action of Jesus was not "culturally conditioned." The position of Jesus is meant for all time. The phenomenon of women gaining more "rights" in a society is a 20th century development. These are issues of the world and Jesus taught us to be "in" the world and not "of" the world.

To us, fulfillment does not come from wearing a stole given as recognition, or having a title, but comes from Jesus Christ being the center of our lives. When we, as Catholic women, are filled with the spirit of God, we know we are valued and beautiful. There is no worldly recognition needed. There is no outside force or worldly symbol necessary. We do not need a woman on the altar to show us our value. We are loved passionately by our Lord

Jesus Christ. Therein lies our value.

Finally, it must be noted that there are countless numbers of women who are serving and ministering in the Church doing varied things; visiting the sick, attending the lonely, teaching the children, safeguarding the rights of the poor and downtrodden, ministering to the dying, participating in liturgy and praying before the Blessed Sacrament. We are all called to love and serve as our Lord loves and serves.

We are Catholic women who love and serve our Lord and our Church. In doing so, we are very fulfilled and now pray that all can exemplify humility, gentleness, patience and selflessness, and together bring peace to our Diocese.

Ann Kirchoff, organizer  
Shalom Bible Study, Pittsford

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter was signed also by 16 other members of Shalom Bible Study.

## Writer wonders if diocese is backsliding

### To the editors:

I am angry. Since Vatican II, my Church has led me down a road of progression. I have been open-minded to the changes: The English language at Masses, taking down of altar rails, receiving Eucharist in the hand, girls being altar servers and women giving homilies. I have been to charismatic Masses, home Masses (where at some all were invited to receive the Lord), "In the Spirit" seminars and "Women in the Church" seminars.

I have seen Bishop Clark reconsider the women in the church issue in his "Fire in the Thornbush."

I have heard women (some in administrative roles) frustrated by the hierarchy of the Church and the power and control of it. I have recently seen Bishop Clark say a Mass specifically for the support of homosexuals and their families.

All of these changes were not only in the Church, but also in my way of thinking towards the faith I have always embraced.

After years of this "moving forward," a roadblock has been set up! I feel that while Bishop Clark, and many religious, really believe in their hearts they are taking positive steps, Fr. Callan is being

made the scapegoat for putting into action the direction my Church has been leading me in for years!!

Are we now going to backslide to pre-Vatican? Can we not still have the beautiful traditions of our Church and yet actively address the issues of our day (women in the Church and oppression of minorities)? Why aren't all the "progressive" people I've listened to for years supporting Fr. Callan?

I think I've been duped. (And "no" I am not a member of Corpus Christi parish).

Donna Carson  
Valley Brook Circle, Greece

## 'Popular' and 'institutional' should not be separated

### To the editors:

The "revolutionary" Christ admired by Anthony Favro (*Catholic Courier*, Dec. 10) is the same Christ who founded His Church upon a rock (Peter) and told his Apostles (the first Bishops) that "he who heareth you, heareth me. He that despiseth you, despiseth me." The "institutional" Church did not "invent" in Favro's words, "creeds, dogmas, articles of faith, doctrines and apologies." These the Apostles and early Church fathers deduced and developed from the Scriptures and primitive teachings. That the institution-

al Church has been guilty of oppression and rigidity is undeniable but to say that strict adherence to the tenets of faith leads almost automatically to bigotry, intolerance, narrow-mindedness and selfishness is to mistake the zealotry of individuals who stick to the letter of the law to the exclusion of its spirit.

"Popular" Christianity can often be well-meaning but erroneous and can produce no lasting fruit if it is cut off from the vine of the repository of truth, the Church. The Church is a structure, yes. A visible sign of an invisible grace. It is also

the dispenser of the sacraments without which we do not have life in us.

The corporal and spiritual works of mercy have flourished for nearly 2,000 years from St. Paul's collection for the needy of Jerusalem to the works of Mother Teresa for the poorest of the poor. They flourished, not in spite of, but because of adherence to tenets of faith. Let us not separate, even in our minds, the "institutional" from the "popular" Church.

Margaret Vincent  
North Street, Caledonia

## Time for Corpus Christi parishioners to permit healing

### To the editors:

I have just finished reading the editorial page of your Dec. 17, 1998 issue. Two letters stand out. One discusses Dr. Jack Kevorkian's murder of a terminally ill man on the TV show, "60 Minutes." The other discusses the conflict between Bishop Clark and Fr. Callan and the people of Corpus Christi Parish. They seem to be parallel situations. Both Dr. Kevorkian and Fr. Callan/Corpus Christi are asking for changes to laws that at this time in history, and for many reasons, cannot and

perhaps should not be changed. The difference seems to be that Dr. Kevorkian is willing to live with the consequences of his actions, and Fr. Callan and the people of Corpus Christi are not. If the conflict between the Bishop of Rochester and the people of Corpus Christi continues, the results may be as destructive as the results of Dr. Kevorkian's actions almost surely will be. Sadly, Dr. Kevorkian can't turn back, but Corpus Christi can. That's one of the wonders of our church. There are always "second chances."

We should be indebted to Fr. Callan and the people of Corpus Christi for bringing to the fore the issues they have. I pray that they can be content with that accomplishment. Now it's time to let the healing peace of this holy season descend on us like a gentle snowfall.

Thanks for a great, Catholic newspaper. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. God bless you.

Robert F. Carson  
Walker-Lake Ontario Road, Hilton