

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.

Readers dispute Thérèse reference

To the editors:

In a piece entitled "Corpus Christi Blues" (*Catholic Courier*, Feb. 4), Father Hart contrasts those who separate from the Church with those who remain within it even though they "seriously questioned its rules." By way of example, he cites St. Thérèse of Lisieux "who felt a calling to the priesthood" at a time when the issue of women's ordination was not seriously discussed.

No one familiar with this most recent Doctor of the Church will find in her writings even the faintest trace of questioning Church rules. It would have been unthinkable for Thérèse in light of her pious upbringing and the fierce loyalty certain French royalists felt — her family among them — for the Catholic Church then under siege from atheists and Freemasons in the government. So, Thérèse openly avows that she would die "in defense of the Church... that Mother who is also a Queen because she is a King's bride."

Father Hart does not seem to be familiar with both the context in which Thérèse expressed her priestly aspiration and the style of French Romanticism in which she wrote. As to that context, Thérèse finds her love for Jesus so ardent that she says, "I feel as if I were called to be a fighter, a priest, an apostle, a doctor, a martyr; as if I could never satisfy the needs of my nature without performing for Your sake every kind of heroic action at once." But as her style of expression indicates, Thérèse finds these vocations —



along with "crusader" and "Pontifical Zouave" — insufficient for all that love compels her to do for Christ.

To view Thérèse in this passage as championing women's ordination is to impose on her mentality a feminist ideology from the 20th century. Lacking historical sense, Father Hart might just as well see in Thérèse's desire to be a crusader or Zouave her advocacy for women in the military.

Joseph J. Murray

Wyndover Road, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: Mr. Murray wrote this letter shortly before his death Feb. 14 while volunteering at Rochester's Mount Carmel House for the terminally ill.

To the editors:

The lead article in your February 4 edition ("Corpus Christi Blues") mentions that St. Thérèse of Lisieux "felt a calling to priesthood," putting her among members who "seriously questioned" the rules of the Church by remained in it nonetheless.

Our diocesan vicar general Father Hart needs to read the saint's "Story of a Soul" a little better, I think. She felt a desire to be a priest, yes; and a warrior, and an apostle, and a martyr. These desires on her part were never once considered to be a calling from God; she knew incontrovertibly that He had called her to be His spouse as a nun, *not* to make the Church her bride as a priest. Her wish is on the same level as a nursing-home volunteer wanting to be a nurse, or an actor or worker in the Peace Corps: She wanted to do *more*. And yet she came to realize that "all vocations are summed up in love and that love is all in all." With this understanding she was at peace, saying "in the heart of Mother Church I will be love; so shall I be all things, so shall my dreams come true."

There is no indication that she ever questioned the rules of the Church, seriously or otherwise, but rather, staying in its heart with her own, always humbly submitted her mind and will in holy obedience to her Lord. To try to link her with the defiant parishioners of Corpus Christi does her, and the Church, a great disservice.

Catherine Lawson

Arrowhead Way South, Fairport

Choir event sign of hope for Corpus

To the editors:

As a 13-year member of Corpus Christi I read with much interest Rob Cullivan's article "Corpus Christi Blues."

It's been so heartbreaking and frustrating to see the destruction of my parish. Some of the destruction from the diocese, while I know wasn't intentional, has left my head reeling.

The sudden removal of Father Callan and Mary Ramerman was done without proper time for parishioners to react. The sudden firing of staff members in December was done in a way that I feel it cold and callous.

On the other hand I was just as heartbroken and frustrate to see the rude behavior that took over Corpus Christi from September to November.

The heckling, the stomping, the clapping, the throwing of Communion hosts back at Father Dan was behavior that wouldn't be accepted in a first grade classroom. It was an embarrassment.

Despite all this darkness surrounding Corpus Christi there is some sunlight, some hope. For four years I sang in the Corpus Christi BelCanto Choir. Despite differences between choir members over the direction the parish was going we stuck together to the very end. No friendships were broken.

Some BelCanto choir members are now singing in the choir at Corpus Christi Faith Community. Some have remained at Corpus Christi Church. All members of both choirs will come together on March 10 to sing for the patients at St. Ann's Home.

I hope that our choirs' singing together will help heal the hurt we all feel. Kudos to Kathy Welch the former music director at Corpus Christi for her leadership and love.

Tony DiFabio
St. Paul Boulevard
Rochester



Priest faces stiff odds in new post

To the editors:

I have been following the situation that exists at Corpus Christi Church. Father Daniel McMullin has been appointed pastor. In this capacity, Father McMullin has been placed in an unfortunate situation. The majority of his parish have moved on to a Presbyterian church in downtown Rochester. Former parishioners of Corpus Christi have followed Father Callan and Mary Ramerman to this new location. They are attending mass which Father Callan and Mary Ramerman are conducting. This to me is against all the rules of the Catholic Faith. It is also against the rules that were given to Father Callan by Bishop Clark.

I applaud Father McMullin; he is trying to regain his flock. Over 2,000 parishioners formerly attended Corpus Christi; this has declined to 900 parishioners. As I see it, Father McMullin is fighting a losing battle. Corpus Christi is faced with a \$500,000 deficit; the parish budget exceeds \$2 million this year. This will increase with a smaller congregation which Corpus Christi is faced with now. I admire Father McMullin for the courage and dedication he has shown in spite of the odds stacked against him. As long as Father

Callan and Mary Ramerman continue to say mass, continue to go against Bishop Clark's wishes, I am afraid that the future of Corpus Christi church to remain active are questionable. I sincerely hope that Father McMullin will get his parishioners back, that this disagreement with Father Callan and Mary Ramerman against the rules of the Catholic Faith will end in peaceful agreement.

James J. Nicholson Sr.
Susan Lane, Rochester

Grateful for leadership of Corpus' new pastor

To the editors:

Reverend Dan McMullin is either a natural leader or has successfully developed the ability to proclaim God's word in such a way as to inspire listeners to greatness while at the same time holding their attention and never missing a beat. In this liberalized society, it is refreshing to hear a church leader speak of living with integrity. I'm glad he's at Corpus Christi Church.

Jean A. Black
West Avenue, Spencerport