

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.

American values at root of schism

To the editors:

I would like to suggest a different viewpoint regarding the founding of the Corpus Christi Faith Community, and why we should not be surprised at its formation.

The past administration at Corpus Christi Parish extended its hand in ways that went beyond canon law. A conscious choice was made to give women an extended role at the altar. Monogamous gay and lesbian unions were blessed. Acts were performed that addressed the needs of the people. In the eyes of the past administration and of many in the parish, they were addressing the needs of the community.

Bishop Clark had no choice in his response. After repeated requests and warnings, the bishop made the painful decision that Father James Callan had to be removed from his post. A sizable percentage of Corpus Christi Parish found this intolerable and was forced by their own moral conscience to strike out on their own.

This is the history. Let me make my observation.

We Americans have always been independent. We bow to no monarch. We have never been afraid to sever our ties and strike out on our own. Indeed, we respect and admire those who have a dream and work to see it come to life. It is our fundamental belief in our independence that makes us so incomprehensible to the rest of the world. And this independence may be why Rome has such difficulties leading American Catholics.

As Americans, we also hold certain fundamental truths to be self-evident. We hold that all of us are created equal. We believe that all governments, regardless of their nature, derive their powers from the will of the people. We believe that under certain very extraordinary circumstances, a government must be replaced with one that reflects the will of the people. Our "Declaration of Independence" clearly states this.

In this case, the government to be replaced was a religious government.

The members of the Corpus Christi Faith Community chose to follow the call of Christ in a uniquely American fashion, as an independent Body of Christ. They are following in the footsteps of Franklin, Adams and Jefferson. They are exploring a new territory just as Lewis and Clark did. They are pioneers and homesteaders. They are being Americans.

And as you talk with members of the new faith community, you will see the flame of passion in their eye. They have examined their faith carefully. They have made a conscious choice in what they believe and how they will follow the call of Christ.

We will miss them in ways we can not yet fathom. And whether we agree with them or not, we should admire them for having the strength of their convictions and the courage to see it through. To the Corpus Christi Faith Community, I say, "Go in peace. Go with God."

Sean O'Toole
Scott Crescent, Scottsville

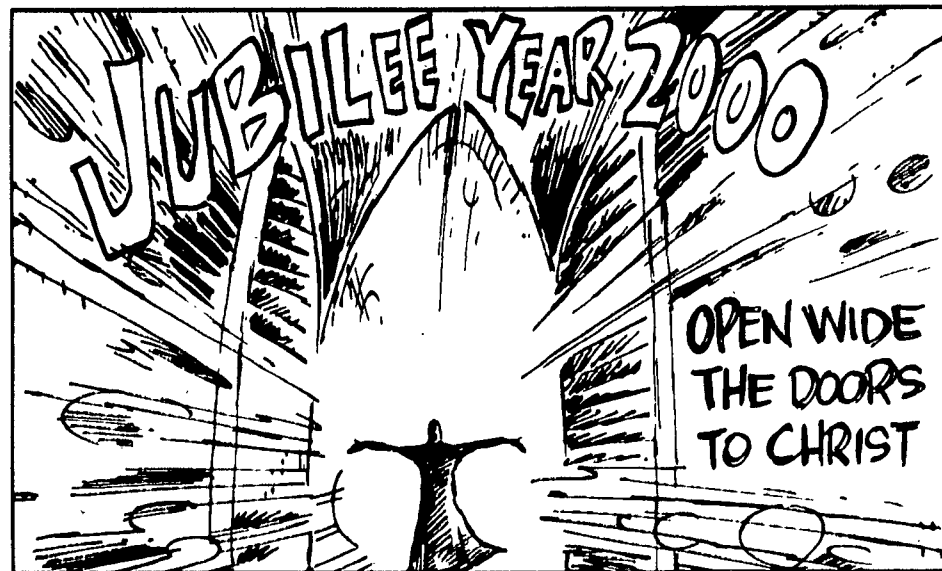
Firsthand view could change men's minds

To the editors:

Seeing that it is commonplace for fathers to be present in the delivery room to offer their comfort and support to the women who are about to give birth, the men who take women to abortion facilities should also be present in the room where the abortion takes place.

Then these men would see firsthand how truly devastating it is for the women who have an abortion and also see that an unborn baby is not a blob of tissue but a baby instead.

Dianna Richmond Ives
Simpson Road, Rochester



Corpus' history of outreach not unique among parishes

To the editors:

I am saddened by the articles I have read for several months concerning my church, Father Jim Callan, and Ms. Ramerman. I do believe many of his followers are non-Catholics. Yes, I agree Corpus Christi parishioners have done many good deeds, but so have many Catholic and Protestant churches. They just don't flaunt their deeds.

As for people attending Corpus Christi never asking if their fellow parishioners were gay or black, I know of no church that asks these questions. Anyone receiving Holy Communion in the Catholic Church must first of all receive the sacraments of Baptism, Penance and Holy Eucharist. With Father Jim Callan's way of thinking on this subject, the church would have to do away with these sacraments.

I often wonder if Father Jim Callan crossed his fingers at Mass each day when he said the words "I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic church." One would not want to change what he truly believes in. As for Father Jim Callan's jokes and

smug smiles in the paper, I feel he is taking excommunication very lightly. I'm too upset to discuss the throwing of the Holy Eucharist by one of Father Callan's supporters. It only proves the lack of respect some people have for the Host. Ms. Ramerman should learn that consecrating the Host is not fulfillment. Receiving Christ in the Host is the greatest fulfillment. And as for her not feeling valuable as a woman, she should turn to her family and friends and ask WHY! I am a woman and my family and friends make me feel VERY valuable.

I wonder if Father Jim Callan and Ms. Ramerman were both as defiant to their parents and their parents' rules when they were growing up. It's very plain to see all these ex-parishioners of Corpus Christi were following a man and not God or God's church. I agree with Father Jim Callan saying God is all loving and forgiving. But what he has forgotten is God is also All Just. When He forgave sinners He did so saying "Go and sin no more."

Laura Campione
Greece

Complaint about 'bland' homilies gave reminder to explore options

To the editors:

A response to Ms. Wagner's letter ("Homilists should learn from black preachers," Feb. 25): Ms. Wagner's letter, which condemns "bland preaching," the absence of "do this and don't do that," and a failure to address what she thinks the children ought to be hearing begs a response. It seems that Ms. Wagner believes that the Sunday Homily, if undertaken to her standards, would suffice to strengthen and enlighten the faithful.

She claims that Catholic social teaching is seldom, if ever, included in the homily. I disagree with her statement that only Pope John Paul II combines social teachings and Gospel teachings — clearly some portion of every homily naturally moves from the Gospel to life and from life to the Gospel.

Ms. Wagner assumes that the burden of catechesis and the call to social action rests solely on the clergy. If she reads the documents written by our current Pontiff, she would discover that both "On Catechesis in Our Time" and "On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World" emphasize the responsibilities of every member of the People of God. Both of these documents of Pope John Paul II's pontificate build upon the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

If Ms. Wagner truly yearns to be "filled," she is in an excellent position to drink from the overflowing cup of knowl-

edge available to her in this diocese. She lives less than one mile from Sacred Heart Cathedral where she can hear the Word and a homily — never "bland," I can assure you — every day of the week. In many parishes, Bible study groups, workshops and seminars take place on a regular basis. St. Bernard's Institute offers lectures, short courses, and graduate courses. I would urge Ms. Wagner and any others within this diocese to explore as many of the options as they are able to.

The young people also have innumerable opportunities to participate more fully in the life of the Church. Youth groups, social events, and Children's Liturgy nicely complement formal catechesis programs and the instruction received in the home. Again, it's all there for the benefit of the entire community, even if one's home parish is unable to offer every option on its own.

I would like to thank Ms. Wagner for her letter, despite its harsh tone, for it gave me the impetus to remind myself and my fellow sisters and brothers that we are called to deepen our faith and bring the Good News to those we come in contact with. I hope Ms. Wagner will experience a change of heart and thenceforth be open to the gifts of the Church that are waiting to be shared by all who ask, seek, and knock!

Katie Conover
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