

# 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.

# Diocese owes debt to many women

March is Women's History Month, during which we honor women for their contributions in a wide variety of fields.

In the history of the Diocese of Rochester, we have many such contributions to note.

Consider Sister Mary Hieronymo O'Brien.

As local superior of the Sisters of Charity, she oversaw the establishment of Rochester's St. Mary's Hospital in 1857 and its growth over the next 14 years.

In 1871, when it was time to renew her vows, she left the Sisters of Charity and joined the Rochester Sisters of St. Joseph at the invitation of Bishop Bernard McQuaid. Assigned to St. Patrick's Orphanage, she in 1872 created a House of Industry to help train teenage girls in job skills. As needs evolved, she gradually changed the focus of the house until it was renamed the Home for Aged Women, which later became St. Ann's Home. Her efforts to promote social ministry earned her the affectionate title "Mother Hieronymo."

While Mother Hieronymo spent much of her career in Rochester, Sister Mary Frances Xavier Warde, RSM, stayed here only briefly. But she left her mark.

Born in Ireland, she was an associate of Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy foundress. The indefatigable Sister Warde came to the United States in 1843 and over the next 37 years crisscrossed the country establishing 39 Mercy centers.

In the midst of that activity, Sister Warde arrived in Rochester June 9, 1857, from her base in Rhode Island. During her brief visit, she help the convent to get off the ground. She oversaw



home visits and preparations for starting a school. She left Rochester at the end of the month, but remained in contact by letter. Her only other visit to Rochester came in 1864 when she stopped for a few days while heading to Omaha to establish another convent — only to have to turn around to Rhode Island when an assistant died. But she left behind a legacy of caring for others and of fostering education.

Another woman who left a legacy of caring was Katherine D'Olier.

In 1917 she was hired as a caseworker at the newly formed Catholic Charities Aid Association, which in 1924 was renamed Rochester Catholic Charities. D'Olier became the director in 1925 — an unusual position of authority for a lay woman

at that time, but the diocese was suffering a priest shortage.

In 1930, when Catholic Charities expanded with the development of an Elmira office, D'Olier was placed in charge of the Rochester casework branch — what is now the Catholic Family Center. She remained with the agency until 1952, helping to foster its focus on family and child-welfare services.

The list could go on almost endlessly. It would include well-known and the lesser-known women who have worked — and continue to work — in such fields as education, business, the arts, parish ministry and so on.

The diocese would not be what it is if not for them.

Thus as we come to the end of another Women's History Month, there's at least one thing that seems appropriate to say.

Thank you.

## Help without being asked, senior pleads

### To the editors:

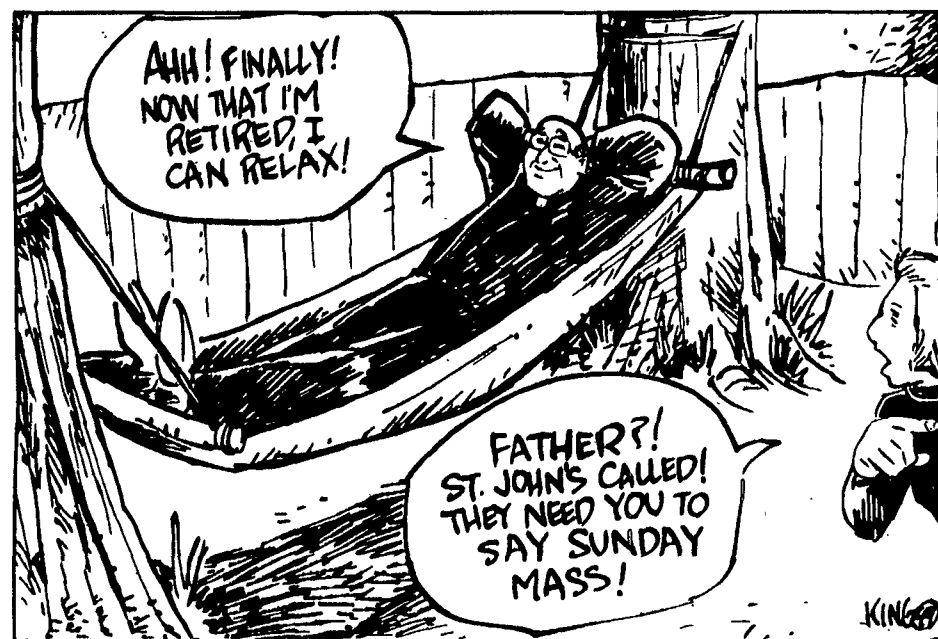
Lee Strong's article under Senior Lifestyles (*Catholic Courier*, March 11: "Planning can help one 'weather' emergencies"), in which he quoted Sandy Schenke's advice to seniors in need: "You have to ask..." reminded me of Gilbert Keith Chesterton's famous observation. "You don't have to be poor to know what a poor man feels like. You only have to be a man!" he wrote.

And I was reminded, too, of how, during the earlier snowstorm in January, my driveway and doorways blocked with drifts chest high, I in desperation called my next-door neighbors — a young couple in their late-20s or early-30s for help. You see, I am in my 70s and alone, and in trying to dig out my car, an old prostate operation reacted angrily and I began to eliminate blood. Terrified of that and of possibly being trapped in my home, I phoned those next-door neighbors, explaining my plight. Sure enough, the young man came over and in half an hour his robust young arms had cleared away the snow. The next day I wrote a check for \$25 and along with a grateful note, placed it in their mail box.

Well, February passed, and our March blizzard came down. Again, I was totally blocked in by snow. I thought: Surely the young neighbors will now of themselves help me. But two days passed; they shoveled their driveway, but made no move to help me. Perhaps my unsolicited \$25 had not been enough. Or perhaps the young neighbor was not man enough to know "what a poor man feels like!" — though as faithful parishioners of Corpus Christi Church and followers of Father Callan they ought to have known.

On the third day after the initial blizzard blast, I hailed a passing teenager. He shoveled me free. I paid him well. You see, Lee, we seniors have some pride, and in our aged wisdom, we know our neighbors will one day be old, too. And if specially blessed, those neighbors will have a truly Christian spirit, and will not wait to be asked for help, when anyone with eyes to see can see that help is needed!

**John Gerard  
Culver Parkway  
Rochester**



## Takes issue with state conference's stance on relaxing drug legislation

### To the editors:

I am writing to comment on our state bishops' legislative agenda, as revealed at the state Catholic Conference on March 9 and reported in Rochester's *Democrat and Chronicle* newspaper on March 10. Specifically, I'm quite concerned with the stance favoring the relaxation of the drug laws.

Spokesman Bishop Hubbard of Albany was quoted as saying that "the Rockefeller drug laws have not been successful" and that "they tend to target low-level people in the drug trade."

People who deal or use illegal drugs, in any quantity, are supporting a business, a business which produces "crack babies," family destruction, neighborhood drug houses, suicide, violence, dead-end hopeless youth, serious medical problems, expensive drug rehabs — with high relapse rates — economic hardship, rich drug

lords, etc.

Catholic morality has always been wise. The consequences and ramifications of what we do, now and in the future, are always important. You can't just dance a "little jig" with the devil. I feel that the bishops' stance on this particular issue is less than what it could be.

There is a lot of room for compassion, understanding and insight when considering many of our brothers and sisters who are incarcerated. Trucking with illegal drugs should not be one of these areas. I think we would be better served to educate as to the moral responsibilities attached to supporting the drug trade and to keep the civil penalties high. Like the old saying goes, "In for a penny, in for a pound."

**Mark Scipioni  
Caves Place, Rochester**

## Can't comprehend warfare among Yugoslavs

### To the editors:

Regarding *Catholic Courier*, March 11, "Kosovo presents relief hurdles" by Rob Cullivan: Your report from Nick Ford confirms my experiences during trips to Yugoslavia during 1968-69.

Mr. Ford's statement, "These people are the same that we find everywhere in the world," may be expanded to include that Kosovo's and all of Yugoslav's "average Joes" are also the most friendly peo-

ple you would ever hope to meet. No fear for a foreigner to go anywhere, anytime, day or night.

How these people have turned to well organized attacks on each other is beyond comprehension.

It is nice to read of the political success being achieved by Catholic Relief Service and this without NATO peacekeepers.

**Joseph P. Leahey  
Hector**