

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

©1999, Rochester Catholic Press Association.

1150 Buffalo Road
P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340
800/600-3628 outside Rochester
http://www.catholiccourier.com
e-mail: cathcour@frontiernet.net

President

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager/Editor

Karen M. Franz

Editorial Department

Associate Editor

Lee Strong

Copy Editor/Staff Writer

Kathleen Schwar
Finger Lakes

Staff Writers

Rob Cullivan
Genesee Valley

Mike Latona
Southern Tier

Staff Photographer

Greg Francis

Photo Intern

Greg Benenati

Business Department

Circulation Manager

Donna Stubbings

Office Manager

Mary DiPonzio

Secretary/Receptionist

Arlene S. Gall

Advertising Department

Advertising Director

Jodiann Marcello

Account Executives

Otto Bruno
Melissa Paris

Production Department

Graphics Manager

Kim Parks

Graphic Artist

Linda Jeanne Rivers

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.

Force not only way in conflict

To the editors:

Just before Christmas, the U.S. began bombing Iraq, land of dying children. A recent *Courier* editorial agreed with Ramsey Clark and accurately called U.S. policy toward Iraq "genocide." During Holy Week, the U.S. brought death from the skies to Serbia. Our political leaders, at least morally indicted for war crimes, now tell us force is the only way to deal with someone else's practice of genocide.

Many Church leaders and Christians go along with further violence as just an unfortunate necessity in yet another holy season. Thankfully, Bishop Clark has spoken clearly for nonviolence and mercy toward Iraq and opposed NATO bombing of Serbia. Catholics of our diocese who listen to our bishop have withdrawn support for these wars and the sanctions.

What of the next conflict, or the next? It seems that more is now asked of Church leaders. Speaking up for peace must be coupled with repentance of the Church's historical justification of violence and a disavowal of any just war theory. Christian support for President Clinton's policy in Iraq and Serbia, like German Christian support for Hitler, did not just happen. This support is the product of consciences nurtured in justified violence for centuries in a Constantinian Church.

How can the Church anticipate a Jubilee when the world witnesses U.S. Christians killing Serbian Christians who are killing Kosovars who are killing Serbs and threatening revenge thanks to NATO actions? Today's situation is something like 1995. At that time, Pope John Paul II was anxious to relieve the suffering of Sarajevo which was under Serb attack. Feeling powerless himself, he offered the philosophical support of just war theory for actions like the NATO bombing of Serb positions. Besides killing noncombatants, that bombing and a billion dollars in U.S. military aid enabled the Croats to practice ethnic cleansing against the Serbs. Military force was unable to limit the violence then. The same is true now.

The Pope seems to have learned this lesson. He is quoted in the April 1 *Courier*, "In response to violence, another violence is never a prospective way out of a crisis." Peter, our first pope, had not learned this lesson in Gethsemane. When Jesus refused the defense of his sword, he and the apostles fled in confusion and terror. Perhaps, in this Easter Season, more of our modern apostles will stay with Jesus and his Way.

Nonviolent love of friends and enemies is a main underpinning of the Gospel. When the Church teaches the nonviolence of Jesus it is not powerless. Jesus' nonviolence is the power and wisdom of God. It is central in Luke 4-6, including Jesus' first mention of Jubilee.

Of course, the pastoral challenge of undoing 1600+ years of just war history is not easily undertaken. This challenge of faith is one of political imagination. In the U.S., the Church cannot speak of an Consistent Jesus Life Ethic or grant Jesus the kind of Jubilee observance he once looked for in Nazareth unless it can imagine a Kingdom of God apart from the demands and benefits of U.S. empire.

The good news is Bishop Clark and the Pope don't even seem to be thinking in just war terms this time.

Mark Scibilia-Carver
Cold Springs Road
Trumansburg

E-mail your opinions to:
cathcour@frontiernet.net



Region's properties selling

To the editors:

I enjoyed your article on the Cayuga Indian Land Claim in the March 4, 1999 publication ("Residents grow uneasy over Cayugas' claims"). All citizens and religious groups of the United States should take notice of these outrageous claims made by our Native Americans and sanctioned by our federal government. American Indians only, have the extraordinary right to claim valid titles that have a 200 year history of warranty deed transfers because our Congress has not ratified ancient treaties.

Most of us believe in God and the U.S.A. When Constitutional inequities have existed in our society in the past, our government literally forced equality on its citizenry through legislation. From this reasoning, there should be little need to worry about the Cayugas taking our land directly. Yet, implications of such court rulings as lease-back, eviction, and monetary awards are both astronomical and irritating.

Your article erroneously refers to the value of real estate in the claim area as declining. ... (O)ur statistics show that properties are transferring regularly within the claim area and that sale prices and the rate of sale are comparable both in and out of the claim area. Although there has been a decline in values over the last 10 years, this decline is manifested equally all over Upstate New York. In the claim area, the seller has the extra expense of purchasing a special Indian title insurance policy which

insures the purchase price to the buyer.

Title insurance companies have felt comfortable in issuing the special insurance for the seller knowing that the U.S. government would never consummate such a far reaching action. Actually, it may be more safe to buy property in the claim area than outside it because of the special insurance specifically for Indian claims. ... All land was once the aboriginal grounds of some Indian Nation so if you're not in a claim area today, chances are an aboriginal claim will come to some property near you soon!

We welcome the Indian people to live among us as individuals who own property, pay taxes, abide by our environmental laws, and interact with the rest of us on an equal citizen basis. We do not welcome a reservation, a casino, Indian bingo, or any other non-taxpaying enterprise. Each of us needs to keep our faith in God and our country. The current situation is creating a definite division between many sovereign nations and One Nation. Our government is promoting racism by perpetuating this situation. I suggest we call on our God, our congressmen, our senators, our president, and our justice department asking each for their help through prayers, letters, phone calls, and faxes. Does God have a fax?

Mel Russo
Seneca County Chairman
Upstate Citizens for Equality
Varick

Jesus will help resolve our conflicts

To the editors:

I am a born Catholic; by that I mean, my parents not only gave me life, but also gave me to the Church through Baptism. I received First Communion and Confirmation. My ability in the Church Choir left a lot to be desired, but I tried.

At the tender age of 14, a priest disillusioned me. A new family had moved in to town and he told them they were not desirable to join the parish community. This was the proverbial straw after the other hypocritical issues I had already witnessed. I left the church and took my faith in Christ with me.

At age 53, I realize I should have left the priest not the Church and prayed for his enlightenment.

Through the 38 years that followed, I dabbled in New Age and kept my faith in Christ. I buried my parents and kept my faith in Christ. I buried one of my beloved brothers, he was only 50, and I kept my faith in Christ. When I watched my son Rick and his girlfriend Kris die at the ages of 24 and 21 respectively in 1992, I kept my faith in Christ. I am not special, just one of many in his flock who have endured times of pain and sorrow as well as great joy in their lives through Christ.

Fall of 1998, I felt a strong calling to return to church. I knew it wouldn't be a

Catholic Church, but a Church. I church hopped for awhile. Although I stood shoulder to shoulder with people who had a strong faith in Christ, I wasn't home.

A friend asked me to join her for Mass at Corpus Christi. The problems had just started to escalate at Corpus, but I felt at home. I stood face to face with Father Jim Callan and felt his love for Christ. It almost takes your breath away. I'm not saying Father Callan is exceptional, for I have felt that with many people, laymen as well as clergy, Catholics and non-Catholics. The love, hurt, anger and disillusionment of the Corpus parishioners are felt also, but it has not shaken their strong faith in Christ.

I do not attend the new or old Corpus Community. I have found a welcome home at Assumption of Our Lady in Fairport, however, I still say my prayers for and with all believers, that Jesus Christ will resolve all issues his followers are dealing with today.

No matter how fast, slow or what changes our church has made and will make, The Lord Jesus Christ will be our leader. Please turn your anger, hurt and criticism into a prayer for guidance and not judgment, and leave that to the Big Guy.

Marleane E. Buholtz
High Street Extension, Fairport