

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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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.

More balance required for review of Pius

To the editors:

The Catholic News Service article you featured May 20, "Official refutes attack on Pius (XII)," needs a more balanced discussion. Catholic-Jewish relations until recently have been tragic. Unfortunately, both Rabbi Hier's and Cardinal Cassidy's statements reflect the deep resentments still found in that relationship. Both represent extremes which should be avoided by Jews and Catholics of good will. Rabbi Hier irresponsibly opined that during the Holocaust, Pius did not lift a finger as the Jews went to the gas chambers. Rabbi Hier should take note that when the Nazis entered Rome on Sept. 27, 1943, the Chief Rabbi of Rome was informed that he must deliver to the Nazis one million lire along with 100 pounds of gold or face the decimation of the Jewish community. Not able to raise that ransom, the Chief Rabbi appealed to Pius. In less than a day, the Pope ordered the Vatican treasurer to come up with the gold — melting down some religious vessels to deliver the ransom. Pius also strongly urged Romans, priests, nuns and members of religious orders to smuggle Jews to sanctuary in churches, monasteries and the Vatican itself. Over 5,000 Jews were saved. In fact, the Pope knew a great deal about the Holocaust in Europe. For example, the Vatican intervened in Slovakia to protect Jews destined for deportation and death in Poland. Many other papal efforts could be cited to refute Rabbi Hier's vicious charges which simply parrot the false view that Pius was a deputy or representative of anti-Semitic forces as well as a shallow protector of the Church's material interests.

To be sure, there is another dimension to the Pius controversy. Though Pius was not the "pope of the Holocaust," he was not a courageous saint either. Cardinal Cassidy and other Catholic leaders should be a bit less defensive and bit more prudent in recognizing that the "silence" of Pius XII must be handled in a historically accurate manner for both Jews AND Catholics. In fact, Pius never denounced the Nazis by name. The Allied powers and Jewish groups including St. Edith Stein urged him to issue a public denunciation. Many Catholics, Jews and others see this "silence" as a failure to fulfill a duty toward his office — the Vicar of Christ — and also to mankind. Cardinal Cassidy should take note that many could reasonably argue that such a failure played into the hands of demonic evil as it grew bolder and fiercer. Such "silence" might amount to some complicity with inequity. How then did Pius and the Church testify to the message of the Gospel and guide the consciences of the faithful as six million Jews were "ethnically cleansed?" This is a very serious question that must be asked. Cardinal Cassidy would indeed be more helpful in achieving reconciliation if he would eschew any veiled threats against the Jews for the "unsupported" attacks which "have provided not a little resentment" among Catholics. Some of the attacks are supportable. As mentioned above, Pius is neither demonic deputy nor holy saint. Therefore, Cardinal Cassidy's institutional defensiveness and Rabbi Hier's libel against Pius should be rejected by us all as we must struggle to learn from history in order to pursue greater reconciliation between Catholics and Jews.

Though Pius saved many Jews, he himself agonized over his "silence." The world needed a clear voice, a steady moral compass, and Pope Pius XII was not it. When dealing with genocide, diplomatic "silence" is not really the highest moral ground from which to look out on.

Dr. Kenneth L. Deutch
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Base marital commitments on more than just 'feeling'

To the editors:

As we approach the most popular season for weddings and my husband and I prepare to celebrate our 18th wedding anniversary, I can't help but reflect on the unfortunately ever more popular divorce rate.

What saddens me is the frequency of the reason, "we don't love each other anymore." I personally know that the love this speaks of has to be the feeling. In order for a marriage to last a lifetime it has to be based on more than just the feeling of love, but on the commitment of true love. As is stated in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 13:7-8, "It (love) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." What this means is yes, a time may come when we might look at our spouse and wonder what our feelings are or who is this person I married. And there may be many trials in our marriage — I like to call them opportunities for growth — but when we endure them together, God blesses us, strengthens our bond and deepens our love for Him and for each other. This is why all marriages need to include three persons: the husband, God, and the wife. If God is in a marriage and

"God is Love" then all things are possible and the marriage will always have love, feeling or not!

So in celebration of our 18 years together and as a gift to all newly, oldie, or to-be-weds I would like to share one of my daily prayers:

Prayer of Spouses for Each Other

Lord Jesus, grant that my spouse and I may have a true and understanding love for each other. Grant that we may both be filled with faith and trust. Give us the grace to live with each other in peace and harmony. May we always bear with one another's weaknesses and grow from each other's strengths. Help us to forgive one another's failings and grant us patience, kindness, cheerfulness and the spirit of placing the well-being of one another ahead of self.

May the love that brought us together grow and mature with each passing year. Bring us both ever closer to You through our love for each other. Let our love grow to perfection. Amen.

May God bless us all with lifelong, unselfish love — until death do us part!

Patricia E. Baloga
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Obligation is also a privilege

To the editors:

Why attend Mass weekly?

After three years of weekly instruction — also studying other religions — I finally converted in 1948.

First answer given to that question, "To give honor and glory to God." Second, "An obligation," which is why it took me three years.

Practiced all church regulations to make sure this was it.

"Catch a Mass" sounds like trying to "catch a plane," "bus" et al. That puts Mass into the aspect of being a "thing" rather than giving honor and glory first, spiritual vs. physical.

When young, and now old, the mind said "yes." The body "no." Spirit wasn't

even that willing. Sleeping in appeared better.

One cannot justify having a normal Sunday without doing the giving to God on His day which He has asked — and the rest of the week. It is a spiritual, moral, and mental exercise — not a habit — moving the body.

Odd how all the aches, pains, etc. disappear — excuses for not going — once there.

A person plans to attend Mass. It's the best banquet to which you will ever be invited, without an RSVP included.

Pax et Bonum

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Look to catechism for the answer

To the editors:

Patricia Schoelles, SSJ, was a bit perplexed by the question "why we should attend Sunday Mass." It would have been gratifying if she could have referred to the Catechism of the Catholic Church which states, "The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a

serious reason or dispensed by their pastor. Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin."

Assisting at Holy Mass on Sundays — or Saturday evenings — is the principal means by which the Church directs us to fulfill the Third Commandment of God to keep holy the Sabbath Day.

Richard Shipley
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