

# OPINIONS

## Catholic Courier

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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

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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.

## Seminarian in Europe anticipates ordination

### To the editors:

I would like to offer some clarification on the article by Mike Latona about the ordination of the new permanent deacons. In the opening paragraphs the editorial note in parenthesis could be read in a misleading way. At the ordination Mass on June 12 there (were) no transitional deacons ordained — that is true and I think the meaning of the noted comment.

The whole truth is that there will be transitional deacons ordained this year, just not at that celebration. As one of the two (2) men that are preparing to be ordained this year I wish to make that known. I fear that there has been a misunderstanding in more ways than one — two people came up to me at the ordination Mass for Steve Lape and asked if I was still getting ordained because they had heard that there was to be no transitional Deacons this year. (I am here completing Pastoral Service at RCC19 and CPE at Strong Hospital as part of the training for priesthood.)

I am moving forward — planning and praying for that day in December when I will be ordained as transitional deacon at the American College in Leuven, Belgium. I would also like to speak for a fellow seminarian — I am sure that William "Micky" McGrath is also preparing for his ordination that will take place in October at the North American College in Rome, Italy. Please remember to lift us up in prayer as we both move toward those days. They will be great step on the road to service as priest.

It is a very common thing for transitional deacons to be ordained at their seminary and not in their home diocese. That practice, combined with the distance to travel, explains why Micky and I will be ordained in Europe. The difficulty is that in many ways studying in Europe can lead to "out of sight out of mind." There are many of us over there studying, working, praying and preparing for our ordination to the priesthood.

With the prayers of all the people, the grace of God, and the blessing of Bishop Clark Micky and I will both be returning to Rochester at the end of June, 2000 for our ordination. I will speak for myself in this — the fact that we will be ordained during the Millennium Year is an extra added blessing. As a special part of that year I hope that many people will think and pray for us both, the road is still long. Please consider this the first invitation to come to Sacred Heart Cathedral and help us celebrate this great sacrament of service to the People of God in this diocese. In the Acts of the Apostles, the first "ordinations" took place as the whole community called those to serve — the whole community prayed that God would bless their ministry. I pray that the same happens on that day in June of 2000.

Patrick J. Van Durme  
American College  
Leuven, Belgium



## Base conscience on the truth

### To the editors:

"In forming their consciences the faithful must pay careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the Church. For the Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth. It is her duty to proclaim and teach with authority the truth which is Christ and, at the same time, to declare and confirm by her authority the principles of the moral order which spring from human nature itself" (Declaration on Religious Freedom, 14-Document of the Second Vatican Council).

Father McBrien may be surprised to learn that the above statement is a product of Vatican II. In his column of June 3 Father McBrien wrote that "...Catholics, in every moral decision, are bound to form and follow their own consciences." Father McBrien was addressing the seminarians at Mount St. Mary's and their supposed ignorance of this so-called "traditional Catholic teaching" — i.e.: freedom of conscience. I suppose that Father McBrien's ignorance of what the Council actually said can be excused as an apparent belief in "freedom of interpretation." The Church also teaches that "personal conscience and reason should not be set in opposition to the moral law or the Magisterium of the Church" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2039).

The concept of a personal formation

of conscience without a moral foundation can only lead to both personal and societal chaos and confusion. The Church was not founded to be an institution of rules and regulations. The Church exists as the purveyor of truth in this world. The idea that millions of individuals can formulate their moral world view based on their own individual feelings can only be viewed as a grand deception. A current example of this kind of thinking is the struggle over the right to life of the unborn. With one side insisting on the right to abortion and the other insisting on the sanctity of life in the womb, which is the morally correct position? Where does the truth lie? Many on each side would say they are acting in accordance with their consciences. "Freedom of conscience" may be attractive in theory, but if it is not grounded in truth, the results can be disastrous.

Rather than relying on one man's interpretation of a perceived Vatican II teaching, I would recommend reading the Council documents for yourself. While you're at it, pick up a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. You may be surprised at what you learn. The truth will set you free.

Eugene Michael  
Concord Drive  
Webster

## Indignant writers share fantasy of misguided Medjugorje seers

### To the editors:

I am writing in response to two indignant letters that appeared in your May 20 issue, criticizing Father McBrien's column of May 6 on Marian appearances. The letter-writers claimed that Father McBrien had written irreverently about Our Lady, in asking why, in her alleged appearances in Yugoslavia, she showed no apparent concern for Holocaust-like outrages there. He also suggested that one would have expected her also to have called on Slobodan Milosevic, in order "to scare the hell out of him."

The indignant writers obviously did not understand that Father McBrien was not criticizing Our Lady, but rather that he was commenting on the religious pro-

jections of the people who claim to have seen her. He pointed out in his column that the Bishop who investigated the Medjugorje apparitions found them to be matters of "collective hallucination," not genuine appearances of the Blessed Virgin. Father McBrien's article did not criticize Our Lady, but rather the supposed apparitions for indifference to social justice in the world around them. In other words, he was commenting on the misguided imaginings of the faithful at Medjugorje, and on their "collective hallucinations." Apparently the letter-writers, one a priest, share those hallucinations.

William T. Bluhm  
Bending Bough Drive  
Webster

## Corpus Christi feast was joyous celebration for parish

### To the editors:

The Feast of Corpus Christi celebrated at Corpus Christi Church was a true celebration.

The return of Bishop Clark to celebrate the Mass and Confirmation was one of peace and joy compared to his last visit to our church.

If anyone doubts the role of women in the church, they should have been in at-

tendance. They would have seen an inclusive church, and no purple stole was needed to remind us of the need for women. We are there, participative and appreciated.

There have been many people who have worked to make a success of everything we do at Corpus Christi. We have been blessed to have one of our hardest workers become one of the nominees of

the Jefferson Award. Don Potter is real blessing to us from gardener, repair pews and whatever else you ask him.

We are still rebuilding, but improvements are seen on a regular basis. Change is still taking place, but rest assured it will only improve and renew us.

Ann Konish, sacristan  
Waldorf Avenue  
Rochester