

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.

Anti-Semitism targets Jesus

On Friday, June 18, arsonists attacked three synagogues in Sacramento, Calif.

At one of the synagogues, the perpetrators left behind a leaflet that blamed the "International Jew World Order" and the "International Jew-media" for the war in Kosovo. "We are Slavs, we will never allow the International Jew World Order to take our Land," the leaflet stated.

Damage estimates thus far are around \$1 million. Totally destroyed at one synagogue was a library containing a videotape collection of Jewish history and culture.

Had the attacks taken place in the Middle East or Central Europe, one might be tempted to dismiss them as remote events, residuals of the kind of blind anti-Semitism practiced in Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s — not part of our reality.

But this was in 1999 California.

Nor are these isolated incidents.

The Anti-Defamation League's San Francisco office reported 56 incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism in California in 1997, and 81 such incidents in 1998.

In California.

The national ADL's 1998 "Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents" records 1,611 such incidents nationwide — up from 1,571 in 1997 — with New York state topping the list at 324 incidents.

Right here in our state.

Hate knows no boundaries of time or place.

It grows wherever ignorance and fear flourish.

The documents of the Second Vatican Council make it clear — as Bishop Matthew H. Clark points out in this week's front-page article — that Catholics are called to be in

respectful dialogue with people of other faiths.

"I think the church tells us with that insight that we have a lot to learn from one another, that no one has a total and exclusive claim on the truth, that we are all, as we describe ourselves, in pilgrimage, needing to learn, needing to reform," Bishop Clark said.

The church should not be isolated from other religious bodies, he said, "but in that kind of dialogue with them that, when it works, yields deeper life for everybody involved."

Dialogue does not include incendiary devices.

Whether the California attacks arose from some misguided sense of patriotism or from a twisted form of Christianity does not matter.

What matters is that they happened, and that all such incidents cheapen all of us who live in the United States or who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ.

After all, Jesus was a Jew.

EDITORIAL

Stunned by militaristic take on Corpus Christi

To the editors:

Father Shamon's mixture of religious and military/patriotic themes is well known. Still, it was a shock to read war slogans in his reflection for the Body and Blood of Christ in the June 3 *Courier* ("Never forget that our goal is eternal life").

In remembering the Alamo, the Maine and Pearl Harbor, soldiers were motivated by revenge to be more effective killers of their country's enemies. This is simply the opposite of remembering Jesus; his commands to love our enemies, his institution of the Eucharist as a new Passover to deliver us from slavery to violence, and the sacrifice of his body and blood on the cross as he prayed for and forgave his executioners.

There is more that Father Shamon forgets. In 1976, the U.S. Navy determined that the Maine was sunk when heat from a fire in a coal bin exploded nearby ammunition. Spain had nothing to do with it. Thus, an untruth became a justification for a bloody war.

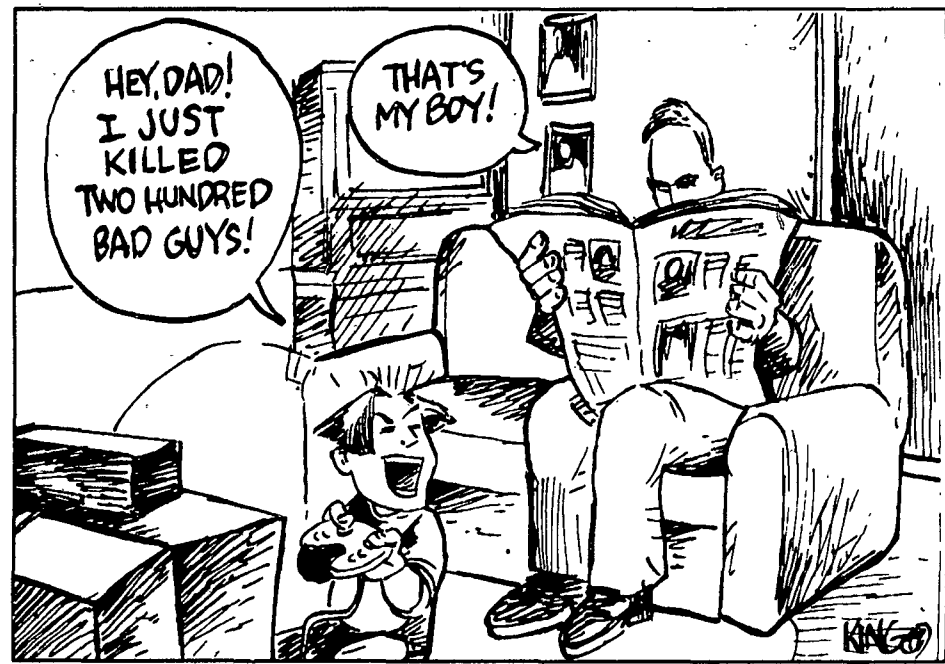
The memory of Pearl Harbor has been used to justify the A-bombing of Japanese cities. In Nagasaki we destroyed the oldest and largest Christian community in the Orient, including whole orders of Catholic nuns. Imagine the abortion of born and unborn and the radiation that goes on destroying the fabric of life forever.

Indeed, all wars directly cause abortion. Father Shamon is either being a cheerleader for more abortion or he considers the unborn of our country's enemies to be "only fetuses" after all.

Following Father Shamon, one can picture good, virtuous Christians trying to kill as many British — baptized Christians themselves! — as possible at Concord Bridge in order to avoid any encroachment on their property. Surely, Christ himself would have picked up a gun to kill these enemies! On the contrary, soldiers do not imitate the pattern of Jesus' death (Philippians 3:10-12). They can only imitate Peter's severe denial of Jesus' way of nonviolence in Gethsemane. The works of war are not the works of mercy despite what Father Shamon and President Clinton suggest.

Violence does not end violence and bring reconciliation. Satan does not cast out Satan. God never requires us to do evil that good may come of it. Remember, the means to reach our goal of eternal life are the same nonviolent ones that Jesus taught and used. The early Church had a clear memory of Jesus in this regard. St. Cyprian, a bishop, is one of many examples. In 248 AD he wrote, "Adultery, deceit and the taking of life are mortal sins ... after partaking of the Eucharist, the hand is not stained with blood and with the sword." How was it that nonviolence was a non-thought for Father Shamon on this feast?

Mark Scibilia-Carver
Cold Springs Road, Trumansburg



Eucharist: anti-violence guarantee

To the editors:

Babies spend the first few years of life totally self-centered — in a universe of their own. Their spiritual development comes with a very gradual awareness of "otherness" — sharing with a sibling, waiting for one's turn, finding delight in returning the family's kisses. Pictures and songs to Jesus become part of reading-readiness and visits to Jesus' house open up a world of spiritual beauty and meaningfulness.

The child comes to accept that Jesus lives in the tabernacle in the form of bread. He waits for the day when he/she can follow Mommy & Daddy to the altar and receive the Holy Eucharist. It means preparing a special place inside the soul which must be kept shining clean for such

company. This can only be done by recognizing acts of selfishness which are wrong, which we must be sorry for, of learning wrong from right.

By the age of seven, the child understands how the Church forgives our mistakes and wipes away all our childlike sins leading up to the day Napoleon called "the greatest day of my life" — that of receiving the Holy Eucharist for the first time and asking Jesus to stay, to love and be loved, above all else, all the days of his/her life.

This is our hidden treasure — the Holy Eucharist, life's best guarantor against violence.

Mary R. Locke
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Stop permitting tail to wag dog of truth

To the editors:

(Regarding) "The Church should not exist in isolation" by Father McBrien (June 10). How can this be true when the Pope travels all over the world and embraces all people. The Pope is at a disadvantage because he cannot utilize the good old American Capitalism to generate jobs in Socialistic countries. Socialism has failed around the world but continues to threaten freedom, peace and prosperity.

How can anyone criticize a fresh new opportunity for Catholic lawyers. Tom Monaghan will contribute \$50 million to create the Ave Maria Law School in Ann Arbor, Mich. We Catholics sure need more people like Tom Monaghan. How

about the sad history over the past 35 years within the Catholic Church with a record number of Catholics leaving the church and lack of workers in the religious orders. Are we to continue to listen to those who preach to us about truth being in a constant state of change or simply define everything as extreme and try to pin the tail — that wags the dog — on the donkey and present this to us as the so called truth to follow?

We need to be able to have faith in Absolute Truth: the constant ray of hope that gives each and every one of us the courage to overcome the trials in our lives.

Joseph E. Judge
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