

# OPINIONS

## Catholics entitled to 'valid' Masses

### 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.

#### To the editors:

As I watched the scandal and schism in the Rochester Diocese being broadcast worldwide last night (June 14) on CNN, I was taken by the biased reporting that vilified the Diocese and Bishop Clark. A Diocesan spokeswoman said that the parishioners had been misled because over the years they had believed that what they were doing was with the full support of the Church. This struck me as a commentary on the state of catechesis in the Diocese, as well as her excuse for the actions of the apostates on which the story was based.

This is cause for concern to those who see liturgical abuses and don't know how to deal with them, and for the growing number of people who are unable or unwilling to recognize abuse. Most have believed that priests could always be trusted to represent and convey the "truth" as taught by the Magisterium. That time has passed, we cannot always trust them to be faithful to the Church's teachings. This has been born out with severe consequences in our Diocese. There will be some who read this and believe that this doesn't apply to them. Their priest is trustworthy, and their Parish is just what they want it to be. Some will be offended by the premise that their priest can't be trusted. Some will not know what to believe. Think about what the people at Corpus Christi believed over the last 20 years. I believe with my whole being that there are many good and holy priests in this Diocese, and that they are working hard to counter the errors that have developed within our Diocese. For many of them this has been very tough to do, because of the widespread dissent and disinformation fostered here.

As Catholics, we are all entitled to participate in valid Masses that adhere to the directions, the "rubrics," of the Church. This is not a call for that "old time religion," that usually polarizes these kinds of conversations. This isn't about conser-



vative or liberal. It is about orthodoxy. Holy Mass can adhere to the directions and still maintain the traditional or contemporary setting that defines each parish. For us, the important thing is that the Mass is given as directed by the Church. I would challenge you to go to your Pastors, and Parish Councils, and respectfully ask that there be a specific Sunday when the Mass will be in total accord with the rubrics. Let the whole congregation participate in a Mass that isn't in any way intentionally illicit. Let them hear the Nicene Creed with "men" in it and the proper Lord's Prayer; hear the consecration without politically correct embellishments; experience an absence of unapproved texts and language; observe extraordinary eucharistic ministers that don't behave like priests; hear ordained ministers reading the Gospel and giving

the Homily; enjoy music that is tasteful and subordinate to the Mass and not a "performance" to be applauded; kneel during the consecration; and observe reverence for the Real Presence by adhering to the Church's guidance on reception of the Blessed Sacrament. This isn't asking for too much. It is asking for what is right.

Ask your Pastor for this and see what the response is. Most, I am sure will welcome your enthusiasm and interest. If this is viewed as a burden in your home parish, find one that is doing it and experience Holy Mass as it intended to be offered. Finally, let your Pastor know that he is appreciated in providing the Mass and Sacraments, and most of all he is important and needed!

**David Coriale**  
Canifer Cove Lane  
Webster

## Wrong to claim apparitions could be false

#### To the editors:

In a response to William T. Bluhm's letter of June 17, concerning the controversy following Father McBrien's column of May 6, the following facts must be contemplated before any more readers are led to believe that a great hoax has taken place in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina. There, purported apparitions of The Blessed Mother have taken place since June 25, 1981 and continue to this day.

Fifteen years ago, the bishop of Medjugorje was removed from determining the

Medjugorje visions authentic and their authenticity rests with a commission of bishops, newly appointed by Rome. Pope John Paul II has expressed deep faith in the visions and at no time have the six visionaries ever been clinically diagnosed as schizophrenic or the victims of a "collective hallucination." The children were examined by eminent physicians and psychologists and NO such diagnoses were published or made concerning them. They were found to be completely autogenic and without noticeable neurotic ten-

dencies. Many tests were performed during actual apparitions, one test measured high, abnormal amounts of electromagnetic energy, energy uncommon in an area the size of the room in which that vision took place.

Over the past 18 years 30 million pilgrims have visited the site of the apparitions and it has been estimated that 16,000 priests and religious were among them. The apparitions have garnered hundreds of spiritual consolations, thousands of physical healings and an innumerable number of conversions of the heart — from hatred and loathing for sins back to love of neighbor and deep spiritual peace; countless numbers of physical manifestations continue to take place there, too numerous and elaborate to mention.

As in Fatima, in 1917, many "frightening and horrible" prophecies made by the Blessed Mother have been cataloged by the children and will be made known once the last visionary receives a 10th secret, which the other five have.

What conclusion, then, is left, if the visions are authentic since most of the work in determining them authentic has been done, and nothing untoward about the six visionaries has been proven?

Anyone who writes letters and columns attesting to or claiming that the apparitions are false or anywhere near false or that the new bishops appointed to investigate the appearances of The Blessed Mother in Medjugorje is a hoax is guilty of a falsehood and should stand corrected.

**Michael H. Pierce**  
Canterbury Road, Rochester  
EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with our letters policy.

## Confused about gripe over column

#### To the editors:

In this week's edition of the *Courier*, Eugene Michael of Concord Drive in Webster wrote an opinion critical of Father McBrien (June 17: "Base conscience on the truth"). At the end of his opinion he wrote:

"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."

Well, I do have the book and I do read it from time to time on a topic-related basis. Out of curiosity I reviewed what was written therein relative to moral conscience. I found the following:

1782 "Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters."

1790 "A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. If

he were deliberately to act against it, he would condemn himself..."

1791 pretty much makes it clear that freedom of conscience does not relieve us of the culpability of guilt.

So I am confused as to what bothers Mr. Michael. Perhaps he can tell me, with a little more clarity, what is wrong with Father McBrien's statement: "...Catholics, in every moral decision, are bound to form and follow their own consciences." I see nothing wrong with it nor do I see how Father McBrien misinterpreted the church's position.

This letter, along with many others that have appeared in the *Catholic Courier*, identifies the writer with the conservative faction that exists in this diocese. I have no quarrel with these people. They prefer to be led by the hand. I don't. But I do take exception to anyone who demands that I adhere to his or her beliefs without question.

**Robert W. Hertz**  
Webster