

OPINIONS

All of creation is miracle from God

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:

Peter Dzwonkoski's letter on chasing miracles (July 22) expressed a bit of frustration with what seems a trivialization of a holy and perfect God.

I have to say I've felt the same way at times, as if we're missing the point of faith and turning God into some sort of "magician" when we look for signs and miracles. Nevertheless, I've done it myself, and without meaning at all to diminish God's majesty or argue with His will.

Perhaps this is off the point, but I came across an excerpt from a book by Rabbis Eliyahu Dessler and Aryeh Carmell titled "Strive for Truth." The chapter was on miracles and made the familiar case that "...there is no essential difference between the natural and miraculous ... the world has no other cause but the will of God."

According to the Rabbis, we put all the miracles we're used to — the growth of a seed, the rhythm of tides, the flight of a bird — into the category of "nature." Then when His will produces something unusual, a miraculous healing for example, we separate that from the rest, finally recognizing the direct working of God.

It's my own feeling that we sometimes carry it a step further. We try to reproduce the miracle, thinking the place it occurred or the person it came through has some special connection to God. We try, in fact, to control the unusual miracles just as we try to control the miracle of "nature." We buy into the illusion of cause and effect, thinking what we do or where we go will somehow bring us a desired effect.

Then there are those who would explain away the unusual miracles by saying they're simply natural effects that we don't understand yet. They've gotten it backwards. What we don't understand yet is that the whole of Creation is a miracle entirely from the will of God, brought forth for the operation of man's free will, the choosing of eternal life or death.

The Rabbis ask, "What can help us to realize that everything comes to us directly from God and that physical causes have no power and no reality?" Their answer is prayer, that silent, motionless thought in the heart that's intimately connected to the will of God. Prayer has the power we look for in holy places and weeping statues; it is the voice of a child who needs, to the ear of a God who is able to bestow the impossible. Prayer opens a channel for miracles that reveal the illusory nature of cause and effect. Then we can begin asking not how the seed grows, but why.

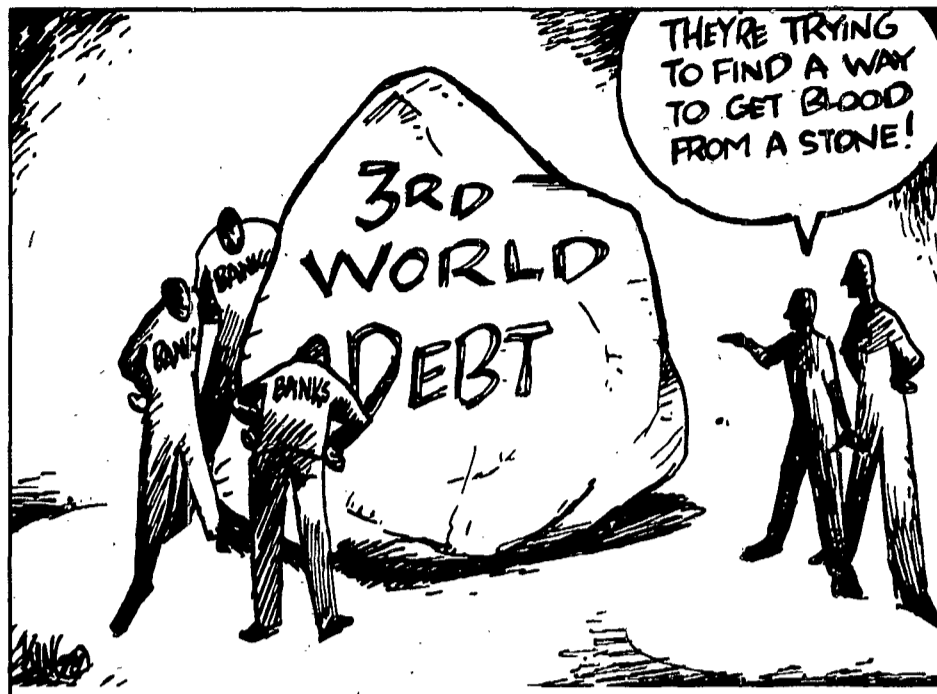
**Sandra Dunn
Mattie Street, Auburn**

No final Vatican OK on Medjugorje trips

To the editors:

Writing in response to my letter about Father McBrien's interpretation of the alleged Medjugorje apparitions, Michael H. Pierce would have the reader believe that the Vatican has fully warranted the phenomena as genuine appearances of Our Lady. It has not. In its latest pronouncement on the matter (1996) the Holy See has in fact forbidden the organization of official pilgrimages to the site by dioceses or parishes. Relying on the judgment of the Yugoslav Conference of Bishops (1991) the Vatican spokesman wrote that "official pilgrimages to Medjugorje, understood as a place of authentic Marian apparitions, should not be organized either on a parish or diocesan level." This was because to allow such pilgrimages "would be in contradiction with what the bishops of the ex-Yugoslavia said in their declaration."

**William T. Bluhm
Bending Bough Drive, Webster**



Pastor worked 'miracles' bringing families together

To the editors:

"Welcome the stranger." How often do we read this in Scripture? On a warm evening in July at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, we witnessed our Pastor, Father Jeremiah P. Moynihan bring together in prayer two very different cultures and religions. Our daughter was marrying a Jewish young man and his Rabbi would be co-officiating with Father Moynihan. Catholic traditions would be observed — Jewish traditions would be observed. When you think of what is involved here, you would need a miracle or two in order to accomplish this. I must also mention, present on the Jewish side, was an Orthodox Jewish grandfather, who was reluctant to go into a Catholic Church. On the Catholic side were a number of very conservative relatives, who were concerned about the whole idea.

At the rehearsal, Father Moynihan brought us together in a circle for prayer. He gave such a warm and sincere wel-

come to all present and offered a good dose of humor. So far so good, I thought, but the big day was yet to come, then the entire clans on both sides will be present. He looks so calm and happy now, but will he be this way for the wedding ceremony?

I wished the entire world could have witnessed the tone that Father Moynihan had set. The welcome he offered to the strangers in our midst was one of love and respect. It caught fire! With mutual respect Father Moynihan and Rabbi Allen co-officiated, fulfilling the traditions of both Faiths.

Just a little footnote: the Orthodox Jewish grandfather has been talking to his friends in Long Island about his good friend Father Moynihan. The Catholic relatives, who were apprehensive about it, claimed it to be a very holy ceremony and one they will always remember.

**Rita B. Sartori
West Clinton Street
Elmira**

Many of columnist's foes have as much, more learning than he

To the editors:

Father McBrien attempts to discredit his adversaries by claiming, "They are Catholics who have not had the advantage of any advanced training in the study of sacred Scripture or Catholic doctrine. And their knowledge of the history of the church is spotty at best." I disagree. Pope John Paul II; Cardinals Ratzinger, Arinze, and George; Archbishop Elden Curtiss and Bishop Bruskewitz; Fathers Joseph Fessio and George Rutler; Msgr. George Kelly; Dr. Scott Hahn and Dr. Janet Smith are but a few of the learned Catholics whose prayerful scholarship has determined a theology which regularly and publicly opposes that of Father McBrien. These people clearly disagree with Father McBrien's views on "...what is truly traditional and essential in Catholicism," but

the dividing line separates the sheep from the goats, not the uneducated from the educated.

Regardless, Jesus has elected to govern His Church through the successive offices of His Apostles, especially the office of Peter. His promise that the Holy Spirit would guide this Church "in all truth" is sure and is not dependent upon the education, or even the holiness, of the office bearers. Much less is it subject to the rantings of self-acclaimed theologians.

Father McBrien's arrogance is as offensive as his errors. However, I do agree with him that "conservative" may not be the most appropriate label for his opponents. A much better word is "orthodox." It means "right thinking."

**Kathleen A. Donohue
Avis Street, Rochester**

Doctor should give babies 'new lease on life'

To the editors:

Dr. Morris Wortman, a Rochester abortion provider, faced eviction from his office at White Spruce Blvd., but his landlord, Home Leasing Inc., extended his lease until July 28, the date when his new clinic is expected to be completed.

If Dr. Wortman had been evicted from his office, that would only have been a temporary setback. But when he aborts un-

born babies, those babies are permanently evicted from their mothers' wombs.

Even though abortion is legal, doctors are not forced to perform abortions. Rather, that is their choice.

If doctors chose not to perform abortions, this would give the unborn "a new lease on life."

**Dianna Richmond Ives
Simpson Road, Rochester**