

# OPINIONS

## 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.

# Evangelization part of ecumenism

### To the editors:

Recently the *Catholic Courier* presented an article titled "American Religious Diversity." In it Catholics expressed their interreligious encounters with, and personal thoughts about other religions. Along with personal views, quotes were given by the two authority heads of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; Francis Cardinal Arinze, president and Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, secretary. Their comments being very brief, I would like to offer some more authoritative quotes, these from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. I believe these citations are crucial to Catholics when dealing in any way with other religions.

"The Catholic Church recognizes in other religions that search, among shadows and images, for the God who is unknown yet near since he gives life and breath and all things and wants all men to be saved. Thus, the Church considers all goodness and truth found in these religions as 'a preparation for the Gospel and given by him who enlightens all men that they may at length have life.'" (843)

Since the goodness and truth found in these religions are only preparations for the Gospel, then they must always be considered incomplete and never sufficient as an absolute rule of life or a means of salvation.

"The Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism* explains: 'For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the One Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God.'" (816)

"Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation...Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it." (846) "This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church." (847) Therefore, as the article rightly affirms those not of the Catholic faith who are saved, are saved through Jesus Christ, but he always saved them through the Catholic Church, and never apart from it, and never directly through another religion.

Lastly who should be in the Catholic Church? "All men are called to the catholic unity of the People of God." (836) Evangelization into the Catholic Church is one of the most important things to consider when dealing with other religions. Let us be faithful to our Lord's command to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mat. 28:19)

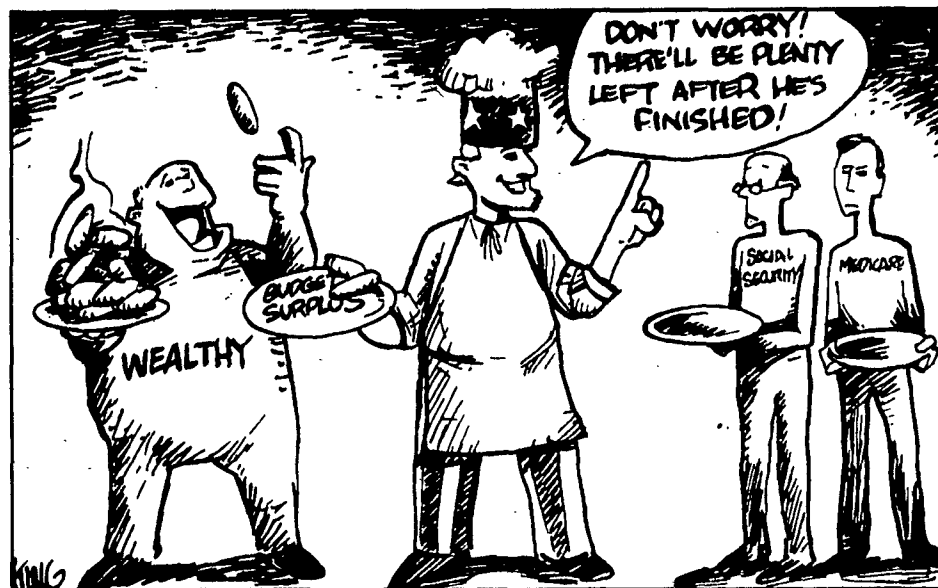
Robert A. Martino, Sr.  
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## Tridentine Mass not 'superior' to new rite

### To the editors:

I would like to remind the zealots for the Tridentine Mass that the so-called "New Mass" is approved by the Church Universal, is the Mass celebrated by the Pope himself and our own Bishop, and is not in any way suspect. There seems to be some underlying theme in most letters and stories about the Tridentine Mass that the "Novus Ordo" which we currently and commonly use is somehow not quite legitimate — or a True Sacrifice — and that the Tridentine Mass is somehow "superior."

I wish to disagree quite strongly with a recent letter (that) seemed to be equating the



## Never underestimate God

### To the editors:

Having read Peter Dzwonkoski's letter concerning miracles (July 22), I am compelled to respond. Assuming his questions indicate a genuine desire for clarification in this matter, he would do well to visit the library at St. Bernard's for reference materials.

His questions as to the nature, interpretation, and pronouncement of miracles are valid, insofar as he is willing to seek answers grounded not in statistics, probabilities, and hyperbole, but in Divine Revelation as preserved by Christ's Church.

The observation that apparitions, cures, and transformations are but "tricks and displays" betrays in him a real inability or unwillingness to accept the humbling Glory of God to act in His own creation. Far from diminishing our respect for that which is holy and mysterious, miracles challenge the faithful to apprehend such qualities in the otherwise profane and ordinary.

Keep in mind that God became flesh in Jesus Christ. Our Lord used the materials of creation, the everyday, the mundane, to give glory to God. He turned water into wine, used dirt and spittle to cure the blind man, healed the bleeding woman with the touch of his cloak. Our Redemption is won through the sacrifice of Our Lord's human body. We need to meditate on that and all its implications. We must not be disturbed when God uses nature to bless us, merely because it challenges our understanding.

Jesus comes to us — flesh and blood,

soul and divinity — in the all too ordinary elements of bread and wine! Surely we do not consider His actions to be the "theatrics" of a "cheap, unpredictable magician." Surely we, in our finiteness and humility, do not restrict the works of God to our personal liking. Far be it from us to presume how to understand God's workings, much less to inform Him of what, to whom, and to how many, where, when, and by what means He is allowed to act.

Each morning, the billions of God's children awake to light, life, and free will. Miraculous? Indeed. Every moment is a gift, an opportunity to direct our will to the praise and honor of God. If I see in my taco shell the image of Christ, my Savior, let me rejoice in the faith He has given me. If the sun dances in the sky, let me fall on my face and glorify the Lord Who is all-powerful. If the Crucifix in my home begins to bleed, God help me if I ask, "What real use is this?"

Yes, let us use our energies of discernment to validate and accept — or reject — alleged miracles. Yet, let us bow to the pronouncements of the Church when we fail to see clearly, trusting the Holy Spirit to "guide us into all truth." Let us pray for the grace to recognize the power of God in all things. And let us never underestimate His love and the myriad ways — profound or profane — through which our Father bestows that love upon His children.

Sean Rook  
Glazer Drive, Rochester

## Saddened by Vatican edict on pair

### To the editors:

Aside from my dismay and anger over my Church's renewed devaluation of the wholeness and holiness of my personhood and my relationships, it saddens me that the Vatican has barred Father Robert Nugent and Sister Jeannine Gramick from their ministry to gay and lesbian Catholics and their families.

I was studying with the Franciscans in Washington, D.C., when I first met Father Bob, Sister Jeannine and their colleagues at New Ways Ministry. Their support and

fellowship enabled me to embrace both my sexuality and my faith, making my vows of chastity possible and my religious vocation purposeful. When I left the religious life, they were among those who affirmed my worth and giftedness, and helped me to discern the direction of my future ministry.

Without such voices of hope and challenge, gay and lesbian Catholics would have precious little evidence of what our bishops maintain in "Always Our Children": that in us God's love is revealed, and that we remain children of the Church.

The bishops also maintain in their document that the Body of Christ needs all of its members to grow, with each carrying out the function proper to it (Ephesians 4:15-16). While teaching is proper to the bishops' office, it's through dialogue that the pilgrim church progresses — a point that Bishop Clark has tried to honor.

Some, however, see dialogue as a threat to the teaching authority of the Church — so much so in this case that they are unable to see the good fruit borne of Father Bob's and Sister Jeannine's pastoral sensitivity. In recognition of those whom their ministry has touched, and mindful of those who remain in need, I pray the dialogue continues.

Michael J. Nicosia, lay chaplain

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