

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.

Question foundation of teaching

To the editors:

The July 15 recent article concerning the priest and nun being barred from the gay/lesbian ministry by the Vatican prompts this letter. We cannot defend the actions of Father Nugent and Sister Gramick because the article did not disclose specific actions in dispute. Likewise, we cannot criticize the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for the same reason. Under the circumstances, we must hopefully conclude that the Congregation acted out of Christ's example of love and forbearance.

Genesis 19:4-8 seems to be the Biblical base for the prevailing condemnation of homosexuality. The story, as related, sounds grim: "Before they went to bed, all the townsmen of Sodom, both young and old — all the people to the last man — closed in on the house." The rest of the story is well known, down to the unanimous offer by Lot of his two virgin daughters to sexually appease the assaulting townsmen. ...

To put this story in focus: were "all the townsmen of Sodom" homosexuals? Very unlikely, as today's knowledge places no greater a portion than 10 percent of the population as homosexual. Were these townsmen then, for the most part heterosexual, bent on a perverted sexual orgy? This would be considered a clearly "objective disordered" act. This portion of Genesis 19 is clearly meant to condemn heterosexuals acting in a perverted manner, not to condemn homosexuals or homosexuality.

Recent pronouncements by medical authorities conclude that there are no known medical reasons or medical disorders to cause a person to be attracted to persons of the same sex. Psychiatry has also made similar statements to the effect that no known mental conditions can be attributed to homosexuality. Both areas of competency conclude that homosexual persons are born that way, and that their attraction to members of the same sex is due to their nature. It follows, that such attraction is as natural to them as attractions to the opposite sex is natural to heterosexuals. Why then does Rome persist in characterizing all homosexual acts as intrinsically evil? ...

Are all "men" created in the image and likeness of God? Would God's creative performance run upward of a 10-percent error rate? Would that mean that God created about 10 percent of human kind with "objective disorders?" We don't think so. Is homosexuality a natural condition for homosexuals, as natural as heterosexuality is to the other 90 percent? To conclude otherwise is to defy reason.

If the natural quality of heterosexuals is to love and be loved — physically, emotionally, spiritually — then why is it "intrinsically evil" for homosexuals to love and be loved by their natural partners? We believe that 10 percent of humankind has been driven to acts of desperation and promiscuity by denying their right to unite and love and be loved... Heterosexuals, in their fervor and self righteousness, have consigned many beautiful, caring people to lives of furtiveness, self denial and self destruction. Virtuous homosexuals should be able to enter into legal, blessed, monogamous, devoted and loving unions with each other on the same basis as heterosexuals.

It's time to crawl out from under the tyranny of intolerance, ignorance, and hate and acknowledge the right of homosexuals to the pursuit of happiness befitting their unique circumstances in full love and communion with their heterosexual brethren.

Ralph & Velma Bodensteiner
Westover Drive, Webster

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with length limitations.



Confident Spirit will lead us

To the editors:

What sad news that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has asked Sister Jeanine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent to discontinue their pastoral work with lesbian and gay persons and their parents!

This is difficult to understand because, as far as I can perceive, these two have upheld the church teaching. Also, it is the professed work of the church to reach out to those whose sexual orientation is not of their own choosing and who need understanding and pastoral care. I hope that Father Nugent and Sister Gramick will ac-

cept this setback and remain within the church, knowing that others like them will carry on this important work.

The Holy Spirit is each person's "birthright" through Baptism so I am confident the Spirit will continue to lead the People of God, helping us to discern God's will and to do it.

Let us pray for Sister Gramick and Father Nugent, for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, and for ourselves, and for guidance in caring for all who are marginalized.

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle, Rochester

Amateur astronomer enjoyed story

To the editors:

I enjoyed your recent article, "Space: Are answers above?" I was pleased to hear of other Catholics who are involved in studying our universe. Since 1986, I have been involved with the Hubble Space Telescope (HST); as an amateur I was the first to use it, then the only amateur to use it twice. (The amateur program was then eliminated in order to reduce costs.) The Space Telescope Science Institute continues to keep me informed of the latest discoveries. After careful study, I give slide shows about HST and its fabulous discoveries.

In following the HST's findings, I became more and more amazed at our Creator's handiwork. God's playing field is much bigger than our solar system or our galaxy. I continue to marvel at how all parts of the universe fit together and change over time. I mostly see God as a great designer. God's original formulation of physical and chemical principles caused us and the universe to develop. The law of gravity is just strong enough. If it had a little less force, matter could not have come together to make stars and planets. On the other hand, a more powerful gravity would cause the stars to burn out too soon.

As a science teacher for 28 years at Bloomfield, I frequently taught about how wonderful water is. Water expands when turning into a solid, as a result it floats, thereby allowing fish to live in the winter. If water contracted when turning into a solid as nearly all other substances, ice would sink — eventually making rivers, streams, and ponds solid masses. Water also dissolves more different types of substances than any other liquid — this fact allows vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients to feed our cells.

In addition, I feel an active God directing my life. When I look back at my life, especially my many painful trials, I see that pain was necessary for my spiritual development. My happiness depends on my attitude, on what I'm looking for. I can see the purpose for my difficulties or I can live a life full of self-pity and helplessness. When I'm living with the right attitudes, good things come to me. My scientific training has taught me to closely examine data looking for connections or seeing if one event follows another. An examination of my life has proved to me over and over that God is guiding me.

Jim J. Secosky
South Avenue
Manchester

Took offense at cartoon on budget surplus

To the editors:

We take serious offense at the editorial cartoon of Aug. 5. First of all, the budget surplus — assuming there is one — means that the government originally taxed us more than it needed to carry out its appointed duties. Since only 40 percent of us pay over 90 percent of taxes, should not the 40 percent be the ones to get our own money back? How can you give a tax rebate to people who have never paid taxes? Simply, the government has overcharged us and should be required to return the overcharge just as we would expect a merchant to do if he overcharged.

Further, we resent what we perceive as a bias toward "the wealthy." Do you really want to encourage class envy in this country? How rich is too rich? You — the church — are quick to fault the wealthy, but who do you turn to when funds are needed? The vast majority of wealthy became that way due to initiative, hard work, and God-given ability. The wealthy are the ones who provide the jobs and a great deal of the philanthropy in this country. We should appreciate, not hate them. And no, we are not one of them.

John K. and Ann Marie Wilson
County Route 47, Dansville