

# 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.

## All should reconsider behavior in church

### To the editors:

The church, God's Temple, is meant to be God's House of Prayer. Is it? Judge for yourself. Some Sunday take an early seat at the back of the church prior to Mass. I believe in most churches you will observe the following actions by too many modern Catholics:

Let us start by entering the church. The hand is dipped in the holy water font and the blessing takes place. Sometimes it is a rotating sign like a whirling dervish. Then comes the walk down the aisle to the pew and the genuflection — supposedly. It can be anything from a quick bending of the knee to a full genuflection, the knee touching the floor.

Now comes prayer time before Mass, the reading of the Sunday bulletin with comments to a partner.

Now comes the time for the readings and the Gospel and sermon. Modern Catholics sit and talk to their partners, gaze into open space, stare at others or continue rereading the bulletin.

I wonder how many of us really become a part of the Transubstantiation — the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.

Now comes the time to receive Communion. Just about everyone in the church heads down the aisle to receive the Holy Eucharist. A traveling missionary priest made the following statement in our church during his homily at Sunday Mass: "Quite a showing to have almost everyone attending this Mass receiving Holy Communion." Then came the bombshell: "I wonder how many can remember the last time they went to confession."

Now comes the blessing by the priest to everyone in the church — even those making a mad dash to leave. Pastors have mentioned this in church bulletins to wait until the priest leaves the altar — to no avail. Just think about it: one hour a week, 52 hours a year. If you live to be 70 it would mean you spent 3,640 hours in church and 607,880 hours on yourself.

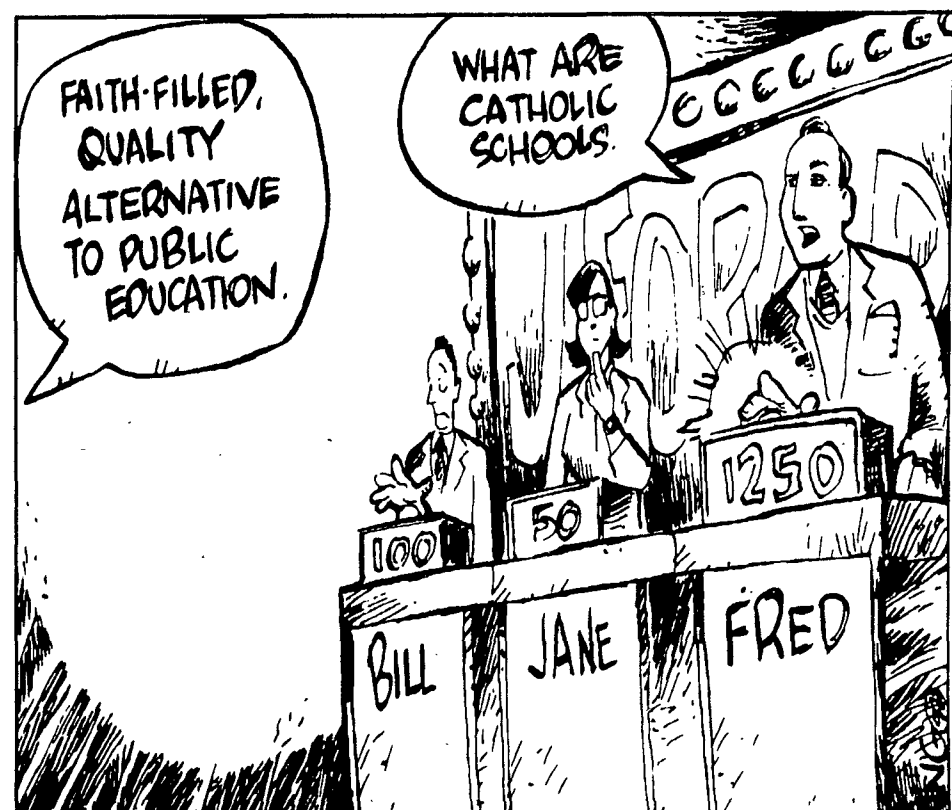
My dear brothers and sisters, this message is not directed at anyone per se, even the front-and-center churchgoer who never misses a trick to be seen or those who make it a point to show their piety. Jesus said pray in the quiet of your cell. Do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. Your Heavenly Father who knows each one of us better than we know ourselves sees what you are doing and will reward you.

Some may think that I am a holier than thou Catholic. NO, I am not. I am in there pitching everyday to make it to my eternal home with my dear wife and family. Am I guilty of any of the above? Who isn't? I daydream in church many times. Have I ever fallen asleep. Yes! Human frailty being what it is, many of us will fall into some of these categories not through carelessness but forgetfulness that they are in the house of God.

To everyone who may read this message may I respectfully submit the timeless phrase, "If the shoe fits, wear it." That includes me!

**Francis J. Mastropietro**  
Clark Street, Auburn

E-mail your letters to:  
[cathcour@frontiernet.net](mailto:cathcour@frontiernet.net)



## Love of God, creation swells from experience of miracles

### To the editors:

People contributing to the editorial page of the *Courier* have different concepts than contributors to secular papers. Normally one would read and agree or disagree with the concepts elucidated by the writer. A recent letter by Mr. Peter Dzwonkoski on miracles deserves reply.

Miracles may or may not occur under standard statistical parameters as he noted. For anyone who has been blessed by "miracles" the statistical parameter is unknown. The only thought is something happened to them when hope had been lost and, to emphasize the point, had created multiple prayers to God, the Blessed Virgin Mary or a saint by the supplicant. Cures may occur within certain mathematical parameters. The thought, however, is the "miracle" occurred without knowledge of these statistics, nor caring.

My family was blessed with a miracle decades ago. Whether it was due to the sacrament of Extreme Unction, a prayer by a Protestant minister who knew prayers would be appreciated or the use of a newly developed antibiotic therapy is unknown. What is known is the doctor had informed my parents he'd done everything, medically. His statement was "It's out of my hands" and indicated a sense of finalization of the outcome.

Since that point in time, having been involved within the scientific community, I've looked for answers to various problems in life. There are times no scientific explanation suffices to occurrences. So that one comes to the conclusion whatever parameter one chooses, scientific, religious or luck, it's Mother Nature who provided the miracle by some method. To the recipients of the miracle it meant a loved one was saved, jobs or money appeared from nowhere.

Miracles aren't meant to demean God, or Jesus or any other religious facet, but to enforce the thought there is a power higher than science, or statistic or any other parameter one chooses. Your writer would do well to accept the fact once a "miracle" occurs in anyone's life the love of God and Creation is increased. People using prayers are blessed in many ways without conforming or knowledge of the method. God works in mysterious ways, proving his presence both through miracles without reason and those explainable. Are there "guardian angels?" Can they be explained scientifically? Probably not. Faith however provides a belief God intervened. Which is more sufficient to any miracle recipient.

**Robert L. Landschoot**  
Sing Sing Road, Horseheads

## Modern estimates of population don't restrict numbers in Sodom

### To the editors:

In their letter "Question foundation of teaching" (Aug. 12), Ralph and Velma Bodenstener reached far to conclude that Sodom's inhabitants were 10 percent or less homosexual.

Fairly recent studies have challenged that 10 percent figure contained in the Kinsey Report some 50 years ago. According to more recent studies, the estimate is now between 2 and 3 percent.

However, these studies do not preclude a much larger percent of practicing homosexuals in ancient Sodom.

As for claiming homosexuals are born that way, considerable medical opinion indicates that the environment is the base cause of homosexuality.

In Romans 1:26-32 we are told that these are "degrading passions" deserving of death.

I suggest that those who consider church teaching as tyranny, intolerance and hate reread the Scriptures.

Hopefully they will learn that homosexuals must practice abstinence if they

are to save their immortal souls. This also applies to unmarried heterosexuals.

**Robert Bart**  
Ithaca

*EDITORS' NOTE: The passage to which Mr. Bart refers also addresses greed, envy, murder, spite, gossip, insolence, rebellion against one's parents and other "evils."*

## Suggests reading book on confusion in Mass

### To the editors:

With regard to David Gonale's letter, "Catholics entitled to 'valid' Masses" in the July 8, 1999 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, I would like to say, "BRAVO!" and "AMEN!" I would also suggest that those who have concerns in this area pick up a copy of *Mass Confusion* by James Akin. It's an easy book to read and is a wealth of information about how the Mass should be celebrated in the U.S.A.

**Robert F. Carson**  
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