

OPINIONS

Psst! Did you hear about ...

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.

A reader recently wrote to us about allegations regarding Procter & Gamble. She had heard that in 1998 the company's president appeared on the Sally Jesse Raphael television show and said he was a member of the Church of Satan. Supposedly, he also said that part of his company's profits supported this "church."

Our reader included a copy of information a co-worker had found on the Internet concerning these allegations and calling for a boycott of the company's products. She turned to the *Catholic Courier* for direction, which we are glad to provide:

The allegations are false.

They were false when they first surfaced in the early 1980s.

They were false when the Phil Donohue Show was the supposed forum for the remarks.

They were false when the Jennie Jones Show was the supposed forum for the remarks.

A spokesperson for Raphael's show said that the president of Procter & Gamble had never even appeared on the show.

"What show is it this time?" a Procter & Gamble spokeswoman asked with a sigh when contacted by the *Courier*. She then denied the rumor.

The company has even had to create a Web site (www.pg.com/rumor) to deal with the reports. That Web site includes letters from the various implicated television shows, Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati (where Procter & Gamble is headquartered), the Rev. Billy Graham and the Rev. Jerry Falwell, among others, all denouncing the allegations.

Again, let's be clear: The allegations are false.

Why repeat the denial? Because rumors persist after nearly 20 years. Procter & Gamble has been forced to waste time, energy and money defending itself. Its battle to end the rumors has even

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extended to courts of law, where the company has won a number of cases in connection with the rumors. One can only estimate how much money the company has lost due to misguided boycotts.

Yet the allegations resurface. The Internet has provided a handy, unpoliced environment to speed their spread.

One is reminded of the persistent rumors that atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair was trying to get the Federal Communications Commission to ban all religious programming. But she had had nothing to do with the attempt — which failed in 1975.

Yet as late as 1990, FCC officials told the *Courier* they were still being forced to waste taxpayer dollars responding to 400-500 phone calls and 80,000 pieces of mail each month about the rumor.

O'Hair disappeared several years ago. She is now believed to be dead. One hopes the rumor linked to her is likewise deceased. Unfortunately, the Procter & Gamble rumor is clearly still alive.

The *Courier* reader who asked for information did the right thing. "As a Catholic Christian," she wrote, "I would appreciate some direction." Her desire was to be able to "make a more informed decision."

She sought that direction from a reliable source.

The Internet is not a reliable source.

Nor are co-workers who spread rumors without seeking verification.

So kudos to the *Courier* reader for seeking the facts from a reliable source and not spreading unfounded allegations.

Oh, and by the way: The allegations are false.

Using dead language preserves meaning

To the editors:

Mr. Muench need not resort to name-calling in his defense of the "New Mass" (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 5: "Tridentine Mass not 'superior' to new rite"). We can disagree without being uncharitable. We Traditionalists who prefer the Old Rite of the Mass to the New Rite do not question the validity of the latter when the priest offers it according to the law and mind of the Church. However, slight deviations MAY affect the validity of the Mass, especially if the words of Consecration are involved. When the Latin language is used, each word has an undeniable meaning which will not change, because Latin is an unchangeable or "dead" language. In fact, the the Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II instructs, "the use of the Latin language, with due respect to particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites" (Art. 36:1).

Have the rapid changes in the New Mass over the last 30 years, as contrasted to about 1,500 years of evolution of the Traditional liturgy, had a deleterious effect on the Church? Yes, according to Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy..." ("Milestones," p. 148, 1998).

We DO agree on Mr. Muench's last point — that a significant percentage of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence, but we believe that to a large extent it IS a liturgical problem. *Lex orandi, lex credendi* is an axiom derived from the words of Pope St. Celestine I, "The rule of prayer determines the rule of faith," that is, the liturgy is a chief instrument in the tradition of true doctrine" (*The Catholic Encyclopedic Dictionary*). The priest and people both facing God in the tabernacle, the genuflections, the numerous signs of the cross, the hushed silence at the Consecration, the prayers centered on the SACRIFICE occurring on the altar — not altar table — Holy Com-

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munion placed on the tongue of the kneeling Communicant, these are some of the built-in safeguards of the belief in the Real Presence that the Traditional Mass conveys.

There is no doubt in the Real Presence at the Sunday 1:30 p.m. Indult Mass approved by Pope John Paul II and permit-

ted by Bishop Clark at St. Stanislaus Church in Rochester.

In Holy Mother Church.

Jean M. Lloyd

New York Street

Honeoye

EDITORS' NOTE: Mr. Muench referred to advocates of the Tridentine Mass as "zealots."

Pray era of materialism will end

To the editors:

We the people tend to behave by the measure of our riches

Behavior in church by Francis J. of Auburn is most interesting and reminds me of a story of when I was a boy way back in the 1930s. You could feel people squirm in their pews when the very young priest gave his fire and brimstone explosive homily. We people of today would not recognize these meek, obedient brothers and sisters. However, we need to understand that in the 1930's an ice cream cone was a big treat and an old fashioned family reunion was like heaven on earth.

Today most of us are rich in material things. Those of us who enjoy reasonable

good health are living better than kings because responsibility has been relegated to a lower priority. Fun and games, R & R, picnics, sporting events and parties are numero 1 in our lives so what do you expect, Francis J.; go with the flow or you will be trying to tread water in the flow.

Let all of us, however, pray and trust in tomorrow. Things will change. They always have. Fifty years from now we will either recover from this gigantic materialistic world or we will realize a chaotic world that could make the Fall of the Roman Empire appear to be like an old fashioned ice cream social.

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E-mail your letters to the editors to:

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