

# 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.

## Fall down in adoration

### To the editors:

"Down in adoration falling. Lo the sacred host we hail!" (As) Bishop Sheen (observed in) *Love One Another*, 1944: "A Catholic believes that Our Lord is present in the Eucharist in every Catholic church. That is why he tips his hat when he passes a church. That is why he genuflects when he enters the church. That is why there are kneeling benches in the church: for adoration is physically expressed by the humility of kneeling."

True, in Europe, some basilicas, even country churches, people stand as there are no kneelers. This is America, we are rich and spacious. Kneeling in profound adoration has always been our tradition. Scripture tells us the Magi prostrated before the Child. They were pagans. Our Muslim brethren touch their foreheads to the ground five times daily facing the holy city of Mecca to honor Allah their god.

Magnificent age-old masterpieces of the Nativity portray the humble shepherds on bended knee in adoration before the newly born Babe, the King of Kings. "Every head shall bow; every knee shall bend at the 'mere' name of Jesus." At the Transubstantiation Jesus is more than "mere." He is Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity present at the words of the priest and extension of hands. True, we honor our "greats" with a standing ovation to express love, admiration, respect and appreciation. But remember, this deference is given to a "mere" human being. Jesus is a Divine Human Being. "Fall on your knees, O hear the angels' voices!" proclaims the splendid, ancient Christmas hymn; and Aquinas, "Therefore, we before Him falling, this great sacrament revere. ... Faith our feeble senses aiding, makes the Savior's presence clear." At Cardinal Bernardin's Mass of the High Priest, a voice over the P.A. spoke loud and clear, "Kneel at the Consecration, those not of our faith may sit."

Nowadays, at festive Masses, weddings, even funerals, standing is suddenly becoming the "in thing." Forgive my seeming frivolity; is it monkey see, monkey do, a sense of being politically correct? We all come from parishes where kneeling at the Consecration has been traditional. I can understand this change in new mod churches where through an apparent oversight, the carpenters were never told to put in the kneelers. The rubrics say kneel at the end of the Sanctus, stand after the great Amen. So why? Exception, of course, for the physically impaired. Please, some learned theologian or otherwise young or old, explain, why? "Let everything in Heaven and on earth bend the knee at the 'name' of Jesus. Alleluia."

What about the "Real Jesus?" Suppose He were to appear to any one of us. I think I could fall on my face. Wouldn't you?

**Sister Sylvia Kircher, SMSM  
Linden Knoll, Rochester**



## Disabled decry White's death

### To the editors:

As the Executive Director of the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities, the voice of the Catholic Bishops' commitment to promote welcome and justice for our brothers and sisters with assorted disabilities, I am appalled by the placency exhibited as the facts of Bill White's death slowly emerge.

A tiny tip of an end-of-life iceberg, much of which lies hidden from public view, is the determination by the Monroe County Medical (Examiner's) Office that Mr. White's death was accidental, a delayed result of a spinal cord injury sustained 32 years ago when 50-year-old Bill was a teenage gymnast.

Over my 27 years of leadership within the disability community, I have known many individuals who live fully interactive lives with the aid of ventilator-assisted breathing. This everyday, routine device is used by practicing attorneys, federal employees, architects and other professionals as they move through their world in motorized wheelchairs, making a meaningful contribution to their communities. Unfortunately, the Medical Examiner based his judgment on negative stereotypes, not cur-

rent rehabilitation realities.

My adult daughter had less than a 1 percent chance of survival on the day of her birth. If she were to die in Rochester, would it be determined death had been postponed by extraordinary medical interventions and that her life ended as a result of low birth weight? That example can be dismissed as preposterous. But the judgment about the cause of Bill's death is just as ridiculous to those who live within their own homes with disabilities similar to those with which Bill lived for 32 years in a medical institution.

Any non-disabled person would have merited suicide prevention treatment if they faced the reality of so many lost options. And possibly they might be expected to continue grieving for a deceased parent. (Mr. White's mother died recently.) Bill White's death is seen within the disability community as a result of the denial of treatment which would have been provided to others not so disabled.

**Mary Jane Owen, TOP, MSW  
Executive Director  
National Catholic Office  
for Persons with Disabilities  
Washington, D.C.**

## Don't be afraid to spread the faith!

### To the editors:

With interest and mixed feelings, I read about the evangelical project of distributing a "Jesus" video to over 300,000 households in December (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 2).

Many Catholics do not wish to participate in this program. Why? Because they feel uncomfortable in bringing their beliefs into their neighbors' homes.

Is it imposing our views on others? I would say "no." Our neighbors can discard and reject the video.

We Catholics have so much beauty and countless treasures in our faith! However, we tend to hide and conceal them. The press and TV display and broadcast our faults and failings. Why can't we display our religious beliefs and practices?

I believe we should be boasting and pro-

claiming Jesus as Lord to the world, which hungers for his message. Jesus said to his followers, "You are the light of the world. Do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket." And also, "Go forth and teach all nations."

In a recent survey, one-third of the teens did not know why we celebrate Easter!

We realize how secular our nation has become, driving God out of the marketplace. In our lifetime we have gone from one extreme to the other: from religion everywhere to religion nowhere.

Regardless of the video project, maybe we need to ask ourselves the question: Are we permitting God and religion to fade out of existence in our nation today?

**Rev. Elmer J. Schmidt  
McAuley Residence  
Blossom Road, Rochester**

## Award recipients set record straight on past service

### To the editors:

We appreciate the article about our pro-life work in your August 26, 1999 issue, but feel that we must clarify statements made in that article. Dr. Sweeney was on the board of directors of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians Guilds, but never served as president. Also, he never held office on the New York State Right to Life

Committee, serving only with the Rochester Area Right to Life Group.

It is an honor to receive the Leo Holmsten Human Life Award. We knew Dr. Holmsten as a very conscientious and capable physician. He was an eloquent and tireless advocate for the the unborn.

We thank all who supported and continue to support the pro-life movement. Al-

so, we wish to express our admiration and appreciation of all those who generously gave of their time and abilities to establish and maintain these organizations.

**Dr. and Mrs. Tom Sweeney  
Nob Hill, Rochester**

*EDITORS' NOTE: The Catholic Courier regrets the errors, which were the result of inaccurate information provided to the newspaper.*

## Encourages fellow Catholics to contribute toward Corpus Christi Church

### To the editors:

Interesting (that the) Sept. 5 *Democrat and Chronicle* gave so much space to the schismatic group Spiritus Christi, also the large grant from the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation just to "study" the needs of women leaving prison. This same foundation contributes to PBS.

I tithe on my minimal social security — only income. Corpus Christi was my birthplace as a convert in 1948. Since the schism, I have started donating to them. A debt I owe.

Article said other Catholic churches are trying to help Corpus Christi. Non-Catholic churches are contributing to the

schismatics, also other groups.

My plea is that each Roman believing Catholic contributes persistently what they can to Corpus Christi.

I do this as a begging member of the Franciscan Order.

**Shirley F. Schuhart, OFM Ter.  
Whalen Road, Penfield**