

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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1150 Buffalo Road
P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340
800/600-3628 outside Rochester
http://www.catholiccourier.com
e-mail: cathcour@frontiernet.net

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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.

New Princeton scholar is dangerous

To the editors:

Princeton University's appointment of Australian-born philosopher Peter Singer to the chair of Bioethics of its Center for Human Values has stirred much controversy, and with good reason. Catholics should be particularly concerned, because Singer's utilitarian philosophy is a frontal assault on the very heart of Catholic social teaching: the transcendent value of every human life.

Like his 19th century soul mates, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, Singer rejects faith-based value systems in favor of a relativist world-view devoid of absolutes. Right and wrong are determined by a subjective moral calculus based on satisfying pleasure and avoiding pain. Under this formula, subjective judgments about the quality of another's life supersede the inviolable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thus Singer embraces not only unbridled abortion, but also euthanasia, suicide, and even infanticide for up to 28 days after birth. Unborn children, infants, elderly, chronically ill or emotionally disturbed persons — all are expendable if society deems their quality of life wanting.

Disabled persons are particularly to be targeted. Singer considers the severely disabled less valuable not only than other human beings, but even than certain farm animals. In his book, "Rethinking Life and Death," he attempts to redefine human nature by denying any rational distinction between the conscious thoughts and actions of a severely disabled human being and the instinctive behavior of an animal.

Singer is a very intelligent and persuasive author and scholar. He is also, like Jack Kevoorkian, a dangerous man — not because he is personally evil, but because he subscribes to evil philosophies and ethical frameworks that are persuasively presented as morally licit and socially desirable. In advancing 18th and 19th century versions of utilitarianism, he would discard thousands of years of ethical moral principles that have protected human life from unjust aggression since the time of the Hebrew prophets and the Greek city-states. Accordingly, his ideas represent a threat not only to the weak and disabled,

Psychoanalyst saw Mass' power

To the editors:

I knew that the Vatican II Documents called the Mass the highest form of worship, but I learned this week that a Jungian analyst who is a Baptist says that the Mass helps a person to balance his or her personality. Writing in a 1991 book called "Owning Your Own Shadow" Robert Johnson says:

"The Catholic Mass is a masterpiece of balancing our cultural life. If one has the courage to see, the Mass is full of the darkest things: there is incest, betrayal, rejection, torture, death — and worse. All this leads to revelation but not until the dark side has been portrayed as vividly as possible. If one went to Mass in high consciousness, one would tremble at the awfulness of it — and be redeemed by its balancing effect. The Mass lost most of its effectiveness when it was modernized and made to serve the cultural process. One ought to pale with terror at the Mass."

I don't see where Johnson comes up with incest in the Mass, but I do think it notable that a Baptist Jungian analyst writes highly of the Mass.

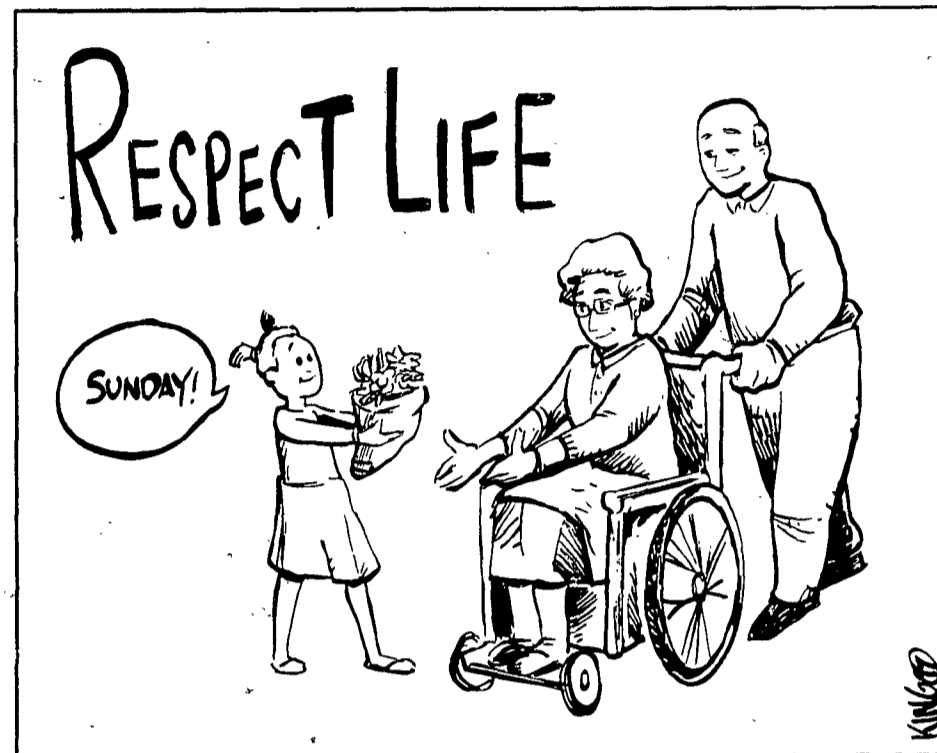
Tom Fogarty
Walnut Street
Auburn

but to the entire moral and religious foundations of Western culture.

Unfortunately, Singer's atheistic and extreme libertarian philosophy comports well with our prevailing culture's adoration of radical individualism and unbridled freedom of choice. The threat posed by his dangerous ideas should spur all

Catholics to redouble our efforts to protect and proclaim the sanctity and dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death.

John M. Kerry
Executive Director
New York State Catholic Conference
Albany



Grateful for chance to know Baltimore's 'gentle prophet'

To the editors:

On September 2 a gentle prophet died. I knew him as a man of integrity, compassion, warmth and gentleness, honesty, and genuine humility. He was a seeker after justice in Church and society who never hesitated to affirm the gifts of others.

Who is this man? He was Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, and his name is P. Francis Murphy. But he insisted on being called "Frank." I did not know him well, and yet he touched my life profoundly. My first memory of him goes back a few years, when I heard him speak on women's issues in Syracuse. That gentle warmth, a hallmark of his personality, was extended even to two people who were there to derail his talk. His ability to listen, his respect even for those who differed sharply from him, impressed me.

Then I read one of his handouts, a talk given to the priests of Washington, D.C. In that talk he spoke openly of his conversion to the issue of women's ordination. He spoke of the painful beginning, when he was able to deeply listen to women and began to see himself as part of the problem. Even recently, just this past fall, he was able to publicly speak about the need for women's ordination. This was truly an act of courage in an official Church that silences such talk. And I came to see that it was not easy for him to speak out. Indeed, his gentle spirit



wrestled with the need to speak publicly on such tension filled issues. But, it was his integrity that won out. His search for justice extended into many other areas, as well. For example, he worked long and hard with people of other faith traditions to provide and advocate for good housing for those who live in poverty.

I can only offer my deepest gratitude for having encountered this gentle prophet. And be challenged to live as I saw him live, with compassion and integrity, speaking my own truth in love.

Gloria Ulterino
Stone Road
Pittsford

Advises parishes, individuals to try exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

To the editors:

The practice of Eucharistic adoration is spreading around the United States. Why don't we join those who do it. It has been bringing special graces to those who do it. It doesn't take a lot of effort.

The pastor simply puts the Blessed Sacrament in a suitable monstrance and it is exposed on the altar at a regular time

so parishioners know when they can come to take part in this personal adoration. Where it is a regular thing on the parish schedule there are lots of blessings that come to the parish. Try it — you'll like it.

Blessings to you all!

Mary Rita Crowe
East Main Street, Rochester

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or e-mail to cathcour@frontiernet.net