

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

©1999, Rochester Catholic Press Association.

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

President

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager/Editor

Karen M. Franz

Editorial Department

Assistant Editor

Kathleen Schwar

Finger Lakes

Staff Writers

Rob Cullivan

Genesee Valley

Mike Latona

Southern Tier

Photo intern

Mike Mergen

Business Department

Circulation Manager

Donna Stubbings

Office Manager

Mary DiPonzo

Secretary/Receptionist

Arlene S. Gall

Advertising Department

Account Executive

Naomi Furbush

Production Department

Graphics Manager

Kim Parks

Graphic Artist

Linda Jeanne Rivers

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.

Meaning is key in case for Latin

To the editors:

Donald Muench, in his letter of Oct. 28, has misunderstood the point that was made about the unchangeability of Latin and why certain of the "Traditionalists" are so adamant about preferring the Tridentine Latin Mass. The meaning of the words that are used is paramount in importance in providing validity to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The unchangeable quality of the Latin language, coupled with the use of this non-vernacular language adds to the "safety" of participating in a valid Mass. The concerns about the *Novus Ordo* Mass is less to do with the language that it is being offered in, and more to do with the deviations from the proscribed words that were given for this form.

While there are some who decry the *Novus Ordo* altogether as a great error, it is valid as given by the Magisterium and used in that form. All too many times, the priest for reasons that vary from trying to "prove" his sensitivities to the feminist issues, to the sheer insertion of his own ego in embellishing the celebration to fit his image of the Mass, results in an illicit, if not invalid Mass. Most of us have experienced a great deterioration of Holy Mass as we have moved toward a celebration that emphasizes a social gathering and a community meal at the "table of the Lord." The Majesty and Mystery of the True and Living Sacrifice has been lost in group dynamics that center on the externalities of the Mass and lose the deep purpose of our participation.

I believe that Mr. Muench's analogy on the use of Koine Greek missed the point completely and perhaps exposes a view that he is more focused on form than content. There are many translations of the Bible, and some of these translations are in error and unacceptable to the Church. The language that they are offered in is not what makes them unacceptable. The issue will always be in the message that is being communicated and its validity. We are dependent on the Pope and the Magisterium to provide us with trustworthy texts and guidance, and no other single Bishop or priest has the authority to change what is given to us. Having great faith is important, but be clear on who and what you entrust that faith to.

David Coriale
Conifer Cove Lane
Webster

Mass is prayer, not performance

To the editors:

Regarding Tom Fogarty's letter of Oct. 28: I too enjoy theater very much and as a mother of four grown children have clapped for numerous performances after weeks of rehearsals. Often I have come to appreciate what goes on behind the scenes as well as a costume crew seamstress.

But it is my brother-in-law, Father Gerald Aman, SJ, now a missionary priest in Benin City, Nigeria, that deserves a standing ovation. It was he who reminded me one day over 18 years ago that my worries of having a baby that might cry during the celebration of Mass where the sacrament of baptism was to take place could spoil the "performance." He said Mass was "prayer, not performance."

Kathryn L. Aman
Daansen Road
Palmyra



Thanks God for blessing of 20 years of Bishop Clark

To the editors:

I don't usually take time to write letters of any sort, except when I feel very strongly about something. After Bishop Clark's recent medical problems, it got me thinking about how very thankful we are to have such a caring and kind man to lead the Diocese of Rochester for these past 20 years.

I first met "Father Matthew Clark" back in the late 1960s and early '70s when he filled in from time to time at St. Agnes Parish in Cohoes, N.Y. near Albany. His appearance was so very striking, there was just no way I could forget him. I maybe served as an altar server for him on maybe three different occasions.

Oddly enough as fate would have it, back in 1978 I moved to Dansville to take a job there and the very next year I see this man's picture in the newspaper stating that he's the new bishop. I thought, hey - I know him!

On a number of occasions I've chatted with him at various functions such as Confirmation, "Clustering" and other gatherings at St. Mary's in Dansville. I'm sure others must notice it, but Bishop Clark

has a wonderful "warmth" you can actually feel. He's so very personable, how could anyone not be taken by his very humble and gentle ways.

During Confirmation last year I had a chance to serve on the altar and just watching him greet each member of the families and all the youngsters brought tears to my eyes.

He's simply such a genuine "Christian" human being! I think if Jesus himself would come back to earth today, I would expect that Christ would conduct himself in much the same way. I hope the rest of my family and all of your subscribers someday get a chance to simply talk to Bishop Clark and understand first hand that he's the "ultimate Catholic Christian."

Despite controversial issues such as "Corpus Christi" and the "gay mass", etc, I think that God Himself has blessed us for 20 wonderful years with Bishop Matthew Clark - and hopefully many, many more!

Francis J. Guillaume
Highland Avenue
Dansville

Generous gesture bespoke the man

To the editors:

I have just completed your Oct. 14, 1999, edition entirely dedicated to the memory of Bishop Hickey. I am moved to recount this incident.

Almost 30 years ago, as I was leaving the active ministry in the Diocese, I asked the good Bishop if a severance were available for me given my four post-graduate years in ministry training and almost 10 years of parochial ministry. In spite of the strain we both were feeling at the time, he had to respond negatively to my question. I was, however, deeply moved when he offered me his personal check to help in transition. Naturally I returned it to him as graciously as I could muster. I was not looking for a gift, but his gesture bespoke the quality of man your edition wrote about at his death.

I was happy that the people of Holy



Family Parish, my home parish, had the gift of his presence for many later years. It gives me some satisfaction that they experienced, through all the intervening years, this great man as I had.

James S. Russell
Washington, NH

Do liberals protest only right-wing abuses?

To the editors:

Over the years liberal Catholics and other left-leaning individuals have seen fit to protest alleged abuses at Ft. Benning's School of the Americas in Georgia.

It seems that Latin American soldiers have been taught cruel methods of torture to take back to their respective countries and use on civilians.

However, a *National Review* article (Aug. 30) challenges this charge and states that the soldiers there are taught professionalism and respect for human rights.

So who is right?

It does seem rather odd that these same critics were silent when the Sandinistas were persecuting the Miskito Indians in Nicaragua back in the 1980s. About the same time period the FMLN Guerrillas in El Salvador attacked Salvadoran voters going to the polls. Again silence.

Critics of the School of the Americas would do well to consider these facts before protesting alleged abuses.

Robert W. Bart
Ithaca