

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.

Why must we complicate salvation?

To the editors:

In January I wrote a letter entitled: "The Bible specifies what we must do to be saved." I was very saddened by the several responses that appeared in the *Catholic Courier* in weeks to follow. One gentleman stated that I was a bigot, arrogant and ignorant. I respond to that by stating that I am far from any of those descriptions, but I am happy to be persecuted for proclaiming Jesus as Savior (John 15:20).

Another gentleman stated that in addition to accepting Jesus as Savior, that tradition plays a role in salvation. Tradition has nothing to do with salvation. Jesus paid for our sins completely on the cross. He shed his blood for us. If tradition plays a role in salvation, why did God send his son to die for us?

Ephesians 2:8-9 states: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast." Why do people make salvation harder by adding works and tradition? How do you know how many good works is enough? We do not know. Good works follow accepting Jesus but good works do not earn you salvation. Another gentleman stated that in John 14:15 Jesus stated that we must obey his commandments to obtain eternal life. True, we must obey God's commandments, but if you read John 14:6 Jesus states He is the only way to the Father. By accepting Jesus our sins are forgiven forever. In James 2:10 Jesus states if we break one commandment, we break them all. So how can obeying the commandments, without first accepting Jesus, earn you salvation, when we break them constantly? This gentleman is talking about doing something to earn salvation when the good news is Jesus already paid for our sins. Another gentleman quoted the Dogmatic Constitution on salvation. I prefer to use the Bible as my source. It is God's inspired word.

What about people who never heard of Jesus or was never given the Gospel? The Bible states that God will deal with them justly because he is a God of love. I cannot judge them. What about people that hear and do not believe? The Bible states that Jesus is the only way to the Father. Acts 4:12 states: "There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven (Jesus) given to the human race by which we are to be saved." 1 Tim 2:5 states: "For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all." I did not say this, God did. It is his word.

I received more positive responses from my letter than negative. One individual wrote stating that she will keep the letter to remind her of the love of Jesus. Another individual came to me in church and hugged me thanking me for the letter. While she read it, she had tears in her eyes because she feels the same way. I know God will not dismiss my letters because I am defending his son Jesus. I am professing love, not hate. Jesus suffered and paid a high price to save us. He deserves all the praise and Glory.

Dan Giancursio
Macedon



Don't let Catholics hear you

To the editors:

While reading the letters in the Opinions section of the *Catholic Courier* Thursday, Jan. 27 regarding who gets into heaven, a sermon came to mind that I heard many years ago. It was at the 9 a.m. children's Mass in 1940 at St. Simon and Jude Church on Avenue T in Brooklyne. I was 8 years old at the time. The subject of the sermon was, you guessed it, who gets into heaven. The bottom line was whoever is good, good to his family, friends and neighbors gets into heaven. To illustrate his point, Father told the following story:

A man dies and goes to heaven. He is greeted at the Pearly Gates by St. Peter. St. Peter tells the man, "Come on in; I'll show you around heaven." They went to the edge of heaven and watched as clouds passed by. Each cloud had a whole bunch

of people on it plucking away on their harps. As the first cloud passed by St. Peter told the newcomer these are Lutherans, the next cloud has Baptists and so on until all the religions of the world passed by. The last cloud was coming up, with the people plucking away at their harps and the man asked St. Peter, "Who are these?" St. Peter leaned over and whispered in the man's ear to be quiet. He said, "These are the Catholics; they think they are the only ones in heaven."

As far as I know, the Church's doctrine has not changed: Anyone gets into heaven if they are good and do good no matter who they are, what they are or where they come from.

Charles Dolcimascolo
Buckwheat Drive
Fairport

Catholic bashing continues

To the editors:

The unrelenting Catholic bashing continues unabated. This time Republicans in Congress are the culprit. In the latest instance of Catholic bashing, Republicans decided to reject Father Timothy O'Brien as the Catholic chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. Father O'Brien had been highly recommended by a bipartisan selection committee but Republicans chose to ignore the recommendation and appointed a non-Catholic as the new House chaplain.

Make no mistake about it. The evangelical fundamentalist religious right-wing has the Republican party in its hip pocket. With the exception of John McCain, all the potential Republican presidential contenders attended Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition "Road to Victory" Conference on October 1, 1999. George W. Bush was there and Robertson apparently gave Bush his presidential

blessing.

Republican Majority Leader Dick Armey avers that he comes from North Dakota and originally was raised in a very anti-Catholic environment. A Catholic chaplain is rejected by Republicans in the House. Presidential Republican candidates including George W. Bush rush to attend a Christian Coalition "Victory" Conference seeking support.

Catholics should remember come voting time that the Republicans are courting groups that Father Richard B. McBrien in his column in the *Courier* of Jan. 6, 2000, says believe that the Catholic Mass is "hocus pocus" and that praying to the saints and the Virgin Mary is close to idolatry. These Christian right-wing groups that support equally right-wing Republicans are no friends to our Catholic religion.

George Mancuso
Edgeware Road, Rochester

House may never pick a Catholic

To the editors:

Kudos for printing the article on page 4 of the February 3, 2000, edition concerning Bishop Rodimer's remarks via a letter to House Majority Leader, Mr. Dick Armey ("Bishop: Chaplaincy remains a barrier").

It appears that the Roman Catholic priest who headed the list of three potential possibilities to become Chaplain of the House of Representatives wasn't accorded the fairness of consideration, and once again, a Protestant got picked instead by an overly tradition minded House.

I agree with Bishop Rodimer's remarks. There may never be a Catholic Chaplain accorded this position! Of all Christian denominations, the Roman Catholic denomination is one of the largest if not the largest in our country. Are we, as Catholics, to conclude from this situation per se that all we Roman Catholic voters will only be afforded second class consideration and status. The point bears pondering considering as there is an election coming up in the not too distant future.

William J. Rivette
Jefferson Street, Elmira

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P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, N.Y. 14624
716/328-4340 or e-mail to
cathcour@frontiernet.net