

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.

Pass the faith on to next generation

To the Editors:

Recently I was asked by St. Pius Tenth School to tell why I chose them for my child's education. Below is my response.

My mother is a very wise woman. I remember from my youth, several phrases she often said. If we complained about going to church, she would say, "... it's up to you to pass this faith on to the next generation!" She also used to tell my family, "if the church or school is having an event, they are having it for you and you will be there." My favorite phrase was, "you have to use the talents God has given you!" My father is a convert to the Catholic faith and his commitment to the church was probably stronger than most people born to a Catholic family. He served on parish council, worked as an usher and was consulted often on parish activities.

My husband and I grew up in northern New York and attended Catholic elementary school and high school. We belonged to St. Patrick's Parish in Watertown. We felt proud to be part of this faith community. The church and school worked together and hosted many events from potluck suppers, to weekend dances, bazaars, fairs, and of course, the annual St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage dinner. I sang in the choir and Mr. Ormiston was an altar server. Parish activities always came first in our families, before sports or girl scouts, but there was enough time for everything. We went to church together each week, and everyday during Advent and Lent. The school children were allowed to walk to



noon Mass during these seasons. As a family, we prayed the rosary around the dinner table during Advent and Lent. We said a rosary in the car whenever we traveled long distances.

We've found it difficult in these hurried times to keep up with all those traditions. However, going to catholic schools and participating in Sunday liturgy as a family, is a must in our house. We wanted our children to grow up with God and Jesus an integral part of their everyday life. We could not envision religious values and education being relegated to once a week on Sunday morning or an hour on Wednesday evenings. The majority of a child's day centers around school activities, sports, and friends. To ban God from these activities is to say we don't need God for most of our day.

We wanted to surround our children

with Christ-centered values of friendship, sharing, compassion and leadership. We experienced all of this first at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Rochester. After moving, we chose St. Pius Tenth School and Parish because as a community, we again found all these things that are most important to us. We found wonderful friends, many opportunities to help others, and plenty of ways to get involved and share our God-given talents. We found dedicated teachers, strong religious values and great models of leadership and commitment to our Catholic faith. We hope sincerely that by doing our part, we are passing the faith on to the next generation and my parents will have accomplished all they set out to do by their examples.

Lucyann Ormiston
Kingswood Drive, Rochester

Pastoral administrators: pastoral, indeed

To the editors:

Thank you to Mike Latona for the spotlight he recently gave to the pastoral administrator model in his series on responding to the priest shortage. As a pastoral administrator in this diocese, I would like to correct the impression that our role is primarily administrative, i.e., attending meetings, supervising staff, overseeing maintenance and physical plant concerns, managing parish finances, and the like. These tasks fall to us, but they are not by any stretch of the imagination our sole or most important function, what energizes us, nor what attracted us to this ministry in the first place. By attending to these temporal concerns, we do "free up priests to be priests," that is to do the ministry they have been ordained to do, that which only the ordained can do. However, as the full-time ministerial presence in our parishes, the pastoral administrator's fo-

cus is far more pastoral than may have been indicated in your series.

In parishes led by a pastoral administrator assisted by a priest as sacramental minister, it is not the priest who routinely makes hospital or home visits or plans funerals, prepares couples for marriage, parents for baptisms and other important celebrations with the members of the parish family. It is not generally the sacramental minister who makes follow-up phone calls to see how parishioners are doing after some life-altering event. It is not the sacramental minister who is readily available when a parishioner or staff member needs counseling or pastoral support. The pastoral administrator is the full-time pastoral leader of the faith community to which she or he has been appointed by the bishop. In partnership with the sacramental minister, the two provide for the total care of the parish: administrative, pastoral and

sacramental.

This is a new and exciting model which we are only beginning to experience in this diocese. It is a way in which all the leadership gifts available to the diocesan church can be well used, honored and celebrated. It makes us all the richer as Church when we are more concerned with the quality of leadership available to serve a parish than whether or not that leader is ordained. As our resource of ordained leadership diminishes, we are discovering alternative models for pastoring parishes, of which this is only one. Whenever our creative juices are flowing, we are more able to recognize the movement of the Spirit in our midst. Perhaps the most significant crisis we are facing in ministry is a crisis of imagination.

Charlotte M. Bruney
Pastoral Administrator, St. Vincent de
Paul Church, Churchville

Catechism, jubilee can help solve priest shortage

To the editors:

Please refer to the recent articles of "priest shortage" and "burn out" in our *Catholic Courier*. I believe that we are overlooking a most obvious solution, probably because of the fast pace of our lives. The blueprint for our problem is the new Catechism of the Catholic Church and, as a bonus, we are now enjoying a beautiful Jubilee Holy Year. Both of these means, thanks to the Holy Spirit ever guiding our Catholic Church, is the way out. We need to have a closer look at ourselves in relation to Christ and his Church.

For encouragement, please turn to page four under Arrangement of the Material in our new Catechism of the Catholic Church: "It (Catechism) should also help to illumine with the light of faith the new situations and problems which had not yet emerged in the past." Thus, we have to continue with hope and joy, religious and laity alike, to pursue adult religious education of our Catholic faith in all its fullness.

This present Jubilee Year is a real gem. Pope John Paul II says in his prayer for the Jubilee, "Father, grant that we may live this Jubilee Year docile to the voice of the spirit, faithful to the way of Christ, diligent in

listening to your Word and in approaching the wellsprings of grace."

In the measure that we change our hearts and lives we find favor with God. I truly believe that the blueprint of our new Catechism of the Catholic Church, together with the bonus of our present Jubilee

Year, are two powerful ways to bring about the solution which is so urgently needed in our Diocese and elsewhere in our nation regarding "priest shortage" and "burn out."

Mrs. Clara Pasto
Columbia Street
Corning

CYO programs offer numerous benefits

To the editors:

As Christians we should be thankful the diocese and individual parishes recognize the importance of the CYO program. CYO is a major building block to a sound parish. This is what the core of parish life is about.

We all realize the importance of CYO to our youth. Through athleticism and sportsmanship, the supervised program builds a strong mind and strong body. The competitiveness and tenacity our children develop through sports will stay with them during their entire adult life. For many of the children this may be the only time they are involved in a team sport. There are no "cuts" in the CYO program.

What makes the CYO program work are the volunteers and parents involved. The

time and effort the volunteers devote to the program is enormous. Families involved in CYO are usually active parish members who attend Mass on a weekly basis and are good parish stewards. The comradery parents develop through the program strengthens parish life. The more active the CYO program is in a parish, the stronger the parish.

In conclusion, no other parish sponsored social program brings more parents and children together on a regular basis than CYO. The program is one of the cornerstones of a vibrant parish. Anyway you view it, CYO is a win, win situation for everyone.

Bob Orlando
Huntington Meadow, Penfield