

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.

Questions motivation

To the editors:

Mr. Gallagher's recent letter ("Encourages diocese to think globally," Feb. 24) speculates quite freely about the motivations of other people of faith in our diocese. I hope he notices that in the same issue which holds his letter, the Monthly Prayer Request for Priests (advertisement, page 3) includes three of the many priests serving in our diocese from other nations.

The people of Nativity in Brockport might dispute his point that there is no role for priests from other nations in our diocese, as may students in Genesee and parishioners in Leicester/Retsof. People in the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community might raise a similar question, with Father Michael Murimi serving them since Father Conboy's transfer. Then there is the priest from Sri Lanka who serves in our Tribunal while providing parish ministry, the priest from India assigned to the Holy Family Catholic Community in Steuben and Livingston Counties, several priests from India who have served in Ithaca, two priests from Poland



currently with us...

I might understand Mr. Gallagher's misconceptions better were it simply that he had no opportunity to know that we have welcomed and encouraged the contributions of priests from other nations in our diocese. Yet knowing that priests from other nations have been of assistance during the past five years at St. Louis in Pittsford, Resurrection in Fairport, St. Jerome's in East Rochester, St. Thomas More, Brighton, St. Joseph's in Penfield, literally circling Fairport, I wonder what Mr. Gallagher's personal agenda might be.

I found the excellent letter to the editor from Father Schmidt to do much more by way of contributing to the good of the

faith. With this fine retired priest who is still well loved and remembered here in Apalachin, I would affirm that the vocation to priesthood is a precious gift. Seeing how that gift plays out in the lives of priests from other nations and cultures has been particularly rewarding, and I am grateful for the many fine priests from around the world who share ministry with us in the diocese of Rochester. May these fine individuals continue to be a blessing to us all.

Father Robert Ring
St. Margaret Mary Church
Apalachin

EDITORS' NOTE: Father Ring is former diocesan director of priest personnel.

Speak firmly against CTA

To the editors:

The group, Call to Action, has come to town and all that Father Hart has to say is that it's a group that's "not ecumenical." Fortunately, there have been many others in the Church that have spoken at length about who the group is and what they are about. One of those who has spoken so eloquently about the CTA is Bishop Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska.

Since the Call to Action group dissents from the Catholic Church's teaching in the crucial areas of the priesthood and the papacy, contraception, abortion, homosexuality and fornication — premarital sex — the Bishop of Lincoln placed all members of that group under interdict in his diocese

in 1996. That is, they were forbidden to receive Communion and they were asked to cease being members of the group within a month's time or be excommunicated. The good bishop was not being mean-spirited. He loved the Faith enough and even those in that group enough to expose their errors and proclaim the Truth.

The Catholic Church has always condemned as intrinsically evil birth control, abortion, homosexuality and fornication. The moral rightness or wrongness of these acts has been determined by God from Whom all moral authority emanates. It is immutable.

To persist in committing these immoral acts ends in death as the Bible tells us. With birth control, it's the death of mutual self-sacrificing love. With fornication, it's the death of one's innocence and if a child is conceived, perhaps a death sentence for that new life to abortion as well. With homosexuality, it's the death of the body

(AIDS) as well as a dying of the spirit. Yet, these are the very immoral acts that Call to Action would have the Church — if it could — change its teaching on.

Why would the Church want to harm those she loves and has been entrusted to save? One always will have the choice of choosing the wrong just as well as the right. Do the CTAs want a clear conscience in their pursuit of sin? Is that why they want to "reform" the Church in these areas? Well, we cannot bend the will of God.

It would seem that a "tough love" approach may be needed in this diocese, too. We don't want to change life-giving laws to accommodate death. Rather we want to save those "going to the pit" because of choices that are intrinsically evil. Help them; help us all with the treasure of the Truth.

Barbara Fredericks
Birr Street, Rochester

Church should trust experience

To the editors:

I read with interest your article on Call to Action arriving in Rochester (Feb. 3, 2000). Father Joseph Hart's concern that 30 percent of its members are from Spiritus Christi is not surprising.

The problem comes down to obedience. The word obedience in its Latin origins means being a good listener. The opposite of obedience is absurdity. For the Christian obedience means attending to the Gospel, listening, watching, being sensitive to the signs of the times and what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

For Jesus obedience meant first of all being in communion with the Father. But this was not enough. It was only the be-

ginning. Being in communion with the Father led Jesus to enter into communion with those who were excluded: women, sinners, lepers, tax collectors, Samaritans, etc. His Paschal prayer was that all might be one as he and the Father were one. To know God and live his presence among us means to bring in those who are excluded.

Jesus' movement toward inclusion led to his being excluded. His compassion would lead to this passion, his suffering with and for others. The church is making a big mistake excluding a community that is trying however imperfectly to imitate Christ in his obedience.

Megan McKenna tells the story of a Rabbi who was out working in the fields with his disciples on a hot, humid day. The disciples made sure there was plenty of water available so they could observe the purification laws, to wash completely before eating and praying. But the Rabbi just

dipped his hands in the water, rubbed them together and wiped them on his clothes. The disciples were scandalized. The Rabbi nodded toward a servant girl who was struggling with a yoke of two large buckets of water. He said, "Sometimes you must break the rules in order to keep the law, which is compassion, human kindness and care for the poor. If we do not use too much water, she will not have to carry any more buckets and neither will you."

I worship at Spiritus Christi because I have experienced the fruits of the former Corpus Christi community. It seems today the church does not want Catholics to trust their experience. I wonder where the Church would be if the early Christians did not trust their experience, the Easter experience, the experience of the risen Lord.

Emmett Neary
Bakerdale Road, Rochester

Hopes new TV norms aid Mother Angelica

To the editors:

I was delighted to see the Catholic Courier feature a critique of the EWTN Global Catholic Network on February 24. While Mother Angelica is to be praised for bringing the Church to vast audiences, I have long questioned her format, which tends to push beyond the extreme of Catholic conservatism. Admittedly, some of the programs aired by EWTN are timely and informative; yet the treatment of liturgical and sacramental issues have been consistently presented with a pre-Vatican II slant. In addition, the celebration of

Mass on EWTN is done in such a way as to blend characteristics of the Tridentine and Vatican II celebrations.

I have long felt that a Catholic cable network should be created that gives fair treatment to liberal and conservative views — one that is both respectful of tradition and the Vatican, and at the same time, encouraging of viewpoints that are directed toward a progressive Church.

It is interesting to note that in response to a web site I designed that promotes the canonization of Fulton Sheen, I only received one negative e-mail. It was from a priest associated with EWTN. He told me I was guilty of heresy for tying Sheen to my prayer that mandatory celibacy be rescinded in favor of optional celibacy. My

response to this priest was that Fulton Sheen, while labeled as conservative by some, was in reality very progressive in his own right. I therefore encouraged EWTN to broadcast Sheen's television program to prove that there would be appeal amongst both conservative and liberal Catholics.

Let us pray that as the Catholic Church continues to strive toward establishing the Kingdom of God, articulated by Jesus, that a cable network will surface that represents such a vision. EWTN tends to distort this image, but in the words of Richard E. Donohue, Birmingham diocesan secretary for liturgy, Mother Angelica has an opportunity to "work even better."

Raymond Grosswirth
Academy Drive, Rochester