

# 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.

## What's the beef about St. Patrick's

### To the editors:

It surprises me to see so many people upset about abstaining from meat for only eight days this year, and claiming a misuse of authority and discrimination. (Bishop Clark's "proclamation" was not last minute as has been described by many. The Code of Canon Law actually states that ALL Fridays through the year are penitential days requiring abstinence. I am paraphrasing, but I believe it also states that some other form of penance may be substituted if approved by the congregation of bishops. I wonder how many of those complaining actually abstain on Fridays the rest of the year? Or, is this just an emotional outburst soothing some suddenly introspective souls?

I think the bottom line is this: do you first consider yourself Roman Catholic or a carnivore? Also, apparently many people are unable to celebrate a Saint's feast day without corned beef. How sad. It's good to see that everyone has their priorities in order.

**Christopher Meisenzahl**  
Wadsworth Avenue, Avon

### To the editors:

Maybe you recall that when the Irish first came to this country and when they tried to apply for work, no one wanted them. Does it still apply? As our bishop two years ago Bishop Clark gave a dispensation to the Italians when St. Joseph's Day was on a Friday. I also remember a year or two before that the Rochester Red Wings had to postpone the first game of the season. Since it was Lent, Bishop Clark said it would be OK to eat hot dogs, on Friday during Lent, for the opening game.

But for the Irish it was back to the INNA—Irish Need Not Apply. As an Irish American, I say that when it comes to our beloved bishop, we should be "Withholding the Green!"

**Richard P. Donohue**  
Rockefeller Road, Auburn

### To the editors:

A gentle question for my fellow Irish Catholics: Since we love our Irish heritage so much, mightn't a small number of us have forgotten that we love our Lord Jesus and our Catholic faith more, and that a better way to express it next time might be to keep Lent quietly as instructed by our bishop, have our corned beef on Thursday or Saturday and offer up the small sacrifice as a prayer for peace in Ireland or better yet, for those who can't afford corned beef on any day of the year?

**Karen A. Webb**  
Lilac Drive, Rochester

### To the editors:

I don't understand and I never will how Bishop Clark for the Diocese of Rochester can say on St. Patrick's Day no meat. The Bishop for the Diocese of Buffalo said it is OK. Is this two different Catholic run churches or what?

In sports there are rules and they all live by them. Let's get with it. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

**Bill Williams**  
Melody Lane, Genesee

## THE SEVENTIES ARE BACK



## Jesus looked beyond the law

### To the editors:

I attended the Church of the Resurrection in Fairport this past weekend with my mother and father-in-law. That visit has prompted this letter. The priest there preached that a good Lenten practice might be to not leave the church directly after Communion. I agree with this advice. For me, the final blessing brings closure to the Mass. I even find myself humming the closing song throughout the rest of my Sunday and even Monday.

However, I reflected for some time on why there are those "early leavers." I thought of the Gospel we recently heard on the Sabbath and the "Letter of the Law." Jesus taught that there are exceptions to the rules. An exception for leaving early might be a fidgety child or a physical challenge that makes "normal" timeframes and activities more difficult. Surely, the priest could not have meant those parishioners? Perhaps another reason for leaving is the large number of

people that were forced to stand! My in-laws told me it is a regular practice at that church. How sad! Couldn't everyone be seated if we sat next to people as though they were neighbors instead of strangers? Perhaps that is a Lenten practice the priest might have mentioned!

... The letter of the law probably would dictate that we all participate in the fullness and beauty of a Mass in its entirety. But then again, Jesus taught there was more to it than those "letters of the law." Maybe the Lenten gift should be from those of us who have trouble with others' timing. Maybe those of us who are annoyed should use it for a point of personal growth. I reflected on this and I made up my mind. For my Lenten gift, it will be my practice to thank God that those "early leavers" and "late arrivals" simply had the wherewithal to walk through the Church's front door!

**Nadine D. Andres**  
Ideson Road, Honeoye Falls

## Pray for Iraqi victims during Lent

### To the editors:

I have just completed and mailed our federal income tax return for 1999. I note that Lent begins next week. In the mail earlier this week I received information about the trial of the Plowshares 4, scheduled to begin March 20.

I have read reports of the hideous devastation to Iraqi women and children resulting from the embargo against their country as well as from the bombing with devices made with depleted uranium. The deformities, birth defects, and bizarre cancers afflicting children are too terrible to describe.

Our country plays a leadership role in both embargo and bombing. I have written several times in protest to the President, Secretary of State, our two Senators, and my Congressional Representative. The bombing and embargo continue.

Some portion of our tax dollar goes to support this depraved business. The

Plowshares 4, having made a simple but heroic gesture of protest by hammering and pouring blood on Warthog bomber planes used against Iraq, now face our American justice system and the possibility of imprisonment.

Does any of this make sense?

I appeal to your readership, as we commence once again our Lenten observance of prayer, fasting, and sharing with the poor, to think of those Iraqi women and children, who are essentially no different from women and children in our Diocese of Rochester. May we direct some of our spiritual energies, the fruit of our Lenten works, to the benefit of these Holy Innocents. And may we be inspired to stand up in protest and help bring to an end the atrocities committed in our name by our country.

**Brendan J. Curtin**  
Spaulding Street  
Elmira

## Jubilee offers chance to reach reconciliation

### To the editors:

Throughout history we have been so preoccupied with our opinions and with what we want that we tend to build up a wall between God and ourselves. Now it is time to find a way to tear down that wall.

Remember when Pope John XXIII told us his bags were packed. This was for his immediate journey to heaven. This is also our journey to make. But first we need to confirm the reservations.

This Jubilee year presents us with the

opportunity. We pack our bags by thinking about why God created us and why He planned our salvation. Then we concentrate on the Incarnation and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Now that we know the why, when and where about the journey, the trip can begin. Once we are on the road, we can pray to God for the grace to know how to reach out for the reconciliation we have been searching for.

**Joseph E. Judge**  
Crow Hill Drive  
Fairport

E-mail your letters to [cathcour@frontiernet.net](mailto:cathcour@frontiernet.net)