

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.

Inspired by activism of youths

To the editors:

It is both encouraging and inspiring to read about youth today who are making a difference.

The recent story of Craig Kielburger's journey to South America, to raise awareness of the poverty and abuse endured by millions (*Catholic Courier*, March 9), is one of true commitment and courage. To speak about the suffering of others is one thing, to go where most of us would rather not, and witness their pain, takes a great amount of strength and compassion. What a remarkable young man! What a beautiful tribute to the meaning of Christianity!

Another story of mission (March 16) tells of several boys and girls traveling to the Dominican Republic. Their unselfish service to the poor should awaken us to what our youth are concerned about. There have been photos of teenagers who visit nursing homes regularly, giving a kind word, a smile and a hug to the elderly. We read of college students helping families rebuild their homes through Habitat for Humanity.

In the November issue of *Maryknoll* magazine, a young girl from Kentucky, with help from other students, organized Friends of the Future. Through Internet, they are dedicated to educate youth from the United States and foreign countries on issues such as environment and protection of human rights. By writing a letter to World Bank, they were able to secure a three-year grant for Ecuadorian students to set up a computer meeting center.

Many youths who are active in their parish serve as Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, readers and choir members. Some volunteer at day care centers and Bible class for preschoolers. Youth groups use their musical talents to entertain at hospitals. They have participated in 24 and 30 hour fasts to aid orphans and have donated food and funds to the Third World. They have walked for the poor, collected blankets for hurricane victims, and marched peacefully for Pro-Life.

All of these stories are shining examples of unconditional love in action. They reassure us that God is alive and well and living in the minds and hearts of our children. Our youth convey a natural exuberance for life and an extraordinary ability to just be themselves. They can teach us valuable lessons in what is real. They show by their spirit how to live a joyful Christianity despite our circumstances.

Let us love them, encourage them, listen to them and be thankful for them. They are our hope for the future!

Leona Dessena
Davenport Street, Hornell



Sees flaws in column's logic

To the editors:

In Sister Patricia Schoelles' (March 2 column) on the death penalty we witness the death of reasoning and logic. They did not receive a fair trial, in this case.

Some theologians understand the fifth commandment to read, "Thou shall not murder." This translation allows for state executions. While Sister Schoelles has implied that the reasons for state executions and a criminal's reasons for murdering are morally equivalent, our Judeo-Christian system of the rule of law is based on a moral code that has ordered our society for centuries. Our law is based on the Ten Commandments.

Executing the death penalty is a long and arduous process that can take years. In recent times we have seen an erosion of the rule of law in this country and that has resulted in the wrongful conviction of some people. It is good that we do not make haste to execute murderers.

The author implies that by applying

the death penalty as the result of a trial by law that soon we will be killing any and everyone who we find inconvenient. It seems that our church leadership is asking us to look at killing without the benefit of a moral compass. Killing an unborn child is not equivalent to killing a convicted murderer. The former is an abomination and the latter is in the service of justice. As some of our brothers and sisters say "No Justice, No Peace!" If a murderer's reason for killing is as good as the state's after a trial by law, then we may be on the way to where the author claims the death penalty will lead us. A place where moral relativism reigns supreme and any and everyone who is inconvenient can be killed.

And so it seems that the rule of law and moral absolutes have been dashed on the "rocky schoelles" of the rule of privilege and moral relativism.

Don Taylor
Bennington Drive, Rochester

Religious bias not life, death issue

To the editors:

George Mancuso's letter to the editors of March 2 ("Catholic bashing continues") was very puzzling and disturbing. His reason for voting against certain people and their party is because they did not choose Father Timothy O'Brien as chaplain in the House of Representatives. It may be important to note that prior to 1994, the other party was in power for 30 years and had never chosen a Catholic priest as chaplain for the House of Representatives. Both sides of the aisle need to address this, but certainly it is not a crucial reason to base one's vote as a Catholic. As people of God, there are issues that demand our concern, because they are life and death matters.

Over 35 million unborn children have been killed since 1973. That is more than

the total casualties from all the wars fought in the history of our country. What is even more horrifying, a new method of taking these little lives has been devised — partial birth abortion. When I hear candidates boast about the "right to choose," I cringe — the child in the mother's womb or partially out of the womb — has no "choice!"

As brothers and sisters in Christ, let us combine our efforts and prayers to restore the right to life to unborn and partially born infants. A mother's womb should be the safest place for a child to be. God created it to be a place of shelter and development for a baby to continue to grow into His loving image and likeness.

Rita B. Sartori
West Clinton Street, Elmira

Pope's holiness, actions draw many to the church

To the editors:

Isn't it wonderful to have such a holy man as our Pope and leader of our church? Being Lent, I think this is an appropriate time to visit the Holy Land. Here he will have the opportunity to cover the grounds Jesus walked on.

In my opinion, I feel that Pope John

Paul is one of the holiest Popes we have ever had. In failing health he still continues to spread the word of God in all parts of the world. During his reign, he has made many sacrifices. It must be so pleasing to him to see and feel Jesus' pathways in the Holy Land. Peace is the Pope's attitude to all nations. Love and

forgiveness is another. Perhaps this pilgrimage will enlighten some of these people from the Holy Land. Even some Moslems have turned out to see the Pope. This is a good sign. He has attracted many people to Catholicism. We hope and pray the relationship between the Jews and Christianity will develop real soon with the Pope's visit. All those who have access to TV sets and newspapers can appreciate the extent of Pope John Paul's pilgrimage. Many non-Catholics praise him highly. Being a very intelligent man, he knows how to speak out to spread the word of God. May the Lord give him continued strength to fulfill his time on earth as a devoted Pope.

Anna Groat Burley
Burley Road, Clyde

Lift cloak of secrecy to permit understanding

To the editors:

Honesty is the best policy. Why hide under the cloak of secrecy? All facts will eventually be known. Why permit scandal that mires a person deeper into rejection? We as adults despise being treated as children. We are all sinners and we must be lifted up. Permit us to heal each

other in loving understanding and compassion. Many a soul has been lost because we do not treat the problem accurately and lovingly. We fail to love as we would wish to be loved. The truth prevails.

Dorothy K. Miller
Hudson Avenue, Irondequoit