

OPINIONS

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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.



Mary deflects honor to son

To the editors:

I would like to respond to Dan Giancursio's letter in the April 20 issue of the *Catholic Courier* regarding the tradition of carrying the statue of Mary in procession. The statue is used much the same as we use a picture of a loved one in our home, not as an object of worship in itself, but rather to put us in mind of the person portrayed. There is no comparison to the golden calf that the rebellious Israelites worshipped when they turned away from God.

If you have ever tried to put a magnet on the refrigerator on the reverse side, you will see it slide down and fall to the floor. You have to pick it up and put it on the right way. This is how it is when we give honor to Mary. She deflects it from herself and turns it toward God and in so doing she brings us into a closer union with her divine Son and His heavenly Father. When her cousin Elizabeth, realizing that she was in the presence of the mother of God, cried out, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb,"

Mary immediately responded by first thanking God for the great honor He had bestowed on her and then continuing to sing His praises. The more we love Mary, the more we will love Jesus. Her great joy is to be a Christ-bearer. It was her mission 2000 years ago and it continues today.

Finally, Mr. Giancursio states that Mary was a sinner just like us. A creature like us, yes; a sinner like us, absolutely not! Reason tells us that God would not allow His son to be born of a sinful woman. Pope Pius IX in 1854 declared that Mary, from the first moment of her conception, was preserved immune from all stain of original sin. This dogma rightly honored Mary and confirmed the belief that by the grace of God she was preserved from the human condition that all others have been subject to since sin was brought into the world through our first parents. She is a role model for all who would strive to advance in perfection on their journey of faith.

Florence Heveron
 Farrell Terrace, Rochester

Mother's rose also tribute to son

To the editors:

Some years ago I returned to my parents' home to wish my mother blessings on her day. She immediately pointed to a beautiful rose on the kitchen table and proudly said, "Elmer, the Scouts from your parish brought that rose to me this morning!"

What was my reaction? Jealousy? Envy? Just the opposite. I was very proud and happy, for I realized my mother received that rose because she was my mother. It was actually a tribute to me as well as to her.

So it is with any honor given to Mary — it rebounds to Jesus.

Also, I carry a picture of my parents in my wallet, reminding me of their words. "Elmer, eat your carrots. They're good for

you!"

So also, pictures and statues of our Lady can remind us of Mary's ways and words. "My soul magnifies the Lord." "Do whatever he tells you."

The fields of sports, music and business present leaders and role models for our young people. Our Lady and the saints should also be presented to our youth. Celebrating their lives can offer imitation and inspiration.

On Mother's Day, we indeed can be grateful and proudly proclaim the lives of our earthly and living mothers.

Father Elmer J. Schmidt
 McAuley Residence
 Blossom Road, Rochester

Through Mary God elevated women

To the editors:

In response to the letter about May crowning of the statue of Mary as idol worship — Hardly!

On national holidays, especially Memorial Day and Labor Day we have numerous parades all over the country. Wreaths are placed at the statues of presidents and monuments to dead soldiers. There are even perpetually burning flames, honoring local and national heroes. Then we have a procession in church and place a wreath of flowers on a statue of Mary and it is idol worship? I don't think so. This is not a golden calf, it is a statue of the greatest woman who ever lived.

Chosen by God for the highest honor

ever given a human, she said yes to God's will and according to both Scripture and Tradition, faithfully served Jesus and his followers throughout her life. I was taught that through her life, God raised all woman-kind to a place of honor.

Mary is a true heroine and should be honored for her life and as a role model for people throughout the world. We can likewise honor our many saint/heroines. True, we have to watch what we do, some religious practices border on superstition, but let us continue our processions, floral tributes and songs to honor the Virgin Mary, our most blessed heroine.

Marion G. Rutan
 Route 38, Newark Valley

Women choose life after wait

To the editors:

It was recently reported in the paper that Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill to create a 24-hour waiting period before a woman can have an abortion to receive information including alternatives to abortion.

It was unfortunate this action was taken. As Director of Project Rachel, I have heard story after story of women who at the time of the abortion felt alone and trapped. One woman described her abortion like an animal that is caught in a trap and gnawed their leg off in order to get out. One lengthy study of women who had abortions asked, "What would it have taken for you to have had the child instead of the abortion?" Almost every woman said that she would have chosen differently if the father of the baby had wanted the child. In other words if there had been some type of support for her. The women who have come through Project Rachel have told me they had no counseling or exploration of alternatives. In fact, one woman who has worked in the area of marketing said as she looks back at the experience now, she realizes that basically she was "marketed through" the abortion.

Abortion advocates don't want to see this waiting period because in places where it is implemented, the abortion rate has dropped. For example, the experiment done in Washington, D.C., with women who already had made a decision to have an abortion. They agreed to see an ultrasound before they had the abortion; not one woman went ahead with the abortion after they had been connected with their unborn child. Those who are abortion advocates know that there is already a mandatory waiting period. Just show up at an abortion clinic without insurance or money and see if they'll do the abortion. They'll tell you to come back when you have the money — their own form of a waiting period.

Pregnancy is a very unpredictable emotional time and often a woman's mood may change. In fact the women most likely to change their moods are the very women who after the abortion will be filled with remorse, especially if she comes from a religious background. A few hours of waiting to receive real counseling and find out about viable alternatives will not impose an undue hardship on a woman. Choice is apparently a one-way street.

The experience of pregnancy is one of the most life changing decisions a woman will have to make. She should be given a true choice. In fact that is what the Diocesan Pledge for Life is meant to do. It is a commitment by parishes to deal concretely and comprehensively with whatever is pressuring a woman to have an abortion and get at the real sources of her difficulty, not a quick fix solution that she later will regret. The stories are already being told by women who are grateful that they have been helped by parish communities to choose life instead of being pressured into destroying not only their child's life but their own as well.

Father Jim Hewes
 Director
 Project Rachel

Overlooking manipulation in Miami showed news service's bias

To the editors:

Your article from CNS about Cuba using Elian Gonzales to bash the Cuban church in Cuba was both amusing and dismaying. Amusing in that CNS accuses Castro of manipulating events — probably true

— but ignores the rabble rousing by the exile community in Miami.

This is typical for CNS — their articles are just as biased as those from Castro's lackeys. What was dismaying was to see a Catholic News Service ignore Catholic val-

ues. Colossians 3:20 tells children to obey their fathers. It did not say that if your dad is a commie you should obey your great uncle instead.

Roger M. Ribert
 Prairie Trail, West Henrietta