

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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1150 Buffalo Road
P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340
800/600-3628 outside Rochester
http://www.catholiccourier.com
e-mail: cathcour@frontiernet.net

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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.

Oppose abortion, not SOA

To the editors:

In their recent cover story, "Civily disobedient Catholics," April 13, the *Catholic Courier* related the latest protests against the School of the Americas.

According to the protestors, the School of the Americas is, in effect, a school where Latin members of the military learn and use techniques to oppress citizens of their respective countries.

Several years ago, then Secretary of the Army Togo West answered my letter regarding these charges and stated they were not true. Since then other members of the military have concurred.

To make a point, it should be noted that Lee Harvey Oswald, Vietnam veteran Lt. Calley, a recently jailed serial killer who was a Navy veteran and a former Harvard graduate, the Unabomber, were all involved in serious crimes.

Does it then follow that all the institutions that they had been involved with be closed down?

Yet while these protests continue to make headlines, the crime of abortion relentlessly claims human lives.

Since 1973 approximately 40 million babies have been put to death.

Unfortunately Catholic politicians like Congressman Maurice Hinchey periodically support anti-life legislation.

This isn't too surprising as some 53 percent of Catholics have voted for anti-life President Bill Clinton.

Hopefully Catholics will see the light, return to their roots and support church teaching.

Perhaps in November they will vote out many anti-life politicians.

Robert Bart
Ithaca

Finds penalty 'useless' after niece's death

To the editors:

On November 5, 1998, 16-year-old Tessa was murdered. She was beaten over several hours in several locations by as many as nine boys between the ages of 16 and 20. They dumped her for dead in a wood lot; evidence suggests she suffered a while before actually passing away.

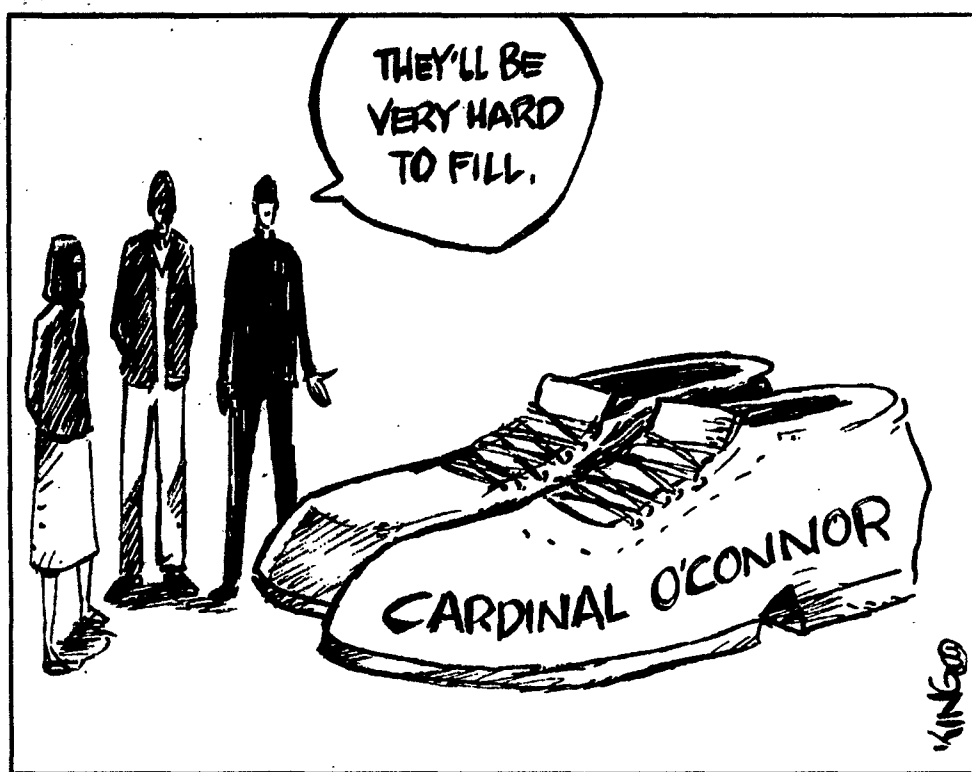
It would be three weeks before her family learned of her fate. It was Thanksgiving week that they buried their youngest child.

Four of those boys are now facing the possibility of the death penalty. Of what use would their death be? Would it bring Tessa back?

What of the families these boys come out of? Should we cause them to suffer further? Will their death heal Tessa's family? Will their deaths stop another potential murderer?

In the 18 months since my niece's murder I have become convinced that the death penalty serves no useful purpose. The two boys who led the group to murder Tessa had already murdered another woman — they murdered Tessa to silence her. They knew the state of North Carolina would seek the death penalty and so murdered a second time to be sure she would not talk.

Bernadette Miller
Gauss Road
Bloomfield



Retiree once guided parish through difficult transition

To the editors:

Kudos for the excellent reporting ("Milestones" edition, April 27) on the service of our priests who are retiring and those celebrating anniversaries. How fortunate we are, indeed, to have such a fine group of talented and caring gentlemen in service to us and to God.

My particular congratulations and thanks to Father Thomas Statt, of Our Mother of Sorrows, who intends to take life a bit easier. Father Statt's biography doesn't mention some very important service to those of us at St. Mary's, Genesee. While newly appointed Newman chaplain at SUNY Genesee in 1964, Father Statt also assumed duties as unofficial acting pastor at St. Mary's during the illness and passing of Father Peter Jankowski.

The period during Father Jankowski's terminal illness was very difficult for the parishioners at St. Mary's. Father Statt's gentle guidance during that time meant so much to all of us. We will always be

grateful. To be sure, Father Statt is a favorite son of St. Mary's, Genesee.

May Our Lord give Father Statt many blessings along with a long, fruitful, and peaceful time away from the demands of parish administration. Ad multos annos.

David J. Dwyer
Genesee

May examples spur others to vocations

To the editors:

Once again the *Courier* has published an issue (April 27, 2000) which lists the many area priests and nuns who are celebrating significant anniversaries of their calling.

Once again I am humbled, beyond words, by the lifetimes of unselfish service that they have contributed to our Catholic communities.

May God continue to bless us with their presence and instill the grace of vocations in more hearts of our younger generations.

Richard B. Blankfield
Nichols Street, Spencerport

Thanks SBI for instructing laity

To the editors:

Father Robert Kennedy of St. Bernard's Institute recently came to Auburn to speak of some of the changes in the Church since Vatican II.

I am grateful to him for his enunciation of some of the biblical and philosophical understandings that entered into Pope John XXIII's decision to convoke a Church Council in 1962. I am also grateful to St. Bernard's Institute for furthering my faith formation by opening its

doors to lay students. I have also purchased books in St. Bernard's Institute bookstore that have deepened my knowledge of Christianity.

Through this testimony of what St. Bernard's Institute has meant for me, I hope people reading this may decide to further their knowledge of the Church by attending St. Bernard's Institute.

Tom Fogarty
Walnut Street
Auburn

Network provided excellent papal coverage

To the editors:

I want to congratulate EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) for their covering the Pope's recent trip to the Holy Land and all the wonderful places near it. It was thrilling to be able to see and hear it firsthand like that!

People in the Rochester area can get EWTN just by asking Time Warner to broadcast it free if they already subscribe

to their TV stations through Time Warner. It's an opportunity you should not pass up. And their station broadcasts 24 hours a day. Of course, it's in living color, too! Give yourself and your family a treat! Try it, you'll like it. They have programs for all ages!

Mary Rita Crowe
East Main Street
Rochester

Send your letter to Catholic Courier,
P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624-0379
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