

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.

Many sites worthy of prayer visits

To the editors:

St. Francis Church may be closing its doors in Rochester, but countless other places and events welcome our prayers and good works!

Years ago my family visited Auriesville Shrine and walked in the footsteps of the early New York State martyrs. Another favorite destination was Lackawanna, New York — Father Baker's Basilica and Orphanage, which cared for new life.

Ten years ago Father Bob Bradler and I witnessed the famed "Passion Play" in Oberammergau, Germany. Every day from May to October, 5000 people came and were moved and touched by the portrayal of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.

Father Bob Kanka and I had our devotion renewed at Canada's three great shrines — in Montreal, Three Rivers and at St. Anne's. When I visited missionaries Father Gus Wall in Lafayette and Father Phil Erbland in Peru, I was inspired by their dedication and their people's simple faith.

Vacation time gives us a great opportunity to worship and praise in many different churches and places.

In our own diocese a warm welcome greets us at the Benedictine Monks and Dominican Sisters in Elmira, the Trappist Monks in Genesee, the shrine at St. Januarius in Naples, St. Francis Shrine in Auburn, and St. Ann's Church in Hornell with its 100-foot long mural painting on the ceiling. Our own Sacred Heart Cathedral has something that other churches do not have. Web sites on our computers offer us a whole new world of information and practices from Vatican City to our neighborhood churches.

St. Francis may not be open for our praise and petitions; however, our faith and devotions can be strengthened in countless other places and ways today.

What we don't appreciate and use, we may lose!

Father Elmer J. Schmidt
Blossom Road
Rochester

Extend 'debt' relief to include forgiving, need for forgiveness

To the editors:

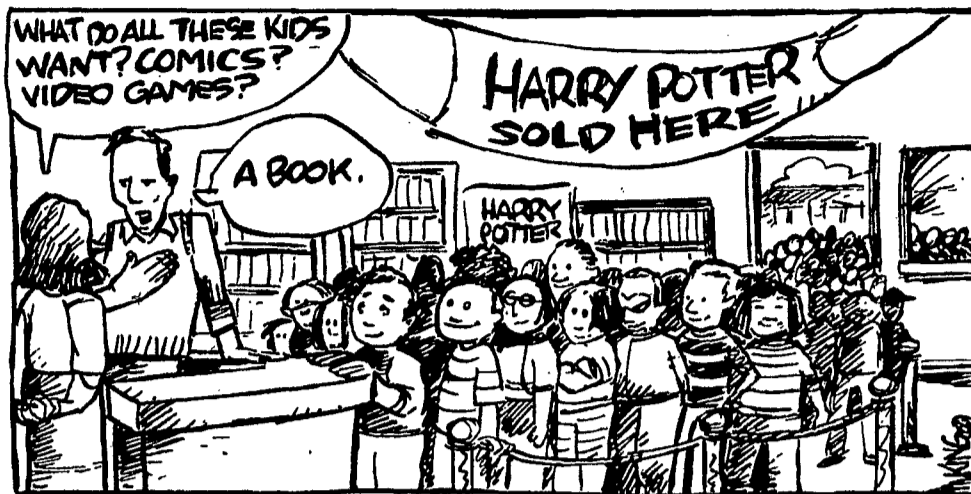
I read with delight of the debt relief granted throughout our Diocese to so many of our communities of faith! What a great gift, to see so many groups being able to "begin anew" financially in this year of Jubilee!

Perhaps now, we can all pause and focus on a deeper element of this sacred year and not be scared to "open wide the doors to Christ" and let go from our hearts! Forgiving others may be a far more "pricey" commitment, as our debts there are deep and often long-entrenched. Writing THAT kind of a check may well be far more difficult but is essential if we are to truly live the essence of our Jubilee year.

I am the first to admit I need to call myself to forgive often and it's hard work. Yet, it is also a grace and one I believe God desires to bestow upon each and every one of us this year!

If we cannot say, "please forgive me," how can we dare to say "peace be with you?" This debt reduction has challenged me to look again at my list of "debtors" and renew again my prayer for forgiveness and its grace. What about you, my brothers and sisters? Are you willing to do so as well? Please join me and make it a real Jubilee year for us all!

Sister Rosemary Sherman, RSM
Warrington Drive
Rochester



Another church needs her

To the editors:

In response to "Parish penalty is undeserved" (*Catholic Courier*, July 6): I am sorry that Phyllis Burruto sees the closing of a church as an excuse to bring down a great deed done by the bishop (his visit to the penalty phase of the capital murder trial of Jose Santiago). There is no comparison to the closing of a church.

In defense of the bishop, he did what the church expects all of us to do when someone's life is at stake no matter the reason. Life in prison is the only sentence we can give a person if we are not to take another man's life. God gives all of us time to repent and turn our lives around. We are to forgive as Jesus forgave. So with that in mind we owe it to God to protect life and if that life is to end it should be God's decision alone. Also we should treat others as we would like to be treated. With that in mind I would like mercy always and let God be my judge, please.

In the matter of the church, I have seen

since the shortage of priests and the coming together of parishes a great many things that should show us that our church works anywhere if we carry it in our hearts and not leave it in the building. We should be able to attend any Catholic church with the same attitude that we attend any church even if it is our parish church. Speaking for myself, I love the people in all four parishes that I attend and I feel that is the real meaning of church. When people ask me which one is my favorite, I cannot answer that because they all, the buildings and the people in each one, are very special in their own unique way. It only hinders us as one holy catholic and apostolic church to become angry when a building is closed. The whole church needs you, Phyllis, and we don't want to see you angry at the bishop. There is another church near you that you can benefit, but please benefit them all.

Kathy Dunning
Davis Road, Wayland

Next: Visit to abortion facility?

To the editors:

Jann Armantrout, life issues coordinator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, mentioned in the *Democrat and Chronicle* newspaper the fact that Bishop Matthew Clark's recent visit to the penalty phase of the Monroe County trial of convicted murderer Jose Julian Santiago received significant media attention. Also, Bishop Clark's public presence at the Santiago trial provided public testimony to the Catholic Church's teaching that all human life is a gift from God, sacred and inviolable.

Bishop Clark is to be commended for

his public presence at the Santiago trial. This was a wonderful affirmation of the teaching that all human life is a gift from God and no one has the right to take another's life even by the death penalty.

The next logical step for Bishop Clark to take in order to confirm the sanctity of life for the unborn would be for him to make a public appearance at an abortion facility. Possibly many more unborn children could be saved from the death penalty known as abortion if this were to take place.

Dianna Richmond Ives
Simpson Road, Rochester

Public-school prayer will stop violence

To the editors:

I did not intend to write any more letters to the editor because of limited space. After picking up the *Catholic Courier* of June 22 I was very upset reading a Supreme Court ruling against prayers at football games. Our government spends millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to find out the cause of violence in schools, homes, etc. My answer won't cost a penny and it's prayers. We are taking away from our young people the very foundation of a better society which is very important to our eroding society.

I'm sure the good intentions of these high schoolers would spread to other schools. Prayers will stop our violence. My generation made it through the Great Depression and shortly after that World War II and came through all right praying for help from the Great Power above. I still attend Mass each day and pray and always pray to help our young people to build a solid society and to get them to church and families. God bless them all.

James G. DeVecchio
Shawnee Drive, Rochester

Perhaps priest shortage is answer to prayers

To the editors:

So many individuals and congregations are praying for an increase in vocations. Not long ago there was a diocesan-wide prayer recited aloud after Sunday Masses, for at least a year. This does seem to be a good cause to pray for. Why isn't God answering these cries to heaven?

I suggest that the continuing shortage of priests is the answer. Perhaps God

wants the shortage, along with the remedies — all those lectors and Eucharistic Ministers, and yes, those women homilists and lay presiders, and yes lay administrators and assistants and associates. Perhaps God in His superior wisdom has wanted these "remedies" in spite of all our plans and efforts in the other direction.

Josephine C. Lavin
South West Street, Geneva