

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.



Program assists women who have had abortions

To the editors:

As we approach the presidential elections, the subject of abortion is again raised as an issue. What I feel is not given enough press is the spiritual/psychological condition of women after an abortion.

Our Holy Father in his special word to women who have had an abortion said in *Evangelium Vitae*: "With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life."

Four of us are working to prepare a weekend retreat in which these women, and anyone affected by abortion, will be able to receive the kind of help, advice, experiences they need. Father Jim Hewes, Pastor of St. John's, Clyde, Betsy MacKinnon, Sister Dolores Monahan and I are involved in preparations for the weekend retreat called "Rachel's Vineyard." Each of us has worked with women who have had an abortion, and we have seen the profound grief, anguish, and guilt they go through as they move toward forgiveness and healing. We have worked on these retreats in New Jersey and see how they help the person bring some closure to their painful experience.

Rachel's Vineyard, designed primarily by Dr. Theresa Karminski Burke, has been in development for some time. It is a national program, with Web site and

hot-line. It includes discussion, Scripture-based spiritual exercises, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a Memorial Service and a Mass of Resurrection. Participation is strictly confidential, and it offers those wounded by abortion a beautiful opportunity to experience God's love, forgiveness, and compassion within a community of Christians. This will be the first Rachel's Vineyard Retreat offered in New York State.

The reference to Rachel comes from Jeremiah 31: "Rachel mourns for her children; she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more. Thus says the Lord: 'Cease your cries of mourning. Wipe the tears from your eyes. The sorrow you have shown will have its reward. There is hope for your future.'"

The retreat will begin on Friday, September 22 and close Sunday, September 24. Another one is scheduled for December 1 to 3. They will be held at a local retreat center. There is a fee for private room, meals and retreat materials. If you have financial burdens, assistance is available.

For further information, call Sister Dolores Monahan at 315/789-7841 or Sister Mary Lynch at 716/586-1000, ext. 185. To register call Betsy MacKinnon at 716/328-0648.

Sister Mary Lynch, SSJ
Nazareth Convent
Lakeview Park, Rochester

Active parish ministries can foster ordination candidates

To the editors:

I want to thank Joseph A. F. Valenti for describing what sounds like my parish (*Catholic Courier* 20 July 2000). Indeed we have two resident priests and one canonical pastor and two deacons. And it is true that we have a large number of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist whose mandates come from our bishop. And, indeed, we have a few who preside at prayer/Communion services.

Mr. Valenti's characterization of the "Communion services" as Protestant is absurd and deserves no further comment.

Mr. Valenti attempts to use these practices to support his claim that this is why we have a shortage of priests. The fact is, as he well knows, my parish has produced at least one priest, now very active and

faithful in our Diocese at the present time.

The abundance of lay ministries and lay ministers is a blessing for our Church. May it continue. Such ministries are appropriate exercises of the priesthood that all of us receive at baptism and in no way assume a right to preside at the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The use of properly trained and informed non-ordained persons to preach in our churches is also an appropriate exercise of our common priesthood.

What better way to encourage people to come forward as candidates for the ordained priesthood than to have it arise from a committed and dedicated and active parish community?

Donald L. Muench
Smallwood Drive, Pittsford

Dialogue needed

To the editors:

At a July reunion of religious educators in Vermont, theologian Monika Hellwig told listeners that the American Roman Catholic Church is facing the risk of a schism in the coming years. Another theologian, Dermot Lane, said history has repeated itself because history has been forgotten. The present age needs the power of memory for the creation of a different future. Memory, it is said, can keep alive the injustices of the past so as to avert them in the future. We need to know our history and where we are going, Lane added.

I wonder whatever happened to Cardinal Joseph Bernardin's thought that common ground must be sought to bring together in peaceful dialogue those who would split our American Roman Catholic Church?

Tom Fogarty
Walnut Street, Auburn

Solution is clever

To the editors:

Regarding "Bishops differ on same-sex unions," *Catholic Courier*, July 26: My congratulations to the Bishops of New Zealand for recognizing a need and devising a humane solution to same-sex unions. Praise also goes to the *Catholic Courier* and Father Richard P. McBrien for communicating this interesting solution to a pressing social problem. The New Zealand bishops say it all with the comment that "The existence of a sexual relationship is not a matter which should be inquired into by the courts."

Let all that you do be done in love: 1 Corinthians 16:14

Kevin M. Kelly
Glen Street, New Hartford

Live in covenant

To the editors:

In the June 22 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, Father Albert Shamon wrote an article for the Feast of Corpus Christi and as usual, in his own enlightening style, clearly explained the meaning and significance behind the word Covenant. And although this expression is found in 286 verses in the New American Bible, it is seldom discussed or talked about, much less emphasized. However, as Father Shamon indicated, this would indeed be a much better world if we all would say yes to this covenant and love one another as He has loved us.

Leon Bartle
Beechwood Crescent, Webster

Enjoys concerts

To the editors:

I wonder if the people of Rochester appreciate the wonderful concerts that are presented by Jeff Tysik and the RPO orchestra.

We attended a magnificent concert at the Woodcliff last week and the performance of Jeff's daughter singing "Carmen." It was a treat for all Rochesterians. Everyone who performed solo pieces were one better than the other.

Since I am in Florida six months and then come to Rochester for the summer six months, I try to catch as many concerts that I can. The following night Jeff Tysik and the RPO put on another grand performance at Charlotte Beach.

It has been a real treat for me and I would like to pass it on to all Rochesterians so they can take advantage of such wonderful performances.

Grace Calarco Staffaroni
Kings Court Way, Rochester