

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.

Candidates should not use church

To the editors:

For the first time in my life I have been ashamed of being a Catholic in the Diocese of Rochester. In my opinion the Church of Rochester has been on the wrong side of many issues, but never as bad as this.

Hillary Clinton, the high priest of the pro-abortion movement, was invited to preach at a Catholic church, St. Michael's Church on Clinton Avenue. I do not know, nor do I care who invited her. Hillary thanked Father Dennis Shaw for asking her to speak at his church. I didn't realize that it was "his" church. Many "Hillary" signs were in evidence inside the church. Several dozen police and Secret Service men were stationed inside and outside the Church. Several people were forcefully removed from the church for daring to recite a prayer. One, at least, was gagged. I do not know if they were arrested or not.

A large number of loyal Catholics were protesting across the street with signs and saying the rosary. Hillary was snuck in the back of the church. Obviously so she would not be offended by the demonstration against her. It is proper to offend the loyal Catholics of the diocese with this desecration of Saint Michael's Church, but not to offend the most prominent pro-abortion leader of our nation.

Hillary spoke in English. Most of the rest was in Spanish. The master of ceremonies said in English at the start of his talk that he would speak in Spanish to inform the people of the correct way to vote, to make sure they voted for Hillary. This was not a "get out the vote" effort. He said that he was telling them the proper way to vote for Hillary. I saw at least one priest vigorously applauding almost every word from Hillary's mouth. To see what is the most beautiful church of our diocese desecrated in this way almost made me cry. The church should be reconsecrated to atone for the sacrilege committed there.

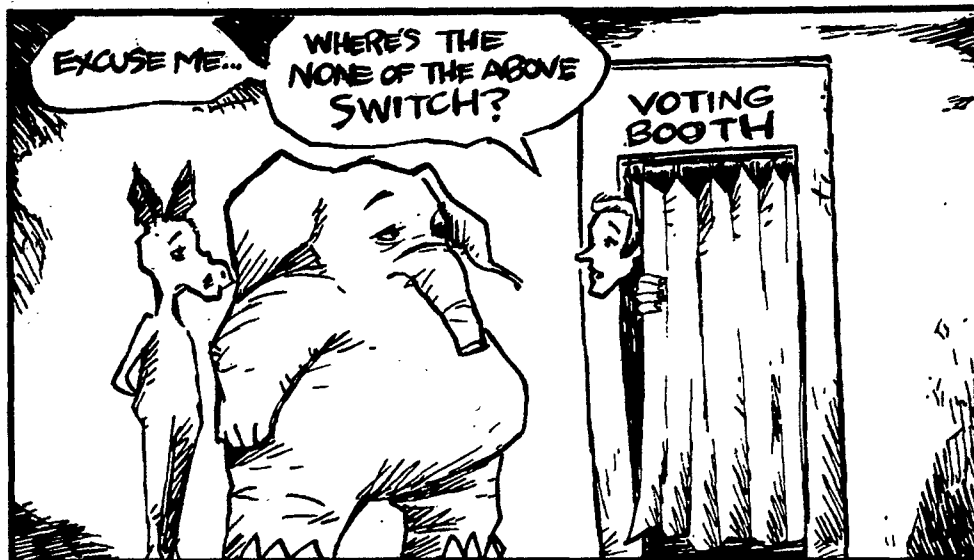
Aside from the completely anti-Catholic, anti-Christian message Hillary sends in her pro-abortion stand in a Catholic Church, there is another very great problem.

The Church is a non-profit religious organization and to maintain its tax exempt status is forbidden to take a public stand on political issues. This is the stand that many priests take when they refuse to speak out against abortion — but it is OK to speak in favor of it. This event obviously violates the tax exempt status of St. Michael's and possibly of the whole diocese.

I can't understand why someone in authority in the diocese did not stop this from happening. People at the church said that they heard about it early in the week and I heard about it on the TV Saturday night.

I am thinking of asking my pastor for the use of the pulpit next Sunday to speak in favor of Lazio for the Senate. Of course he will turn me down — not because he is for or against Lazio — but because it is not a proper use of the church.

John D. Foy
Spanish Trail, Rochester



'Single issue' has implications on gamut of social concerns

To the editors:

Discussion about "single issue" voting, or protecting the unborn vs. broad social concerns, misses an important similarity.

Taking the lives of 1.3 million unborn human beings a year can be reason enough to vote "single issue." But the broader implications of abortion touch on the dumbing down of many liberal or socially progressive principles which are critical to our Christian faith.

Legal abortion justifies violence and promotes radical individualism over community. The mantra "It's my body, my life" has been ironically co-opted by the firearms industry. Using abortion rights language in an ad for the Lady Colt, women are persuaded to "Be safe and responsible. Don't let anyone take away your constitutional right to own a gun."

The tobacco industry is also in bed with abortion rights activists. At the NARAL annual dinner in 1994, Tipper Gore presented an award to tobacco heiress Robin Chandler Duke for her financial support of "the right to choose."

For those of us who promote gay rights or disabled rights or the rights of the eco-

nomically disadvantaged, our efforts reek with hypocrisy since these classes of people can biologically and legally be eliminated through "choice."

Colorado Senator Patricia Schroeder who led the fight for the right of women to destroy their unborn was the same senator who led the legislation that gave women the right to be combatants in war.

For those Catholics who work hard to defend the rights of born children, it is revealing that child abuse in Canada skyrocketed the year that country legalized abortion on demand. And here in New York it's much less expensive to give a woman \$340 to abort her child than to give her day care or housing or education.

If violence leads to more violence, can the converse be true? The states that have not reinstated the death penalty are the same states — except Hawaii — that do not pay for Medicaid abortions.

If the "single issue" is community over individualism, and peace over violence, then abortion can be understood to be a comprehensive social concern.

Carol Crossed
Pickwick Drive, Rochester

Pollution kills entire planet

To the editors:

During this presidential campaign, the Church is rightly urging us to vote according to the principles of our religious teaching. It seems a simple decision, with a pro-life candidate opposing a pro-choice one, but things are actually not as clear cut as most people perceive. Here is a larger consideration to act upon: What we are currently doing to our own species by way of abortion is terrible, but what we're doing to all the other species on Earth, and to our planet's ability to sustain healthy life, must be just as unforgivable in God's eyes. The common practice of abortion in this country should eventually be abandoned along with capital punishment, just as slavery has already been discarded. These three barbaric practices are the ugly blemishes on America's human rights record. I believe this change will occur within a few more generations, regardless of which political party holds office longer during this century.

On the global scale, however, the biosphere has taken a terrible beating, and correcting our human impact on this earth has already been delayed for too many decades. The headman of the most influential nation could play a critical role in altering the direction of this spiraling disaster if he so chooses. All future generations could depend on it, so the election really is a tough choice this time, and a more important choice than usual. Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance*, is out there for all to read and to understand his position on environmental concerns. After reading it, I realize we probably should not hold out, waiting and hoping for another candidate in the future who aligns better with our beliefs. The stewardship of this piece of God's creation is in our hands and we are called, at this crossroad in time, to make a painfully imperfect, yet farsighted and courageous decision for our descendants.

Justin A. Tubiolo
Midland Drive, Webster

Clinging to old voting patterns won't help end offense against God

To the editors:

Election issues are topics of many letters featured in the *Courier*. Some writers urge us to weigh the value of the born over the unborn, others rank the defense of innocent lives as the number one issue. Why is this an either or situation? Can't we continue to work for the grand social issues and also defend life? As we travel down this road, we find innocents dying beside the path. We are on our way to an important mission to further the Gospel, so we do not stop and attend the dying along the road.

We avert our eyes and continue on our way, saying to the first person we encounter that he is obligated to attend to the dying persons whom we just passed. After all, we belong to the other political party. Maybe the wrong party has adopted the issue of the right to life. But would we further the Gospel by clinging to old voting habits? Do

we not have the power to end very soon an egregious offense against God with our votes? Wasn't it urgency that prompted the Good Samaritan to action as well as compassion?

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