

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.

Catholics obligated to know answer

To the editors:

The recently issued Church document, *Dominus Iesus*, has elicited a rather critical local response judging by your article in the October 19 issue of the *Courier*. This reaction is illustrative of the confusion over the ecumenical program that the Catholic Church has advocated since Vatican II. As readers are probably aware, the Catholic Church's position is that she has the deposit of the full truth of the means of salvation. The Church teaches that other Christian denominations and other religions contain elements of this truth in varying degrees. The Catholic Church recognizes these truths as valid to the extent that they conform to the teaching of the Catholic Church. If all that is true comes by revelation from the one true God, then the truth should be the same for everyone.

Your article states that Protestant minister, the Rev. Womack, is one of those parties that is upset with the Church's teaching on ecumenical relations as explained in *Dominus Iesus*. He is the past president of the GR-CC which is a local ecumenical group currently headed by Sister Beth LeValley, SSJ. In the context of the article he states that he is not prepared to defend Christ as the one savior of the world. This is an example of the sort of false ecumenism that can only lead to confusion. In order for true ecumenism to be productive, it must also be honest. It is a disservice to the ecumenical process to diminish or misrepresent a core teaching of Christianity.

If all religions are equally valid, then it



would make life much easier for everyone. We could pick and choose what is compatible with our current way of thinking without having to worry about our salvation. If reincarnation is an appealing prospect, then a person could choose Hinduism. If you believe that all reality is in constant flux and don't like the idea of a personal God, then Buddhism would be a good match. If a person believes in the idea of human sacrifice to appease the gods, then a revival of the Aztec religion could be in order.

When it comes right down to it a person has one of three choices to make. One: All religions are true therefore all contradictions are true. Christ can be a mere man and

he can be God incarnate. Christ was the Messiah and Christ was not the Messiah. Christ is truly present in the Eucharist and the Eucharist is merely a symbolic wafer. Two: No religion is true. This makes the idea of religion rather pointless. Three: Only one religion is true. Other religions have elements of truth but only one has complete truth.

Does the Catholic Church have the fullness of truth regarding salvation as revealed by Jesus Christ or does it not? This is an essential question. As Catholics we have an obligation to know the answer.

Eugene Michael
Daley Boulevard
Rochester

We can't compromise truth to satisfy others

To the editors:

"*Dominus Iesus*: on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church" is a beautiful document, which expresses great mercy and love. When we pray and work for unity, we must not compromise the truth. The Catholic Church was founded by Jesus himself and given the guidance of the Holy Spirit — working through the Successor of Peter. It is such a relief to know that we do not have to rely on our own limited humanity to try to guess the truth. God lovingly has assured us of his guidance. We cannot compromise the truth for the sake of making people of other religions feel better about us and themselves. In humility — since the document clearly states that faith is a gift — and with gravity — since it also states that because of this gift we are obligated to embrace the truth and proclaim it — we must give hope to those who are not in full communion with the Church Christ founded. Truth is NOT relative. There is one Truth, and that truth is a Person, Jesus Christ!

There are over 25,000 Christian religions. Which one is the true church? They are different because they accept that truth can differ. Christ prayed for unity, that all might be one with him and the Father. Which one? Let us not cut ourselves off from the life-giving relationship of God in the Church. Let us cherish it, protect it, fight to the death for it, and proclaim it to all in the world, who are dearly loved by our Creator. I beg our priests and bishops to stop debating that which we are required to believe. Rather instruct and educate your flock, which hungers and thirsts for the Word. The Holy Father "granted to the ... Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for

the Doctrine of the Faith, with sure knowledge and his apostolic authority, ratified and confirmed this Declaration, adopted in Plenary Session and ordered its publication." This means that it is doctrine and verified to be true by the Holy Father. The

faithful are required to believe it. Its contents are unchangeable. You better believe that the Holy Father read it carefully.

Mary Vazquez
Virginia Avenue
Piffard

Document isn't political statement

To the editors:

There is nothing new presented in the recent Declaration *Dominus Iesus* published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Although it has caused a firestorm of criticism from various secular and religious quarters, including some Catholic, it focuses on problems resulting from false teachings that have influenced certain modern Catholic theologians, especially relativism and indifferentism.

The only reason to be a Catholic is that the Church was founded by Christ and has received the fullness of truth through the working of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the teachings of the Church are true in the objective sense. One cannot pick and choose which truths are convenient or promote a certain agenda. A Catholic is required to accept and believe all the doctrines of the Church not just those which happen to fit

one's individual taste.

This document makes clear that the Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in other religions. However, that does not mean that apostolic zeal for converts should diminish or that centrality of Jesus Christ should be ignored.

It seems as if almost any statement or document issued by the Vatican these days is open to attack from both inside and outside the Church. Too often commentators of various stripes regard new pronouncements as somehow political. In this case the Declaration is aimed at half-faithful Catholics who undermine the truth and unity of the Church. It is not a political statement, nor does it in any way contradict documents from Vatican II which are quoted throughout the document.

Dolores B. and Douglas R. Vining
Black Watch Trail, Fairport

Document's nothing new, so why fuss?

To the editors:

Why all the fuss? *Dominus Iesus*, I believe, states nothing new.

Perhaps the problem is a lack of adherence to the truth and/or obedience to Holy Mother Church? It does seem too many

would like to change the unchangeable for convenience.

God's timing is always correct. I believe this is proof of God's timing.

Helen Shultz
Main Street, Newfield

Parent unhappy that choir photo wasn't included in pilgrimage coverage

To the editors:

I found your coverage of the Family Pilgrimage very disappointing. One of the main reasons being that our youth choir performed at the Family Pilgrimage. They were all dressed in nuns' costumes and they sang two songs from the movie "Sister Act." They were in the outside tent. I'll bet you that they were the only ones there that got a request

for an encore performance. I saw your photographer taking pictures of the group. They worked very hard. We are very proud of them. They also made the 6 o'clock news. A little support, recognition and publicity would have done a world of good for those kids. Pictures of the kids enjoying themselves were nice, but to say the least, we all were disappointed that our kids were not

even mentioned in the article. In our opinion, they were the highlight of the day.

Lisa Burns
Cress Road, Phelps

EDITORS' NOTE: Ms. Burns identified herself as a "proud parent of one of the youth choir members." We regret that space limitations make it impossible for us to include every aspect of an event in our coverage.