

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.

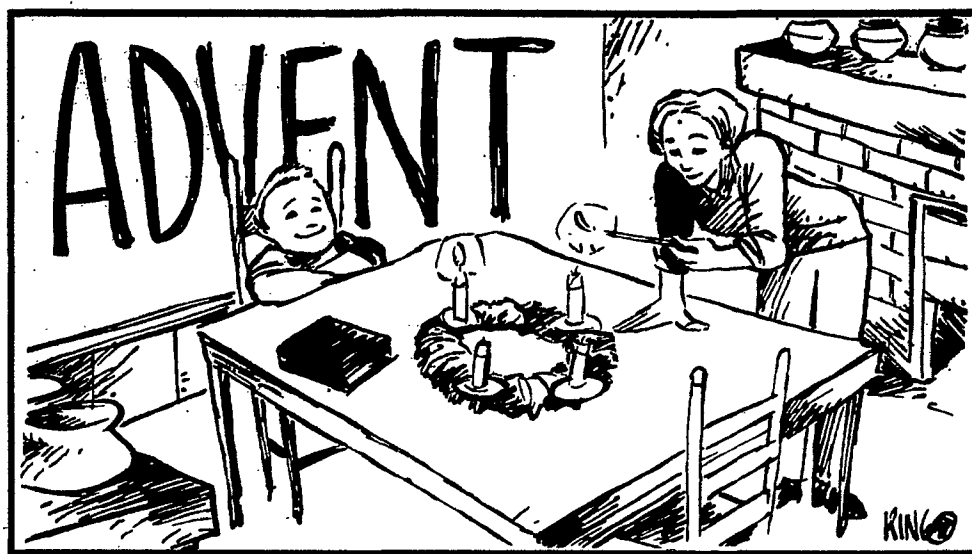
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Will diocese accept input on cathedral?

To the editors:

There is an intense conflict many members of the Church of Rochester appear to be caught up in these days. At first I dismissed the rallying cries of those who are upset over impending renovations to our Diocesan Cathedral as sentimental reluctance to accept necessary changes, progress and innovations that would improve the quality of liturgy there. I am familiar with the renewal of Liturgy ushered in by the Second Vatican Council and welcome it. I grew up with the Mass in Latin and sang in a choir for years which included the wonderful Gregorian chant music. I don't miss the altar rail or being a spectator while the priest saying Mass does it all. I do think that contemporary thought on the placement of the altar as critical to evoking the ability for those present to engage in full, active and conscious participation in the Eucharist has some merit. I also think that some contemporary worship environments are devoid of beauty and inspiration, my own perception of beauty not withstanding.

The conflict has reached a point of real concern to me though. I admit that I can really understand the perspectives of both sides of the issue. I do strongly believe that some proponents of change are putting too much weight on the ability of a certain architectural design to significantly impact the hearts and minds of people who enter



that place. In the end, it is not the physical environment that has the real power to effect the full, active and conscious participation of people present. That level of participation derives from conversion to the Risen Lord, a conversion that involves heart and mind and soul. It is a conversion that puts the good of our relationship with one another as members of one another in the Body of Christ, above the need to be "right" or to "win" the argument.

My concern about the current state of the "union" of the Church of Rochester is how WE can have full, active and conscious participation together in the Eucharist when we are battling over what happens to our Cathedral. And my concern is also for how the local leadership carries out its decision making process in this regard. Will it more actively listen to the voice of the people as many of us wish the magisterium would do on other more serious issues?

Sheila Cody
Jefferson Avenue
Fairport

Save money for the needy

To the editors:

Although I no longer live in Rochester, family and friends keep me in touch with happenings there. Being able to read the *Catholic Courier* on the Internet is great.

I have one comment on the issue of "renovation" of the Cathedral, the church where my parents were married 62 years ago. Those who oppose drastic redoes should be listened to. They should also read Michael S. Rose's book "The Renovation Manipulation: The Church Counter-Renovation Handbook" (2000, \$12.95).

I now worship in a "new style" church that was originally built that way. Aside from its lovely stained glass windows and interesting life-size wood sculptures of Jesus and the Holy Family, it is not a very at-

tractive or inspiring place to be. Its "innovative" roof also leaks a lot, despite frequent repair. The "renovated" churches I have seen, including St. Helen's in Gates, are not improvements over the originals.

We can grasp the concept that the people, not the building, constitute the Church without destroying our valuable architectural, artistic and cultural heritage. The clerical "less is more" school of interior design is a phase that many hope to see ended soon.

Don't mess up the Cathedral before more mature and mellow minds prevail. Use the money you thereby save on some worthy projects, like feeding, clothing, housing and educating those in need.

Shannon Troy-Peterson
South King Road, Lockport, Ill.

Environment can enhance worship

To the editors:

I've been a Catholic since I was baptized 51 years ago. I was raised with the Latin Mass and I appreciate it. Recently I've noticed considerable controversy from some among us about church renovations, changes in the liturgy, etc. Every time I listen to a discussion or read an opinion on these topics I think of two experiences I've had.

The first one dates back to when I was a senior in a Catholic high school. One of our priests held a Mass for us in the senior lounge. We were all seated in lounge chairs, passed around the Bible for the readings, had a discussion of meaning after the homily, and shared Italian bread and small glasses of red wine during Communion. After the service we chatted

about our concerns and plans for the future. It was the closest I've ever felt to memorializing the Last Supper.

The second experience is very recent. My parish, St. Ambrose, Rochester, is currently undergoing church renovations, and for now we're gathering every Sunday in the school gym on green plastic lawn chairs. Surprisingly, it's great, and I don't miss a thing. Somehow, it almost feels like the sense of community has been enhanced, especially if you sit up front!

If I were to be in a discussion with someone who was concerned about these issues I might say that "wherever two or more of you are gathered in His name...there is Love."

Mark Scipioni
Caves Place, Rochester

Alarmed by thinking in critic's argument

To the editors:

I was troubled and alarmed with Richard Wolf's letter "Weigh value of born, unborn life" (Oct. 19). He seems to elude that if one is for protecting the unborn, they are automatically opposed to a myriad of other human rights issues. This idea is far from the truth. If one respects life, from the very beginning, they usually protect life in all instances as God's precious gift. The means used to achieve goals, as to the best way to benefit the "poor, the worker, global solidarity, and the environment," may differ from that of Mr. Wolf's, yet are sincere and morally sound. Even experts disagree in which are the best ways to resolve these matters. In abortion, however, the Teaching Body of the Catholic Church has stated very clearly that human life begins at the moment of conception. Perhaps Mr. Wolf should acquaint himself as to who is empowered as the Teaching Authority of the Church.

The most troubling of all of his statements is "Catholics should be responding to fully born fully human people." He is clearly stating here that the unborn are less human. This brings to mind the horrific suffering from critical moments in our history when certain people took it upon themselves to decide who was human or who was less human.

May God, the Creator of all life grant us wisdom and grace to protect and embrace all human life from the very beginning until the end and to be true stewards of His beautiful creation.

Rita B. Sartori
West Clinton Street, Elmira

Other issues don't compare

To the editors:

Richard Carl Wolf, in a recent letter, chided Rita Sartori and me for not going beyond the abortion issue.

However, I would remind Mr. Wolf that abortion is the most important issue as over a million human beings are killed each year in this manner.

The other issues raised by Mr. Wolf like care for the poor, rights of workers, etc. are all important but they are not on the same page with abortion.

Voicing concern for children while doing nothing and even encouraging their mothers to kill them in the womb is nothing short of hypocrisy.

Any candidate not willing to protect the unborn in no way deserves our vote. Green Party candidate Ralph Nader — thanks for your correction, Mr. Wolf — will not protect the unborn. As an environmentalist he should know that the environment is more than air, water and soil. It also includes humans who need the basic protection to be born, live and contribute to our society. Pat Buchanan is cognizant of that fact. He is the most solid pro-life candidate.

Robert W. Bart
Ithaca

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