

# 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.

## More responses to *Dominus Iesus*

### To the editors:

Vocal critics of the Vatican Declaration *Dominus Iesus* are expressing disappointment, disagreement, and even distrust. They are disillusioned with what is perceived to be its negative tone, narrow and reactionary posture, and anti-Vatican II spirit. It is considered an unfortunate document, problematic, and an embarrassment.

These critics simply cannot find the Declaration's saving grace. While portraying themselves as more loving of non-Christians than is the Teaching Church, the document's doctrinal substance is ignored, distorted, or misunderstood. How tragic that these religious leaders are experiencing doubt and confusion about Jesus Christ, God's Church, and the Lord's command to evangelize. The mystery of mercy revealed in God's desire that everyone be saved through the knowledge of the truth of the Good News is opposed adamantly by them. It is apparent that these baptized Christians are undergoing a profound crisis of faith. A particular co-pastor even said he would not defend the belief that Christ is the one Savior of the world.

Rather than encourage others to accept and obey God's complete and trustworthy Self-Disclosure in Jesus Christ, these religious leaders object to *Dominus Iesus* implying a rejection of and disobedience to the Son of God and Divine Revelation. How terribly tragic that some have closed their hearts to the Word of God and the saving mission of Christ Jesus!

Anyone can read the document and discover its faithfulness to Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, Ecumenical Councils including Vatican II, and Papal Encyclicals. In light of the prevailing religious relativism that pays little attention to Almighty God's absolute and definitive revelation through Jesus Christ, this Declaration's substance is relevant and timely. No one should be misled or deceived by its vocal critics. Much of their faultfinding stems from loyalty to the same false theories and presuppositions which *Dominus Iesus* warns are contrary to Christian Doctrine and harmful to faith.

As we pray God that the disappointed and disillusioned rediscover Christ Crucified and Risen, the following quotes from Pope John Paul II and Bishop Matthew Clark can inspire and encourage all of us. "It is not enough to discover Christ — You must bring him to others! You must have the courage to speak about Christ ... the missionary task ... concerns the eternal destiny of humanity and corresponds to God's mysterious merciful plan." (Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 1989 and Mission of the Redeemer) "Give generously with your prayers and financial gifts to help speed the day when the whole world will share faith in the one Lord, Jesus Christ." (Bishop Clark, World Mission Sunday Message, *Catholic Courier* Oct. 19, 2000)

Confidently, charitably, and in the grace of the Holy Spirit, we can and we will proclaim and bear witness before all people: The Good News of Salvation through JESUS CHRIST, the One Savior of the World.

Dominick A. Zarcone  
Sharon Drive  
Rochester

**EDITORS' NOTE:** The "co-pastor" mentioned in this letter is a Methodist minister quoted in our Oct. 19 article about the document.



## Love is church's foundation

### To the editors:

Recently on EWTN after the release of *Dominus Iesus* these words were spoken, "Now we can say that the Church of Christ is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church." I thought back to the first draft of *Unitatis Redintegratio* prepared for Vatican II by the Roman Curia: "There is a single Church of Christ which exists in the Catholic Church." The council fathers wisely rejected this wording and said instead, "There exists a single Church of Christ which subsists in the Catholic Church." The council fathers accepted that God's truth is revealed outside as well as within the Catholic Church. Indeed the Catholic Church can learn from other churches.

Leonardo Boff critiques *Dominus Iesus* for its rigid exposition in defense of the Roman system, immutable, implacable, cruel and pitiless. It is a system completely closed in upon itself, the private property of the Vatican hierarchy. No truth exists beyond the system. All must submit to it. He challenges that the Roman system is not the essence of Christianity. Missing from *Dominus Iesus* are two foundation stones which are of the essence of Christianity; the centrality of the law of love and the primacy of the poor. Boff writes: "For Jesus and the entire New Testament love is all, for God is love and only love can save, a love that must be unconditional... There is no mention of the poor. For Jesus and the New Testament the poor are not just one thing among many. The poor are the starting point where one begins to under-

stand the Gospel as Good News of liberation; the poor stand as the final criteria of salvation or damnation (Matt. 25). It is useless to belong to the Roman Catholic

Church, to have all the means of salvation, to submit yourself heart and mind to the hierarchical system, to take unto yourself all revealed truth unless you have love for without love you are nothing... Our theological tradition has always argued that where Christ is there too is the Church. Christ is in the poor. The Church must also be in the poor." These essential foundation stones are missing from (Cardinal) Ratzinger's document.

My reading of the New Testament tells me that Jesus was the most inclusive person who ever lived. He had harsh words for only two groups, the religious leaders — Scribes, Pharisees, and priests — and the rich. But even they have hope for "with God all things are possible." Now let me be perfectly honest. Boff is a laicized Franciscan Theologian whose book, *The Church, Charisma and Power* was condemned by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith which Ratzinger heads. Nevertheless it is very clear that Boff, not Ratzinger is much closer to the mind, heart and spirit of Jesus, according to the Scriptures. I believe with Vatican II that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church but you will have difficulty finding it on much of EWTN, in the document *Dominus Iesus* or in the Roman system.

Emmett Neary  
Bakerdale Rd., Rochester

## Late pastor was interfaith leader

### To the editors:

It is with sadness that I call the attention of the Catholic community, especially in Rochester, to the recent death of the Rev. Jim Rice of the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley. Our Ecumenical and Interfaith community has suffered a great loss in the passing of this dedicated pastor so committed to empowering the poor, opening arms of hospitality to refugees, and raising our consciences to social justice issues. His death denotes another passing of that era when the faith communities of Rochester worked closely together to organize neighbors, to strategize efforts, lobby corporations and City Hall, and witness to justice demands of the Gospel.

Back in the '60s when our local Catholic community was just awakening to both so-

cial justice and ecumenism, and when Rochester exploded in racism, fire and death, Jim pulled many of us into arenas we had never known before and worked to make Catholic laity, religious and clergy partners in the Interfaith efforts of those days.

While many of the famous names of those days (viz. Bishop Sheen, Saul Alinsky, and so many, many others) have all left the scene, Jim Rice has remained at his post through all these decades, quiet, hopeful, and kind.

Since "to rest in peace" is not his style, I pray that Almighty God will reward him with still more work to do, to pray for us that the fire for justice never burn low.

Father Daniel P. Tormey  
Holiday Harbour, Canandaigua

## Group's flyer on cathedral renovation seeks to vilify and humiliate

### To the editors:

Were I to demonstrate a screed, that written tirade or harangue designed to denounce, abuse, vilify and slander one's opponents, I have at hand a bitter hand-out from "Catholics For the Real Presence," a group that contemptuously protests renovation of the cathedral in the name of "authentic" Catholics who

would "continue the traditions of their faith."

In its wanton effort to cut and hurt, it imputes some motives and impugns others. Not content with disagreeing or dissenting, it unbecomingly suggests the renovation as a "sacred scam," a fraudulent scheme for making a quick profit. It forgets that humility is not the same as hu-

miliation, which it would impose on others, and that Christ, marvelously present in his Eucharist, is present also in his people.

Who was it that said, once upon a time, "See how these Christians love one another?"

E. Leo McMannus  
Sail Pointe Circle, Venice, Fla.