

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.

Departure should be explained

To the editors:

The Sept. 28 article concerning Father Robert Beligotti of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Auburn sounded almost verbatim like an article published earlier this year. That article concerned Father Robert Hammond, pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church in Irondequoit.

Apparently both priests were well liked, had committed no crimes, but were put on administrative leave to deal with personal concerns and issues.

Father Michael Conboy spoke also at St. Margaret Mary's initially — then the unanswered questions and waiting game continued for six months until our valiant pastor resigned. Those who wanted him gone had succeeded, leaving the parish to be run by lay people with several generous priests filling in to celebrate Mass. Father Hammond by the way is to "supply priest coverage wherever needed."

At this critical time when vocations are rare, why would the diocese relieve pastors from their duties and allow vicious rumors



to circulate causing these priests grief and embarrassment!

I hope that Father Beligotti and his parishioners don't have to go through the same uncertainty experienced by Father Hammond and St. Margaret Mary's Parish.

These priests deserve better for their years of faithful service to the Catholic Community. The parishioners who support their churches — monetarily and with their time deserve explanations from the

Bishop; not a debriefing session led by an outside facilitator.

As a member of St. Margaret Mary Church I'm deeply upset with the whole turn of events. Father Hammond brought people together and now the parish is split with many families leaving because there is no pastor!

Catharine Simmons
Thistledown Drive
Irondequoit

Immaculate Mary saved from sin's stain

To the editors:

Christmas is the time of giving. We imitate the Father who gives us his Son. God is always showering his gifts on us. The question was posed in the *Courier* (Dec. 7), why did God give Mary this wonderful gift, the Immaculate Conception. The Catechism of the Catholic Church answers this question on nos. 396-421 and 491-92. It makes an appropriate reading for the Advent and Christmas season. And yes, the Catechism does mention "stain of original sin."

To our first parents God gave the gifts of holiness and justice: Holiness — a sharing in God's divine life; Justice — freedom from the triple concupiscence that subject man to the pleasures of the senses, covetousness for earthly goods, and self-

assertion, contrary to the dictates of reason. Cat. 377.

In the fullness of time, God sent His only Son. Is it surprising that the Father gave to Jesus' mother those same gifts given to Adam and Eve, which they lost, not only for themselves but all mankind. "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned." Rom. 5:12, 9. Cat. 1868, 1869.

By our first parents' sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even though man remains free. 'Original sin entails captivity under the power of him who thenceforth had the power of death, that is, the devil.' The Catechism quoted the Council of Trent and Heb. 2:14.

Is it not most fitting that God pre-

served Mary from these consequences of original sin. In her gift of the Immaculate Conception, Mary is full of grace and Satan has no power over her. The heart, mind, and soul of Mary are completely given over to the will of God. God - the perfect giver. Thank you, Lord.

Joan M. Rand
North Drive
Rochester

Church needs former priests

To the editors:

How disturbing to read the study regarding the priest shortage. We in the rural area already are aware of one priest for two to six parishes.

There is an answer — prayer. Just prayer. Remember the Iron Curtain?

The priests who left to get married must be brought back out of exile, like the Holy Family, and Moses with the Jewish people. St. Paul said, "It is better for you to marry than you sin."

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "If we could look into the hearts of other people, we would have so much compassion for them that no one would be angry with anyone." So let us be a forgiving people and pray to bridge the gap and give ourselves back our priests. "Thou art a priest forever, in the order of Melchisedek."

There will be more changes, we must be patient, we must pray. Don't get anxious — or do, just enough to lead you to prayer. Prayer will resolve the problem.

"That the Church bring her married priests out of exile, we pray to the Lord."

Peggy Faul
Main Street
Phelps

Coaches excellent examples

To the editors:

"Sports do not build character; they reveal it" say the T-shirts. This is true for coaches as well as athletes.

Our youngest daughter just completed her soccer season under Bishop Kearney's Paul Forte, who has seen sectional victories and losses. Through both he has shown integrity: honesty, compassion, kindness and humor. He has encouraged but never belittled a player. He asks for each player's best — not a win — but a best effort. With each game's win or loss, he evaluates it on effort only. In a win, he does not allow his team to humiliate an opponent in order to raise one of his player's statistics; rather, he plays "the bench," those who faithfully practice but see little

game time. At the end of each senior's season he sends a personal letter enumerating her character qualities — not just skills. Included is a poster or picture to remind her that life is about giving your best. In place of one practice he substituted a team viewing of "Remember the Titans." With him has been the J.V. coach Manny Espinosa. Both men exhibit genuine concern for each player — they never seek personal rewards.

When players and spectators become disenchanted with coaches' behavior, these men are examples to emulate — they teach by example.

Margaret Finucane
Canterbury Road
Rochester

Cathedral renovation is a waste

To the editors:

As a Catholic who has been attending Sacred Heart Cathedral for years, I am devastated over suggested plans to dismantle one of the most beautiful church interiors in Upstate New York. My sentiments are common among other Catholics, who also believe that such radical remodeling is wasteful, unnecessary and practically criminal. How can Bishop Matthew Clark ever justify spending millions of dollars jack hammering precious imported marble, when there are so many

needy people right in his neighborhood?

In the midst of all this controversy, it is most peculiar that Bishop Clark has yet to make a single comment or explanation. Why does he continue to remain silent while his cathedral is in a crisis? What is really going on that our bishop won't address his fellow Catholics and tell the truth? We as Catholics feel betrayed and deceived.

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