

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.

Alterations aid notion of Eucharist as a symbol

To the editors:

Seems like every effort is being made to boost the opinion that what is contained in the Holy Tabernacle is nothing but a "symbol." A survey was taken a number of years ago in our diocese and 65 percent of those surveyed believed the Host was nothing but a symbol. Apparently those that are in charge of the renovations also believe this by relocating the Tabernacle off to the side or out of sight.

What is contained in the Tabernacle is what makes the church holy or sacred and because it IS the true body of Christ it should not be hidden or shoved off to one side. Who is contained in the Tabernacle is what makes our church unique. He is always there and we can always come to Him and pray or just sit there and listen to Him at any time.

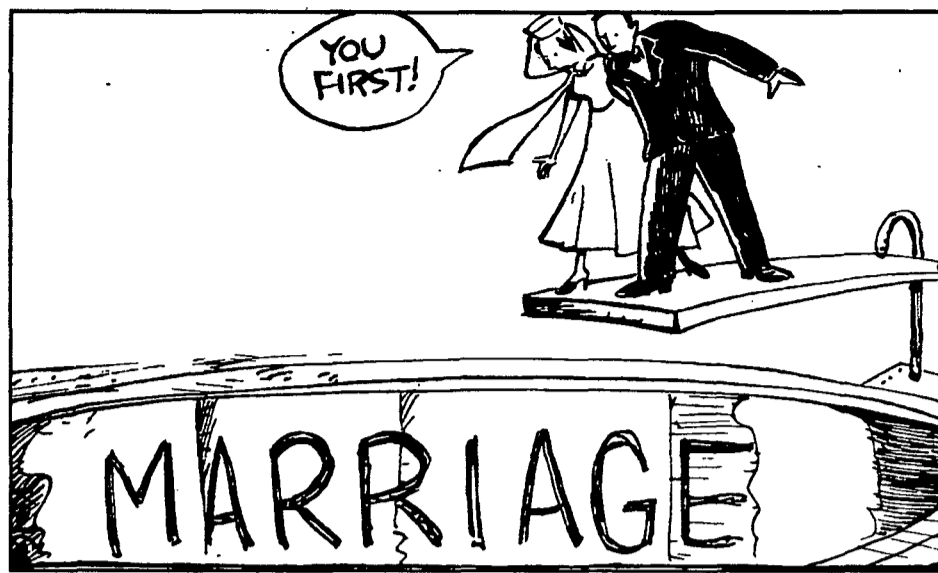
Many renovated churches and new ones don't have kneelers. In my opinion another disrespect for the Lord's presence. I believe that we should ALWAYS humble ourselves before the Lord and kneel unless physical problems prevent us during those parts of the Mass that kneeling is required.

Along these same lines, when did we last hear a homily on the true presence of the Lord in the Host or have a regular Holy Hour at least once a month? Suggestion boxes have been removed that used to be in church for those who felt they couldn't speak directly with those in charge of the particular parish about changes or prayer services.

Several years ago a priest had told me the Mass should be kept "simple." Simple? Or am I missing something? The Mass should be one of the most important events of the week. The coming together to celebrate Mass should be the highlight of one's week for Catholics.

I often wonder just how far some of these renovations and/or changes will go in the future for our church. I realize the shortage of priests is a valid issue but should our place of worship be altered to fit in to the "new age"? I also realize some of these renovations are needed to bring the particular church up to standards and they should be done, but much is not required and is a waste of the Church's resources.

Bill Shaw
Oakmount Road, Bloomfield



Belief slipping subtly away

To the editors:

May I respectfully submit another side to renovation.

A hallowed traditional Catholic act on entering the church is to genuflect, to reverently acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ, His actual Presence, truly, sacramentally, in the Tabernacle. We believe. It is the essence and heart of the Catholic faith.

We elders at St. Patrick's Church in Owego, New York, have grave concern as we are seeing this belief subtly, insidiously slipping away from our young people's faith. We have no Tabernacle in the church proper. Upon entering the church now, we are encouraged to bow to the altar — an empty gesture to an empty altar.

The following is a real life example of the questionable faith in which are our children are being reared. Recently, it was witnessed, several young boys who were visiting, out of curiosity, decided to skateboard through the aisles!!! They were invited by one of the boys who "belonged."

Kneelers in church is another hallowed Catholic tradition. The renovation removed the kneelers. Consequently, several

of our parishioners have constructed makeshift stool type kneelers which have been tucked under the pews here and there. My husband and I have traveled extensively through the United States, Canada and Poland. In all of the countless Catholic churches in which we were privileged to participate at Mass only one did not have kneelers. But also, it did not have pews. It is the church in Nowa Huta, Poland, built at a time of extreme shortages of building materials. The church itself is a manifestation of the will of the people resisting the oppressive godless Communist Regime.

Our Tabernacle's degrading is a gnawing insult to the spiritual sensitivities of this people. This fact and the lack of kneelers are two of the most antagonizing issues keeping this congregation in spiritual disrepair. After all these years we are still an ailing people. Ask any Priest who has been assigned here since the 1992 renovation.

Heaven help us!

Joanne Lepkowski
Ross Street
Owego

Use funds to end cycle of poverty

To the editors:

Page 3, the *Catholic Courier's* December 14 headline: "Frigid winter means busy shelters." What if Jesus comes back as one of the men in this picture — cold and hungry. What if Jesus comes back as a child of AIDS, being treated by Mother Teresa's nuns.

Would Jesus be proud that we are spending thousands of dollars to turn the inside of our churches around. I have been a member of both types of churches — the traditional setting and the new. No matter, it's the heart you worship with that matters. It matters not if we use gold or glass chal-

ices. It won't matter to Jesus.

Many old traditional churches in America and Europe are visited by tourists for their beauty. A beauty we choose to change and destroy.

It is not enough to just feed people in our soup kitchens. Let's be the generation that finds a way to break the cycle of poverty.

Catholics, please speak out on this issue. Let your voice be heard. Jesus' face is there for all of us to see. The *Courier* tells of the new churches. Now let's tell our side.

Eileen Burgen
Greenway Boulevard, Churchville

What are we doing to end the horror of abortion in diocese?

To the editors:

The Jubilee Year that we have just completed has often been referred to in terms of "a springtime" or a new dawning, which is as it should be. But in August Cardinal Lopez Trujillo stated in his address at the opening of the Year of the Family in Rome that "in reality this time appears instead to be like a prolonged cruel winter especially for many children in the world. It is the winter of crime because of the lack of respect for conceived human life, the crime of abortion."

I'm reminded by this reference of the Cardinal to the state of perpetual winter described in C.S Lewis' *Narnia Tales*. Winter persists in Narnia because evil reigns supreme. But evil is overcome by the sons and daughters of man there.

Christ has given us the ability to change that winter, that evil here. But overcoming evil, especially the evil of abortion, is not an armchair pastime. It's a life consuming, prayer focused way of living the culture of life.

Where are you and what are you doing

about the abortions that happen each day here in Rochester? Each Saturday, people pray in front of the Planned Parenthood and the Highland Hospital abortuaries. Could you be there? Letters to the editor need to be written that stress the sanctity of all human life and the horror of abortion. Our legislators need to be contacted so that they can sponsor pro-life bills and fund programs that are moral and life-giv-

ing. The Problem Pregnancy Help Center needs funds and volunteers. Masses can be offered either for an end of abortion or for a particular abortionist. The task needs each one of us and then only will the Jubilee have ushered in a time of hope for all, a springtime of life, and end to the abortion holocaust.

Barbara A. Fredericks
Birr Street, Rochester

Why no final celebration for Jubilee Year?

To the editors:

Why do we as a diocese have a problem with closing celebrations? After going through the diocesan Synod preparation and implementation for over five years, it closed with a whimper.

The Jubilee year ended the weekend of January 5 and 6. The Diocese of Syracuse made available to its parishes a closing ceremony. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated, "In order that the Eucharist of the closing of the Great

Jubilee may be uniquely and truly celebrated as the central act of closing the Jubilee year, it should take place in the cathedral."

These opportunities only happen once in a great while. Too bad we as a diocese do not take full advantage of them and make them a priority in our planning.

Father Leo Reinhardt
Church of the Immaculate
Conception
Ithaca