

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.

Adoration not equal to Eucharistic celebration

To the editors:

Several people have written recently about how deeply they treasure the true Body of Christ contained in our tabernacles. It is a treasure indeed. It is a great grace to the sick who receive it at a later time because they cannot attend a Sunday Liturgy. It is also a precious gift to those who enjoy praying before the tabernacle as part of their personal devotion. And if that were all the Eucharist is, then it would be enough, but it is not all. God's overflowing graciousness has provided a gift for us, which we call the Eucharist, which is so much more than what is contained in the tabernacle. Let me explain by using something that I learned while I attended the seminary. I learned that if we want to know what the Church believed, we should listen to the prayer of the Church. So, in this case, if we want to discover what we believe about the Eucharist then we can listen to a Eucharistic Prayer.

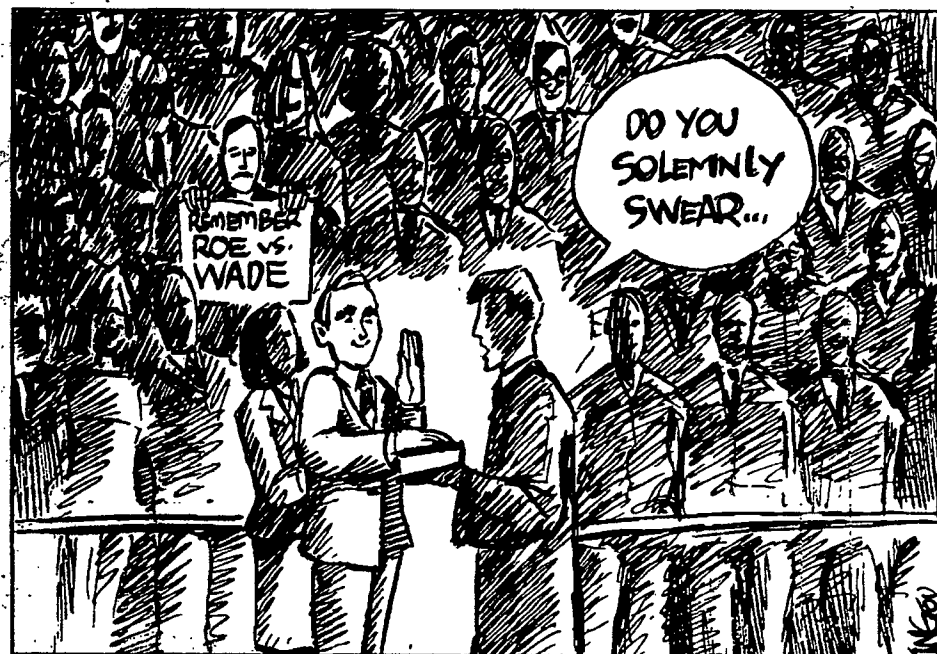
As I write this, I have in front of me a copy of Eucharistic Prayer III, one commonly used during Sunday Liturgies. This prayer certainly is about the real presence of Jesus. For example, it speaks of his body and blood. Also, in this prayer we ask God to "look upon your Church's offering (the bread and wine) and see the Victim (Jesus) whose death has reconciled us to yourself." Clearly we are praying that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus.

The real presence of Jesus is mentioned directly or in other words, about four times; I say "about" only because the exact number is not my point. It gets even better: worship or thanksgiving are mentioned five times; forgiveness of sins is mentioned three times; praying for unity, five times; invoking the Holy Spirit to transform the bread, wine or ourselves, four times; remembering the saving acts of God, five times; offering gifts (us to God or God to us), seven times; eternal life or the heavenly banquet, three times; sacrifice, five times; intercession for others, seven times; covenant, once; food or consuming food, six times.

I do not mean to imply that those things mentioned most often are therefore most important. What I am saying is that all these things are a part of what we mean when we speak of the Eucharist. When we celebrate the Eucharist at Mass we receive forgiveness for our sins, we become more united as the Body of Christ, we receive the real body and blood of Jesus, we give thanks, etc.

Praying before the tabernacle is a wonderful thing, but it is not the same thing as celebrating the Eucharist. The Eucharist as reserved in the tabernacle is not the center of our life as church. The center of our life as church is the celebration of the Eucharist, in all its overflowing richness.

Father Tim Niven
Parochial Vicar
St. Patrick Church, Owego



Save funding for the needy

To the editors:

The front-page article in the January 11 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, written by Rob Cullivan, was concerned with poverty in the United States in general and in the Diocese of Rochester in particular. It was truly an excellent explanation of the plight of the poor nationally and locally. As I read it, I was disturbed by the dire statistics contained in the story, among which was that given by the Rev. Peter W. Peters, the Chairman of the local chapter of the Interfaith Alliance. According to the Rev. Peters, "more than one out of four Rochesterians — twice the national average — are poor."

I find this to be a terrible situation, which is accompanied by a deep sense of helplessness on the part of those who are enmeshed in it. There is no way, short of actually experiencing the utter lack of hope that these people must feel, for me to even come close to understanding their frustrations. However, I do have a great deal of empathy for them, especially in light of the fact that while they suffer unimaginable deprivation, they must sit by and watch as hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent by Catholic parishes for unnecessary and costly church "renovations."

I would suggest that those church renovators who have a propensity to spend

other people's money for wider spaces and face-to-face "worship" should issue invitations to the area's poor to pay a visit to newly renovated churches. Perhaps the improved acoustics of these newer worship spaces will better resonate the growls of their empty stomachs as they view the handiwork of the renovators. Even worse, in the presence of the renovators' handiwork, they may be able to envision this total waste of money as, in the not-too-distant future, these renovated structures stand empty due to the decline of the priest population and the demographic changes which may take place.

If the renovators think that by spending vast sums of money to change churches into stark mausoleums the attendance of our young people will be increased, they are ignoring the fact that today's youth, while turned off by the failures of the past 30-odd years, are, more than ever, experiencing a universal social consciousness that is more acutely in tune with the sufferings of the poor, and for them to witness the waste of money on renovations while children go hungry can hardly inculcate in them a great desire to actively belong to a church which, on the surface, appears to be so indifferent to human needs.

George A. Goodwin Jr.
Laredo Drive, Rochester

Encourage lay vocations in church

To the editors:

On January 14, in a beautiful ceremony at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bishop Clark welcomed 20 men to candidacy as deacons for the Rochester diocese.

As I watched and listened, I couldn't help but feel a deep hurt for the wives of these men and for many women present who have been excluded from this ministry. In Church history there is a precedent for accepting women as deaconesses. In today's Church there are myriads of brilliant women, with advanced degrees in theological studies, and with temperaments suited to pastoral work. Some are powerful preachers, too! Why can't they be ordained as deacons, even if the Church has not yet agreed to permit them priesthood?

We are reading about young men being invited to retreats to discern whether or not they have a calling to priesthood, and we are asked to pray for more voca-

tions. That is wise. My thinking, however, is that we should also be calling for more men and women to consider careers in lay ministry — *paid* jobs, after obtaining the necessary theological degrees and training.

I should like to suggest that the *Courier* carry a lead article about such career opportunities through study at St. Bernard's Institute. The article could tell about some of their successful graduates and their great impact in the community. Play up the availability of generous help with tuition. Also, ask parishes to advertise these possibilities frequently in their Sunday bulletins.

We in the pews need all the help we can get! When you pray for vocations to priesthood and religious vocations, please pray for lay ministers as well!

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester

Priest shared important messages with flock

To the editors:

The Bishop writes (in last week's "Along the Way") that Father Edward Zimmer was a model priest. One way in which Father Zimmer excelled was the wisdom he packed into his homilies at daily Eucharist at St. Mary's of Auburn. The most memorable saying

of Father Zimmer that I frequently recall is "We take our broken lives and we make the most of them." Surely, Father Zimmer shared some fine thoughts with his people.

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