

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.

Letters focus on secondary devotion

To the editors:

The letters of Mr. Bill Shaw and Mrs. Joanne Lepkowski (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 18) seem to exemplify many of the objections to church renovation that have filled the opinion pages of the local press for some weeks now. They seem to be based on some misconceptions. First, they assume that references to the Eucharist as a "symbol" are denials of the Real Presence. I have always understood that the sacraments were sign or symbols that made present what they signified. As one theologian put it recently, "Religiously the word symbol says, at the very least, 'mysterious'; it does not, or need not, say 'unreal.'"

Secondly, the critics of renovation seem to assume that the purpose of the Mass is to provide an occupant for the tabernacle. They claim that those doing the renovations are attacking belief in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. I know many people who have been involved in some of the renovations. None of them questions the real presence. They

believe with the church that devotion to the Eucharistic Christ is good, desirable and pious, but it is SECONDARY. It cannot be the essential and primary focus of the Eucharist or it would be found in the ancient church, and it is not. The custom of reserving the Eucharist in the tabernacle for private prayer and devotion began in the Middle Ages and the tabernacle on the altar of sacrifice came even later. More importantly, read the Eucharistic prayers of the Mass; nowhere do they speak of adoration of the reserved Eucharist. They do focus on praise and thanksgiving for God's gifts, on the unity of the faithful gathered around the Eucharistic table, on the sacrificial offering of Christ, and the eating of the Eucharistic meal. Furthermore, the church is and always has been the House of God primarily because it is the place where church — the word means assembly of God's people — takes place. It is a church, not a temple.

Another misconception seems to be

that the signs of respect and piety we learned in our youth are the unchangeable ways that Catholics have always expressed their faith and devotion. Thus genuflecting and kneelers become touchstones of reverence and veneration, though some Christians, both today and in other times and cultures, have found standing equally as meaningful as a sign of reverence. Times change and external signs often change with them without lessening the integrity of the internal attitude they signify. This has been the experience of the church for two millennia. Finally, some seem to think that "simple" is the equivalent of unimportant. The Mass can be "simpler" without being one whit less the highlight of the week.

I can understand the pain and loss many may feel at the change of ways they have long loved, but I have less sympathy for their impugning the motives of those they disagree with.

John J. Dealy
 Creekside Drive, Rochester

Do renovations please Jesus?

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 chalices. 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

Invites writer to visit St. Andrew's 'sister'

To the editors:

In response to Bill Shaw's (letter) of Jan. 18:

My family attends St. Philip Neri Church — the sister church of St. Andrew's. We share a Pastor — Father Tim Horan.

Our Tabernacle is still in the center of our altar. We still have kneelers. Even though my significant other has a bad knee, he still kneels before the Lord. When you look around, almost everyone kneels, the young and the old!

Every week we hear the true Gospel of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Our homily reflects on the Word of God and how we can apply this to our daily lives.

We're not a rich church, but we are rich in the love of God.

Mr. Shaw, you're welcome to attend our services and see for yourself.

May the grace of God be with all of the churches. And may He protect their futures.

Marie Walters
 North Goodman Street, Rochester



Camp plays role in vocations

To the editors:

It was wonderful to see the article (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 11: "Is priesthood another hat?") on Rob Stevens and his process of discernment about a vocation to the priesthood. One factor in Rob's vocation as noted in the article was Family Camp at Camp Koinonia. The camp is one of the Diocese's greatest untapped treasures. Through the summers our family has spent there, we have seen the spiritual life of each family member grow and blossom and although we do not have any children yet with vocations to the religious life, they are all interested in social and service issues. Another important

note is that Deacon Joe Marcoux who will be ordained in June and Father Brian Cool also were very involved with Family Camp long before they entered religious life. It is an instant small Christian Community experience which would be a benefit to all families interested in spiritual growth. It would also be grand if more of our Diocese's priests would come out, preside at a Mass and share their vocation with the families there. Information about this summer's camp can be obtained by calling Sharon Griffiths at 716/235-6455.

Sharon Griffiths
 Genesee Park Boulevard, Rochester

Campaign needed to protect youth

To the editors:

Upon reading "Videos offer slim pickings," in the Thursday, Jan. 18, publication of the *Catholic Courier*, I think you touched on a very sensitive and key issue. We, as grandparents and parents would like to see a more detailed list of the videos that are congruent with the ideals we wish to impart. Our children, unfortunately, are bombarded with "trash movies" rated PG. I believe it might be very important for us to think about the issue of videos, form a committee, and take some action! I am a grandmother, and I can see a sometimes subtle, although extremely successful, movement

to usurp the parental family's influence and power and hand it to the filmmakers. Let's face it head on. We need to begin a crusade to bring this to the attention of parents, counselors, and teachers. The handwriting is on the wall. I am willing to do my part, yet I do believe we need to spearhead an all out protest, perhaps boycotting video stores, etc. There is power in numbers. There is no doubt in my mind that we need to think about this and move expeditiously to rescue our youth — our most valuable asset — from being robbed of their innocence and childhood.

Mary Prosser
 Little Brook Drive, Pittsford

E-mail your views to letters@catholiccourier.com