

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.

Preserve traditions for youths

To the editors:

This is in response to Father Tim Niven's seminary explanation of "Eucharist, which is so much more than what is contained in the Tabernacle."

Why even compare difference? Eucharist is what is contained in the Tabernacle. Anyone who is on their knees before the Tabernacle is adoring Jesus, the Bread of Life, the Sacrament, the Eucharist. This is not in any way to replace, or detract from, or overshadow, or undermine, or neglect, or lessen the importance of the awesome happening at the consecration and throughout the Eucharistic celebration.

If the liturgical ritual of Eucharistic celebration is "the center of our life as church," then it must go on beyond the half to one hour of time it takes to unfold. The Eucharist is then enthroned in the Tabernacle 24 hours a day, every day. The Tabernacle is not merely a cupboard to store the Host for future use. At any time of the day or night one can pray to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Believing, acknowledging, loving the Lord Jesus in His Sacramental Presence in the Tabernacle is, in fact, upholding, highlighting, exalting, prolonging, extending, and thoroughly appreciating the completeness of the Eucharistic Celebration. It is entering in and more profoundly living and breathing, steeped in the Eucharistic Mystery which has been celebrated here and is unfolding in a Mass someplace in the world.

This is the truth in which many, if not most, of us have been nourished and nurtured along our spiritual journey as Catholics. It has been a lifelong process assimilating Catholic teaching. For some of us this is more than a half century of ingrained belief and tradition. Obediently, we believed — we believe! Why should we be chided for a devotion that deepens our faith and prayer fervor and love of the Mass? Why should our young people not have access to the richness of the traditions which have been the hallmark of the Catholic Church?

Father Niven need not be overly concerned about adoration of the Blessed Sacrament getting out of hand here at St. Patrick's, Owego. There is no clear approach to the Tabernacle. There is a maze of obstacles regardless of which entry to church is used. Besides, people are too preoccupied coming and going through the busy Tabernacle area to even notice Jesus waits.

Joanne Lepkowski
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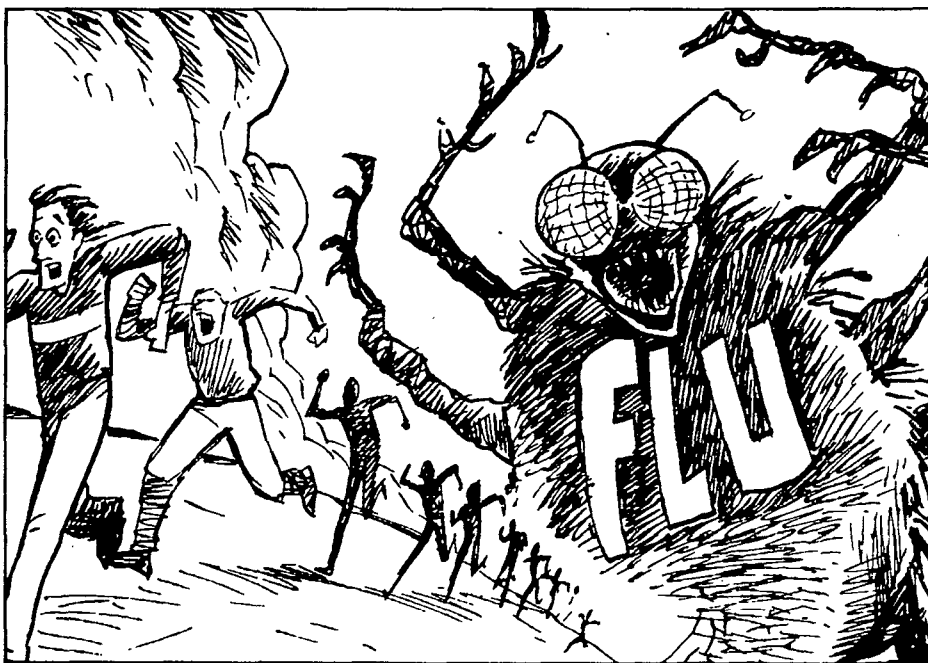
Appreciated photo coverage

To the editors:

Congratulations on the great pictures and information about the March for Life in Washington in your latest edition. That old saying "A picture is worth a thousand words" really is true in this case! It's so good of you to capture the spirit of that day.

Mary Rita Crowe
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Send your views to
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or mail to P.O. Box 24379,
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Priests should try adoration

To the editors:

Father Tim Niven's letter (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 25) comparing the Eucharistic celebration with Eucharistic adoration made several valid points. However, in some respects, I think he may be missing the point. Because of my great respect for the priesthood and all that it entails, I sometimes hesitate to be too critical of those who are ordained. Therefore, I would have him accept my comments with charity.

He is absolutely correct when he says that the Mass is the center of our life as Catholics. Nothing in this whole wide world is greater than the continuing and unbloody sacrifice of Christ on the cross. It is the most important liturgical act of the church. Yet, we cannot discount the importance of the Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle. In interpreting Father Niven's comments, I believe he seems to be saying that it is important, and yet it is not important. He calls the true Body of Christ contained in the tabernacle a "treasure," and a "great grace to the sick," and a "precious gift to those who enjoy praying before the tabernacle as part of their personal devotion."

Somehow, I feel that these are condescending phrases which lessen the impor-

tance of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. Furthermore, I believe Father makes it appear that the Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle is for private devotion only, and that it has no value other than that. In this respect, he would do well to recall the words of Pope Paul VI, who said, "Eucharistic adoration which extends the grace of the Eucharistic sacrifice is beneficial to the entire community of the Church. It impels us to cultivate a 'social' love by which we give preference to the common good, make our own the interests of the community, of the parish, of the Church, and extend our charity to the whole world."

Except for locking up the church at night, I wonder how many of our priests step back into the building after they have offered Mass in the morning. In this respect I truly believe that if more of our priests were to spend time visiting with Our Lord reserved in the tabernacle, these visits would further extend their daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass into the life of the people they serve, as well as into their own.

George A. Goodwin Jr.
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No place is good enough for God

To the editors:

Many years ago at a De La Salle Brothers School our daily prayers began "Let us remember we are always in the presence of God." That's an awesome thought! Right now it seems to trivialize discussions about where to place the tabernacle and how to behave in church.

We know that we are always in the presence of an omnipresent God. That should challenge all our thoughts and all our actions. It is so comforting to know that God loves us even when we don't appreciate his presence. So let's loosen up about where to place the tabernacle. No basilica, no ornate altar, no jeweled monstrance, is good enough or big enough to contain his presence. Let us strive to appreciate his omnipresence in our everyday experiences — in meeting the persons that annoy us as

well as those we love. All are his beloved.

A word now to those who are unhappy with physical changes inside our places of worship. Pastors and parish committees are trying to make churches more user friendly and apparently they are succeeding. The place to register your objection is at the parish council meeting. You have a right to express your opinions there.

We all know that change is inevitable. Thank God it is! I am well into life's twilight and would not want to return to some of the practices that make prayer life burdensome.

So let's all "loosen up," relax, enjoy what we have and hope that future changes will appeal to our children and grandchildren.

Thomas G. Shea
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Lord should be in his house at all times

To the editors:

I find it very difficult to understand why so many Catholic churches have to be renovated now. New paint, carpeting, speaker systems, etc. are normal maintenance problems. But why do so many have to also remove the Tabernacle to some remote area outside of the church proper?

I equate this to parents taking their children to Grandma and Grandpa's house. But when they get there the children ask, "Where are Grandma and Grandpa?" The parents reply, "Oh, they are out in the backyard. They can't come in until we

are ready to prepare the dinner. After dinner they will have to go back outside." I'm sure the children would be confused and ask, "But isn't this Grandma and Grandpa's house? Shouldn't they be allowed to stay in their own house?" As to how the parents would reply, I'm not sure. But possibly they would say, "Well, it's just the way we do things today."

The church is the Lord's house; let's be sure He is there anytime His children come to visit.

Ralph Bleier
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