

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.

Group aims to preserve our heritage

To the editors:

Regarding "Cathedral establishes renovation committee" (*Catholic Courier*, March 1), in all fairness it should be corrected that Michael Brennan is not the founder of the Sacred Heart Preservation Committee but a group called Domus Dei and the Real Presence. Michael is very devoted to promoting respect for the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and also addresses liturgical abuses in local houses of God.

The Sacred Heart Preservation Committee, as it is registered at the Monroe County Clerk's Office, is a group of mostly Catholics from throughout the Diocese, who love our beautiful Sacred Heart Cathedral and the One Who dwells in it. We believe that beautiful cathedrals need to be cherished and preserved; not dismantled and renovated.

We must not forget about our parents and grandparents whose generosity and financial sacrifices made Sacred Heart's spectacular interior a reality. What if our ancestors had decided to "gut out" the beautiful church interiors of Europe that are still standing centuries later? We most show reverence and respect for our Catholic identity and heritage, and not "hack apart" our sacred houses of God.

We also have serious questions about the removal of the Blessed Sacrament from the center of Sacred Heart. Why is Christ the King suddenly no longer worthy to remain most prominently enthroned in the main sanctuary of our Cathedral? Why is Almighty God no longer the central focus in the house built for Him? How does removing the Blessed Sacrament give honor and glory to God? As Catholics, are we ashamed of Our Savior, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament?

According to the Diocesan Building Commission Guidelines (*Catholic Courier*, Nov. 30, 2000), church renovations are expected to include "relocating statues and images outside the sanctuary." This would mean that the majestic image of the Sacred Heart would also be removed. One has to wonder why such images as the Sacred Heart of Jesus would suddenly be outdated and meaningless. It seems ironic that when Our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary in the 1600s, He was concerned about people's indifference towards Him and requested that special devotion be given to His Sacred Heart. It appears that our Cathedral named in His honor has forgotten this message.

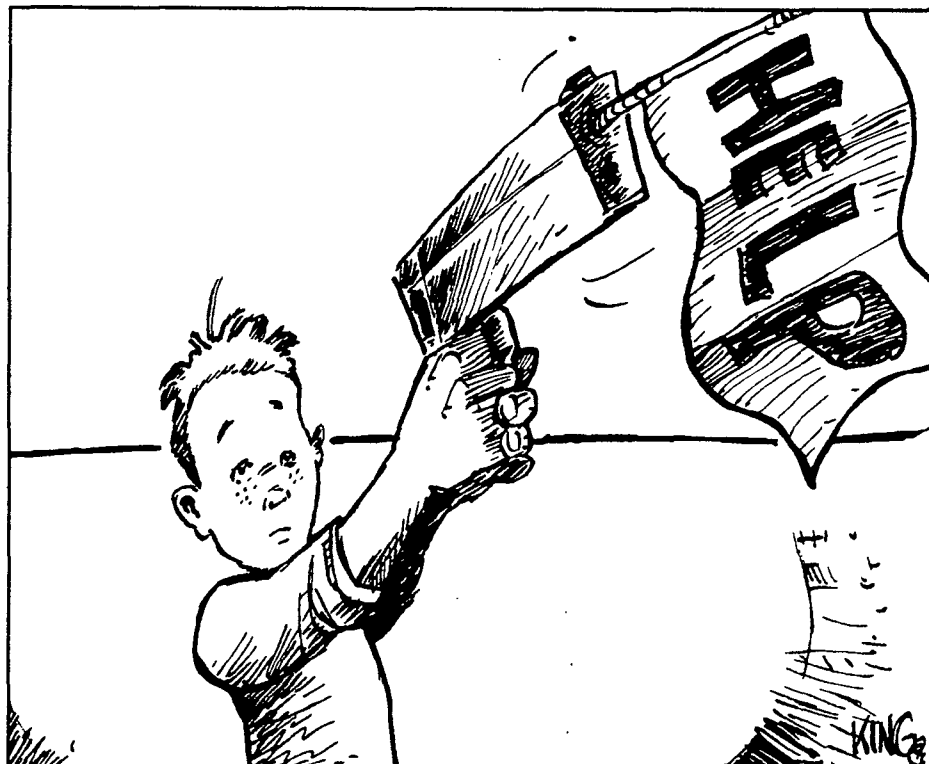
It was unfortunate Mike Latona had not mentioned in his article that on February 10 over 3000 signatures were presented to Sacred Heart Cathedral, opposing costly and needless dismantling to the church's interior, as well as the removal of the Blessed Sacrament. We sincerely hope and pray that Bishop Clark will listen to his people and keep the jackhammers out of Sacred Heart!

**Mary Melfi, member
Sacred Heart Preservation Committee**

EDITORS' NOTE: Mr. Brennan initially instructed his supporters to e-mail petitions to the bishop in care of the *Catholic Courier's* editor (without seeking permission to do so). All those we received came from Illinois, Texas and other places outside the Diocese of Rochester. The *Courier* has never received or seen a complete copy of the petition.

Send your views to

letters@catholiccourier.com



Use cameras for protection

To the editors:

I would like to add a further recommendation to others that were aired at a recent public hearing on nursing homes held in Rochester (*Catholic Courier*, Feb. 22: "Nursing homes fight cuts").

Some time ago a team of sociologists from the University of New Hampshire questioned 577 staff members in 31 nursing homes to study the extent of intentional abuse of nursing home residents by their caretakers. The respondents were promised anonymity.

The study revealed that 10 percent of direct care staff admitted to physically abusing residents; 40 percent acknowledged they had psychologically abused residents. There was little variation in abuse patterns from one nursing home to another. A subsequent federal study concluded with similar findings.

Legislation should be enacted to require the camera monitoring of all areas of every nursing home. Knowing that their actions may be under surveillance, care providers would be encouraged to

provide quality care at all times.

Mentally competent residents should have the right to waive camera monitoring of their rooms since they are capable of reporting abuse if it occurs. Privacy would not, however, be an issue for the more regressed residents who are the most likely targets of maltreatment. Because they require assistance in all activities of daily living, most nursing home residents have already lost privacy.

Legislation has been introduced in Maryland that would force nursing homes in that state to allow residents or their families to install video cameras in their rooms. The bill is sponsored by a legislator who witnessed an aide verbally abuse her mother — a nursing home resident. The bill is narrow in scope, but if enacted, would be a good start toward better protection of our most vulnerable citizens

Joel Freedman
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Canandaigua

Freedman is a member of Nursing Home Community Coalition of New York.

Article misleads the unsuspecting

To the editors:

Some people try to justify abortion by claiming that the result of conception, at least up to a certain number of days, cannot yet be considered a personal human life. But, in fact, "from the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor the mother it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth. It would never be made human if it were not human already" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 60).

The above, infallible statement was made by Pope John Paul II in 1995 in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. This no-nonsense positive assertion of the innate dignity of every human life flies in the face of your scandalous headline "Vatican experts debate when human life starts." The text of the Pope's encyclical goes on to say "Human life is sacred and inviolable at every moment of existence, including the initial phase which precedes birth."

"Throughout Christianity's two thousand year history, this same doctrine has been constantly taught by the Fathers of the church and by Her Pastors and Doctors. Even scientific and philosophical discussions about the precise moment of the infusion of the spiritual soul have never given rise to any hesitation about the moral condemnation of abortion" (*EV* 61).

The information given by the obviously misinformed "theologians" you chose to include in the stated article are contrary to Church teaching. One MAY NOT hold that human life begins at 21 or 40 days post conception. To teach this to the

uninformed laity who seek clarification from theologians on moral issues which present themselves in our time is the height of imprudence. It leads the unsuspecting into grievous sins which though due to misinformation they are not fully culpable, they will never the less harbor the guilt of for a lifetime.

Barbara A. Fredericks
Birch Street
Rochester

Thanks departing sister for assistance

To the editors:

Sister Sylvia Kircher (Sister Isaac Jogues) is a Marist missionary who spent 32 years of her life working with the natives in Papua, New Guinea, on the island of Bougainvillea. She was (later) given permission to take care of her aged mother. For 10 years she was companion and nurse. Not only that, she spent many hours taking care of the sick and elderly.

She has been an angel of mercy to many who had no one else. She was always there when the Lambs of Christ prayed the rosary outside Planned Parenthood for an end to abortion. Never too busy to help the needy. A real missionary.

She will be greatly missed when she returns to her Marist congregation. Thank you, Sister. God bless you.

Betty Pikuet
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Rochester