

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.

Cathedral should reflect holiness

To the editors:

Many laity in the diocese have expressed concern over proposed renovations to our Sacred Heart Cathedral. The concerns that I have seen expressed have been legitimate questions which I hope the diocese will take seriously. In thinking over this issue, there seems to be a few major areas that the diocese ought to address.

First off, no one disagrees with renovations that consist of adding a handicapped ramp, adding bathrooms, improving the sound system, replacing old wiring and improving the ventilation system. These types of changes are obviously not the area of contention. We would all be better served if in future articles and discussion of this project, the cathedral committee and others involved would separate the above improvements from the more controversial issues involved.

Secondly, it should be acknowledged that the cathedral committee and others involved in the proposed renovations have an obligation to "make the case" for what they are proposing. It isn't the other way around. Many concerned area Catholics believe the need for certain necessary improvements is being used as an excuse to add on unnecessary renovations. The laity of this diocese have a right to know in clear terms the reasoning behind any changes to the worship space of their cathedral. These possible changes include moving the tabernacle, moving the altar, changes to the "penance area," or other changes in "floor plans." When you propose to spend other people's money, it seems only right that you be clear about what you are going to do and why. If a clear answer to the question "why?" cannot be given, then the project itself needs to be questioned. This is especially true in the case of a cathedral church which is not an ordinary parish but in a way belongs to all the people of the diocese.

It has been disappointing to see how those protesting what may be unnecessary renovations to Sacred Heart have thus far been treated. The diocese claims to want all to be involved in the renovation process. If this is true, why haven't any of those against certain renovations been invited to join the cathedral committee? With no opposition voices, the cathedral committee will be simply a rubber stamp commission of the diocese rather than a real forum for discussion. When over 3,000 people sign a petition against what they see as unnecessary renovations, how can the diocese continue trying to give the impression that only a handful of people have reservations about what might be done to Sacred Heart?

Finally, with all due respect to liturgical consultant Father Richard Vosko, it is simply not honest of our diocesan leadership to not acknowledge that Father Vosko is a controversial figure. He has a particular vision of what a worship space should consist of and this vision in many ways goes against what is required by the liturgical norms of the Church. Looking at the controversies that have occurred in other dioceses only naturally raises the level of concern about the hiring of Father Vosko.

The greatest gift we can give our bishop and future generations is a beautiful yet preserved Sacred Heart Cathedral that fully reflects our Catholic heritage. Just as the beauty of such local churches as St. Michael's or Blessed Sacrament helps to "raise the mind and heart to God" so should the interior of our cathedral. Let's be smart and instead of removing confessionals, pews, altars and statues or moving around the tabernacle, let's make sure Sacred Heart continues in some way to reflect the beauty and holiness of the God we go there to worship.

Robert Pokalsky
 Five Mile Line Road
 Penfield



Critics' poor example may hinder evangelization work

To the editors:

"If that's a Catholic, I don't want to be one." How often I heard my non-Catholic adoptive father, who died in 1974 and was received into the Church only six months before his death, speak those words when he observed people he knew were Catholics behaving badly.

I wonder what he would say if he were around now. Last year it was the whining of the "Why can't Bishop Clark give us a dispensation from the Lenten abstinence rule?" brigade when St. Patrick's Day fell on a Friday. This at a time when millions of people around the world are either starving or under-nourished. As my Jewish husband said, "Why can't they have their corned beef on Thursday or Saturday?"

This year it's the "Why can't they leave the cathedral alone?" crowd. It seems to me that improvements such as better lighting, audio, and handicapped accessibility are acts of charity, not malice. Then there was the disgraceful behavior of some when circumstances forced the closing of St. Francis of Assisi parish. And on

and on.

I became a Catholic in December 1971 after 12 years of thought and study. When my adoptive father was received into the Church in March of 1974 Father Neil Miller, who had given Dad his instructions, said to me, "He's a good man. He has the faith. He was a Catholic long ago." In the years since, I have often pondered just what Father meant by that statement. Could it be that Dad had wanted to join the Church for a long time, but was hesitant to do so because of the poor example set by some of its members?

At the Last Supper Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Think about it. Could someone you know be thinking about joining the Church but is hesitating because of your poor example?

Shirley J. Schooler
 Meredith Avenue
 Rochester

Support nursing-home legislation

To the editors:

This letter is in response to the *Catholic Courier* article of Feb. 22, "Nursing homes fight cuts."

On Jan. 31, 2001, I attended the public hearing held in Rochester on the subject of Nursing Home Quality of Care. As my mother resided in a nursing home, I witnessed many of the problems that the Certified Nurse Aides described in their testimonies.

Several of them referred to a STAFFING CRISIS. Among the reasons for the crisis are "overwhelming workloads" and the need to cope with multiple and complex disorders. These CNAs — the lowest paid staff in such facilities — emphasized the need for "skilled training" in such things as pain detection.

One CNA mentioned that there were 175 residents and that with their staff numbers not being at the proper level, they "cannot even come close to providing proper care."

It is impossible for any human being to render the daily patient care to each resident that the CNAs are expected to provide, particularly, because of the STAFFING SHORTAGE. This is one of the major reasons why the CNAs cannot provide the best quality of care to residents.

For the CNAs it is most frustrating knowing that some of the residents receive care and others, "no care at all." The CNAs' outcry was quite obvious as we heard their testimonies.

At the hearing, nursing home administrators complained about negative publicity by the media, but the media is telling it like it is.

Increased staffing ratios, skilled training of CNAs and higher wages would make significant improvements in the quality of care.

Statistics show that about 44 percent of us will one day be residents of nursing homes. Nursing home issues affect all of us.

Please encourage your State Assembly members to endorse the following bills for Nursing Home Staffing:

A4171, introduced by Assembly member Richard N. Gottfried; S2185, introduced by Senator Kemp Hannon.

Mary J. Caruso
 Wilson Street, Corning

Tape offers message

To the editors:

There is a cassette tape, *Sweet Mystery of Love*, obtainable from Meet the Father Ministry, 363 Greenwood St., Millbury, MA 01527. Cost \$14.

I believe Joanne Lepkowski and George Goodwin, Jr. would find the message very enlightening for their concerns expressed about the Eucharist in the Feb. 15 *Catholic Courier*.

Helen Shultz
 Main Street
 Newfield