

# 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.

## Gov. Bush supported executions

### To the editors:

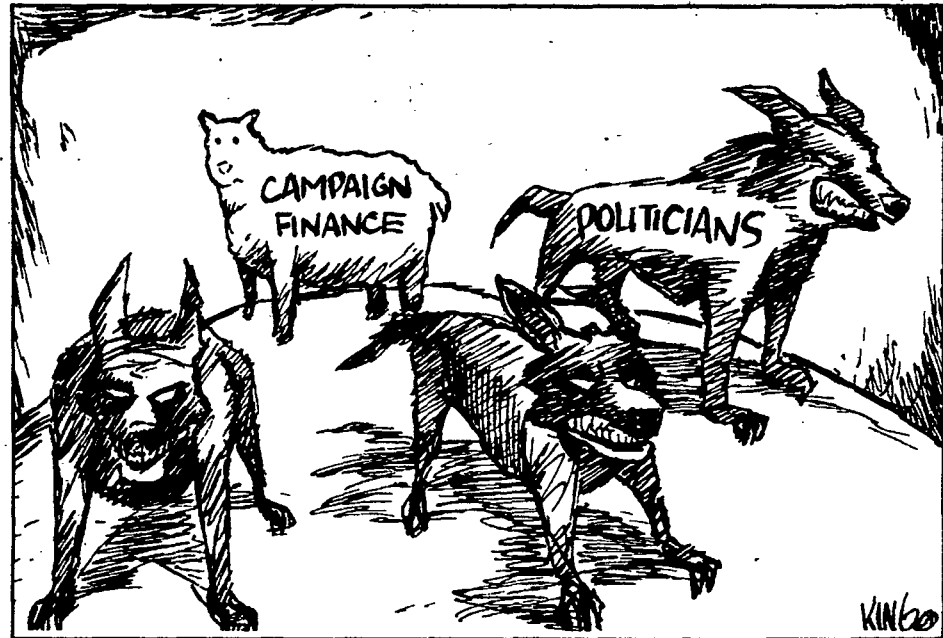
A letter in the March 15 issue by Shirley Schuhart stated that President Bush was only following Texas law when he presided over 152 executions. Then-Gov. Bush maintained that all of those executed had "full access to the courts" and all were guilty as charged.

A detailed study done by Equal Justice USA of four men executed during Bush's term found they were denied effective counsel and were almost assuredly innocent. One of the men was a juvenile when he allegedly committed the murder. His lawyer failed to interview two eyewitnesses who told police he wasn't the killer, as well as alibi witnesses. The police admitted the bullet did not come from the gun Graham possessed. His court-appointed attorney, who was later sanctioned five times and spent time in jail for contempt for mishandling criminal cases, had 12 clients sentenced to death. Besides Graham, the guilt of nine other men executed under Bush has been seriously questioned.

The mentally ill, the mentally retarded and juveniles are among those executed.

The Texas Senate passed a bill — supported by 73 percent of Texans — that would have banned the execution of the retarded. Bush spoke out against the bill which was then bottled up in an Assembly committee.

Gov. Bush also vetoed a bill, passed unanimously by both houses of the Repub-



lican-controlled legislature, that would have provided for public defender offices in each county — now in 3 of 254 — raising standards for defense attorneys and making state money available to pay for them. Judges, who now appoint political cronies as defense lawyers, opposed the bill. The bill would also have given a jailed defendant the right to a lawyer within 20 days. Lawyers appointed by judges have slept through large portions of trials, failed to file post-conviction petitions on time resulting in poor people being denied the fundamental right to counsel. The all-Republican Court of Criminal Appeals has upheld death sentences even obtained under these conditions.

Because previous Texas governors had accepted bribes for pardons, a law was passed allowing the governor to grant only a 30-day reprieve. The final decision on clemency rested with the 18-member parole board appointed by Bush. Only once

did Bush ask for a 30-day stay — in the case of Henry Lucas who wasn't even in the state when the murder was committed. Bush opposed a bill that would have required that the parole board hold public hearings and to discuss their decisions openly. Currently, board members don't meet as a group. They fax their decisions to one another and give no reasons for their decisions.

Gov. Bush when campaigning said he would, if elected, use the "bully pulpit" of the presidency to bring about changes. Why didn't he use it in Texas to repair some of the inequities of the justice system there instead of vetoing progressive measures?

Is it any wonder Europeans, who have abolished the death penalty, look upon President Bush as the "world champion executioner!"

Clare Regan  
Manor Hill Drive, Fairport

## End mandatory retirement

### To the editors:

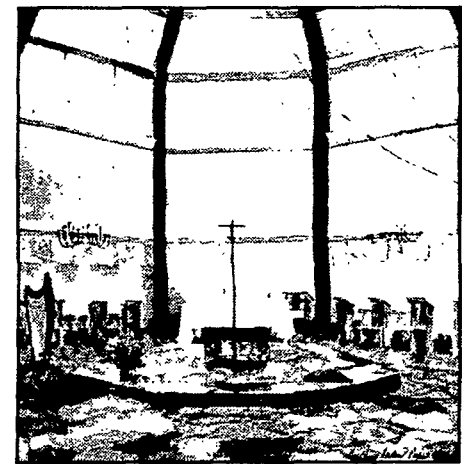
The recommendations from the recent studies on parish ministry reported in the March 22 *Courier* article on Diocesan Plans for Parish Leadership reports raises a serious question of priorities, in my mind. While it is helpful to see such information, it is somewhat puzzling to me that one of the recommendations offering priests under age 75, one-year positions as sacramental ministers seems to cut off further opportunity for those priests whose health and interests provide them with the ability to serve in "official" capacities beyond the official retirement age of 75.

The secular world has long since ended the mandatory retirement age, and many able people are still working well past that age in jobs that they still want and can handle. A priest has more than a job, he has a vocation and as we all know, he is a priest forever. Yes, there are those who have retired and are providing useful service "supplying" short term coverage throughout the Diocese. This is a critical need that we have to be sure. There are some, how-

ever, who believe that they can and are able to serve in official capacities beyond this age. Our Pope is an excellent example of this kind of committed service. Locally, a good example of this is Father Frederick Bush, a Holy priest and the pastor at Holy Spirit Church, who has been serving one extension and will be at the "mandatory" retirement age this year. He has expressed his willingness to continue serving his parish, especially in light of the needs of the Diocese.

I would hope that Bishop Clark and Father Conboy would reconsider this mandatory retirement guideline, especially in light of our local shortages, and provide priests like Father Bush with opportunities for continued one-year extensions. We have a dwindling number of priests who can and are willing to serve. Why make the problem worse? Are we being led toward Lay ministry as an alternative, and at the exclusion of ordained ministry? I keep wondering what, if anything, would be in God's personnel policies in Heaven?

David Coriale  
Conifer Cone Lane, Webster



File photo

## Kudos for monastery story

### To the editors:

I would like to comment on the beautiful article about Mount Saviour Monastery. It was presented to us in the March 8 *Catholic Courier* and written by G. Wayne Barr.

After visiting the monastery several times, I remember the peace I felt and my closeness to God.

Katherine C. Poulson  
Horseheads

## We must reverence each other as tabernacles

### To the editors:

Separating God from Life, it seems to me, is what some of us are tempted to do. But as soon as we make a division between God and humanity, when we are creating a split between God and work, between God and play, or family. When we are separating God from caring for the needy, politics, finances, the environment etc., we remove God from our daily lives and put God in a pious place where we can think pious thoughts and experience pious feeling.

When we lack the experience of God in the ordinary events of our everyday lives, we tend to get extremely rigid. When we don't notice God in the activities in our ordinary lives, we get dogmat-

ic. When we don't have the vision of the whole, we tend to get narrow minded. When we are not aware that God reveals himself to us in a 1,000 different ways, we get controlling about religion. Not having a sense of the whole makes us cling desperately to a small part — like the location of the tabernacles.

It is important to remember that after receiving the Eucharistic Bread and Wine we are the tabernacles, we are the container of the body and blood of Christ, we are the dwelling place of God, we are a sign of God's presence. We bow before the tabernacles, but do we bow before each other, or reverence one another with the same intensity and conviction? Christ is truly present in us and we

are in Christ.

When we discover that our lives are hidden in Christ, interwoven into the fabric of everyday living — which includes religion — God becomes central. There God converts us. Eucharist and life go together.

Then and only then can we expect and may demand as some people do, that the tabernacles in our churches be placed up-front and center stage. The central and honored position of the tabernacles are then a reflection and response of the central and honored place God has in our lives. Only then are the tabernacles credible signs of God's presence.

Deacon Klaus Schulz  
Red Apple Lane, Rochester