

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.

Renovate cathedral in tasteful manner

To the editors:

I am writing in response to the article in the May 3 issue of the *Catholic Courier* entitled "Top consultant assesses cathedral." I was interested to read that plans for a renovation of Sacred Heart Cathedral are in the process of being formed. After reading this article and especially after seeing the "before and after" photos of other such renovations, I felt compelled to voice my concern for this project.

With all due respect to the *Courier* staff, this article seemed to be more of a sales pitch than a way of honestly informing the laity. Despite its highly propagandistic tone, what really disturbed me was the relatively minute press given to the many people like myself at the end. Branded "detractors," what brief coverage they did receive was nothing but ridicule and even at one point, dismissal as not even worth listening to.

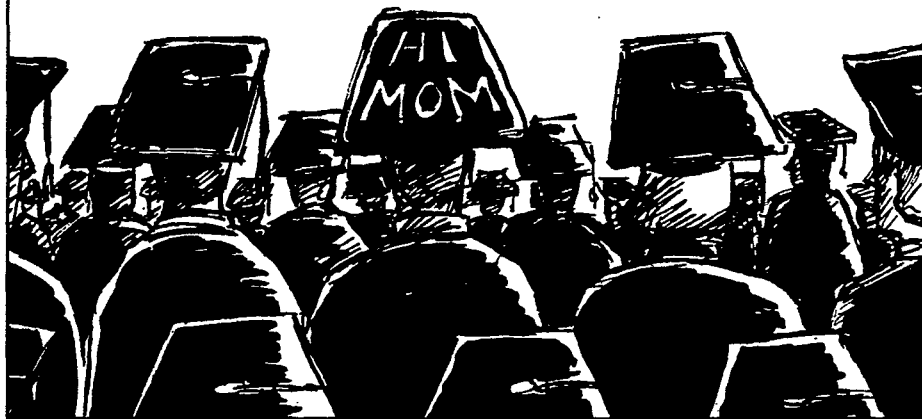
It is ironic then that these so-called "traditionalists" are the ones who are consistently able to back up their positions with solid citations of Vatican II, papal encyclicals, Church history, and numerous other official Church documents, all in their complete context. The "progressive" mindset, on the other hand, is fond of invoking the infamous "spirit of Vatican II," for the simple reason that in actuality the Second Vatican Council itself offers little to support the sweeping and often devastating changes inflicted upon Catholic church interiors for the past three decades or so. Contrary to popular belief, Vatican II desired to protect, albeit in a slightly modified fashion, the rich liturgical and artistic patrimony of our Church.

There are many issues involved in this highly complicated matter, far too numerous to address in this small space. However, I recommend two books to all those who care about their churches. The first and perhaps most practical is *The Renovation Manipulation* written by Michael S. Rose. This is actually a handbook and is something that no informed Catholic and certainly no pastor or parish council should be without. It is arranged in a simple, easy-to-read format, offering concrete citations that call the bluff of the "top consultants" point by point. The second is a more theoretical yet still very useful work by architect Steven Schloeder entitled *Architecture in Communion*. Both books are available from the Amazon.com website.

As a graduate architecture student and an art historian, I am very fortunate to belong to a parish in which both of our beautiful churches, aside from minor modifications for current liturgical needs, are relatively the same as they were the day they were built, and the laity's appreciation and involvement in the Mass is no less than in a modern and mundane "worship space." In fact, I would argue, it is enhanced all the more because of the otherworldly environment; it draws the spirit upward. Sacred Heart Cathedral is beautiful exactly the way it is. Whatever renovations are necessary, if any at all, should be done in a very subtle and tasteful manner.

Michael F. Tamara
West Eighteenth Street
Elmira Heights

CLASS OF 2001



Living received Eucharist is center of life as church

To the editors:

I would like to express my feelings on the Eucharist. When we receive the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, it is more than just an encounter with God for a few moments. I think that Jesus permeates our entire being and is with us long after we leave the church and perhaps until we are able to receive him again; hopefully, more often than just once a week. I think what he does for each of the recipients is as varied as the number of recipients themselves because each of us has different needs and they change from time to time.

We cannot limit God in any way because he is infinite in every way. When he walked the earth 2,000 years ago, nobody asked him to do this. It was his idea and we accept what he wants us to do. At the same time, he would never force himself on anyone at any time.

During the day I find myself thinking about God because I am aware of what he is doing for me as a result of receiving him in the Eucharist. In my way of thinking, receiving the Eucharist is something that just can't be beat.

When it comes to other forms of prayer I think it is very difficult to judge which is better than the other. All prayer is communicating with God and who but God alone knows how effective that prayer is. It certainly is a function of the mind-set of the person praying and probably other things that I know nothing about.

The Eucharist is in a class by itself. It is receiving the real body and blood of Christ into our own body. I think the center of our life as church is living what we received as Eucharist throughout our day.

James Foos
Route 434
Apalachin

Wonders what Catholics think when weighing tabernacle move

To the editors:

After reading the *Catholic Courier* this week, I can only wonder about what we Catholics are thinking when we deny our Lord His place in the center of our church.

Why is it so urgent that we "renovate" our churches by moving our Lord out of the sanctuary or at best into some out of the way spot in the sanctuary? Does this give our Lord all praise and all thanksgiving that is every moment His? If we had an audience with the Pope, would we ask him to sit off to one side so we could communicate with others before we ac-

knowledge him. If we were going to meet Queen Elizabeth, would we not give her a place of honor and a bow of recognition? How does this moving of the tabernacle containing the Living Presence — we believe — show reverence for our God: King of kings and Lord of lords?

Anytime we seek to honor and praise a human being, we make him or her the focus, the center of our attention. Should we do anything less for our Lord, our God with whom we hope to spend eternity?

Helen S. Harris
Evergreen Road
Brockport

Humor is key element in salvation

To the editors:

The picture of the four evangelists on the front page of the May 17 edition of the *Catholic Courier* recalled a question on a third-grade religion test at St. Ann's School in Hornell: "Who are the four evangelists?" A boy wrote: "Matthew Clark, Luke and John." The teacher forwarded the paper to the Pastoral Office. Bishop Clark responded with thanks for promoting him to evangelist!

A recent *Democrat and Chronicle* cartoon featured a boy kneeling next to his

bed praying: "I know who stepped in the wet cement, and you do. But do we have to talk about it?"

This reminds me of a comment made by our Holy Father when asked: "What is necessary for salvation?" After a moment's thought he replied: "A sense of humor and faith — and in that order."

Father Elmer Schmidt
Blossom Road
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: The photograph to which Father Schmidt refers was taken of the tabernacle at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Send your opinions to letters@catholiccourier.com or mail to PO Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624