

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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1150 Buffalo Road
P.O. Box 24379
Rochester, NY 14624
716/328-4340
800/600-3628 outside Rochester
http://www.catholiccourier.com
e-mail: info@catholiccourier.com

President

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager/Editor

Karen M. Franz
kfranz@catholiccourier.com

Editorial Department

Assistant Editor

Kathleen Schwar *Finger Lakes*
kschwar@catholiccourier.com

Staff Writers

Rob Cullivan *Genesee Valley*
rcullivan@catholiccourier.com
Mike Latona *Southern Tier*
mlatona@catholiccourier.com

Staff Photographer

Andrea A. Dixon
adixon@catholiccourier.com

Editorial Assistant

Louis Litzenberger
llitzenberger@catholiccourier.com

Photo Intern

Karin vonVoigtlander

Business Department

Office Manager

Mary DiPonzio
mdpionzio@catholiccourier.com

Administrative Assistant

Arlene S. Gall
agall@catholiccourier.com

Circulation Manager

Dopna Stubbings
dstubbings@catholiccourier.com

Graphics Department

Graphics Manager

Kim Parks
kparks@catholiccourier.com

Graphic Artist

Linda Jeanne Rivers
lrivers@catholiccourier.com

Advertising Department

Account Executives

Nancy Baeskens
nbaeskens@catholiccourier.com
Donald P. Wilson
dwilson@catholiccourier.com

Classified Advertising

Joyce Kluchko

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.

Disputes axiom that 'less is more'

To the editors:

Father Richard Vosko is quoted in the May 10 issue of the *Catholic Courier* as saying, "To quibble over things in buildings is not what Jesus called us to do." How insulting that statement is to those of us who do not want to see our beautiful churches pillaged and plundered in the name of liturgical reform! I respectfully suggest that Father Vosko and those advocating these major changes listen to those words themselves.

As a lifelong Catholic of liberal and reasonable persuasion I realize that Catholic workshop spaces and rituals have changed greatly over the centuries since the Last Supper. I also find the new worship spaces in newer churches very beautiful, but as one who appreciates antiques and historical architecture I find it extremely distressing to see and experience this movement to rip out all that is traditional.

Perhaps if earlier local remodelings had not been so radical, tasteless and totally lacking in any historical sensitivity, people would not be so "up in arms" now. While I love my new "Faith Community" it is shocking to my senses to enter a dear little New England Gothic style church and find that the pews, stations, lecterns, sanctuary lamp and other appointments are all light-colored Danish Modern style and an ugly leather expando door covered by three tri-colored shower curtains hangs where once a delicate and ornate altar stood.

I served on the Nativity (of the Blessed Virgin Mary) Parish Council during the renovation time. We listened to the insufferably arrogant architect tell us over and over that "less is more." The heavenly pointing spires of our gorgeous marble altar were replaced with a big rectangular board which was covered with something that looked like indoor-outdoor carpeting. Ornate gold candlesticks were replaced with some things which looked like sawed off three pound coffee cans mounted on folding chair parts sprayed putty color. At first a large crucifix hung in the empty arch above where the altar had been, then when that was deemed improper, a series of banners hung until alas they fell into disfavor also. Then for many years a totally ugly oriental rug — I referred to it as the "flying carpet" — hung there. Only in the last few years of Father Roy Kiggins' pastorate was a beautiful new crucifix commissioned and hung.

While it is regrettable that parishioners become rude in their protests against these renovations I think the frustrations of being absolutely powerless in these decisions forces desperation. We all know that hearings and committees are just smoke screens. Pastors dismiss committees which disagree with them and parish councils vote by consensus so that moderate members are out maneuvered by those for total change. The major sacrifices of the peoples who built our lovely churches will be reduced to rubble and we will be expected to foot the bill even though we would rather "take care of what Jesus called us to do."

M. Catherine White
Colby Street, Brockport

Seeks logical reason for tabernacle move

To the editors:

When the moving of the tabernacle arises, this question should be seriously deliberated.

What would Jesus "the silent prisoner of the tabernacle" want — to be in view of the general population or arbitrarily sentenced to solitary confinement, if lucky to receive an occasional visitor?

I would like one theologically logical reason how leaving the tabernacle in plain view detracts from the celebration of the Mass — not theories. Pax et bonum.

Shirley F. Schuhart
Whalen Road
Penfield



God doesn't dwell within structures formed by man

To the editors:

This is in response to all the question and debate over where the tabernacle should be placed in the church.

The reason John was the beloved apostle was because he had the word of God in his heart and he knew how to love the way God wishes for us to love. You won't find it in a tabernacle or where it's placed and you won't find it in any material building made by man.

You will find it in those who know how to love unconditionally.

A quote from the Acts of the Apostles (17:22-30), which by the way was one of the readings this week (May 23): *Then Paul stood up at the Areopagus and said:*

"You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made

by human hands, nor is he served by human hands because he needs anything. Rather it is he who gives to everyone life and breath and everything. He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' Since therefore we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divinity is like an image fashioned from gold, silver, or stone by human art and imagination. God has overlooked the times of ignorance, but now he demands that all people everywhere repent because he has established a day on which he will judge the world with justice through a man he has appointed and he has provided confirmation for all by raising him from the dead."

Kathy Dunning
Davis Road
Wayland

Hopes diocese will act promptly in response to Vatican instruction

To the editors:

A few years ago, in response to a largely exaggerated feminist sensitivity, a project was initiated throughout the diocese to revise all liturgical texts in accordance with some gender-neutral language principles recommended by the Diocesan Women's Commission. Consequently, a somewhat wholesale purging of male nouns and pronouns from the Scripture readings and the prayers at Mass was effected at most parishes. But, there was also a major overarching problem with all of this activity, and that was the fact that the Vatican would declare such efforts to be misguided and that all of the amended liturgical texts are now to be corrected.

With the issuance of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, this local experiment with so-called "inclusive language" will need to be essentially dismantled. Not easy will be the task of reversing course and re-educating the faithful as to why the "abandonment of (masculine) terms under pressure of criticism on ideological or other grounds is not always wise or necessary." Harder yet, might be an explanation as to why the local Church all too often finds itself in need of correction.

Be that as it may, there is certainly no valid reason why an authentic reform can-

not begin immediately. For example, only a Sacramentary and Lectionary approved by the Vatican is to be used at Mass. It is well-known that many parishes employ non-approved texts, particularly those resources produced by Liturgy Training Publications. In this regard, fidelity to Church directives will require that those liturgical texts be discarded at the earliest date.

With these new instructions from the Vatican, let's see if we can't avoid the usual foot-dragging response: "We will have to study it." After all, aren't we still studying the "Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priest?"

As Catholic faithful in communion with the Church, we must ensure that the liturgical celebration in Rochester is "in full harmony with the tradition of the Catholic Church down through the ages and throughout the world." Toward that end, let's not waste any time in getting out the red carpet to welcome with open arms "Son of Man," "fathers," "mankind," "men," "man," "he," "him," and all of the "brethren" back to an authentic liturgical celebration.

W. Randolph Smith
Rochester