

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.

Prays daily for greater respect for all people

To the editors:

On June 4 the secular press reported on members of a "Rainbow Sash Movement" who sought and received Holy Communion at Sacred Heart Cathedral Pentecost Sunday. Several persons objected saying the Cathedral (pastor), Father John Mulligan, should have denied them the sacrament because, in their words, the sash wearers were "known to be actively gay."

A vivid memory from early childhood still haunts me. A haughty monsignor stopped in the middle of his sermon and pointed to a man. "You," and he mentioned him by name, "are a despicable sinner and have no right to be here. Get out!" The poor man slunk out and I cried inwardly for him.

Another memory: On Solidarity Sunday, October 5, 1997, many social ministry groups, with their pastors' approval, handed out rainbow ribbons and Solidarity prayer cards at the front doors of their churches, "in solidarity with my lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered sisters and brothers." One woman said to me, "You are going straight to Hell!" I looked at her sadly and replied, "Please pray for me and I shall pray for you, and let God be our judge." With a cold glance at me, she turned on her heel and walked away.

One more true story: A dear friend, now deceased, a devout Methodist, told me she attended a special liturgy at Sacred Heart when Fulton Sheen was bishop. At Communion time she went forward and said to Bishop Sheen, "I'm not Catholic but I have a strong desire to receive." He smiled sweetly at her, gave her Holy Communion and said, "If you don't tell, I won't!"

One of my daily petitions, occasionally spoken aloud at Prayers of the Faithful, when we are permitted at weekday Masses, is "that we might have greater love and respect for the dignity of all persons, regardless of color, ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, economic or social status." Please pray with me and let us be merciful as God is merciful. Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester

Thankful for callings of deacons, lay people

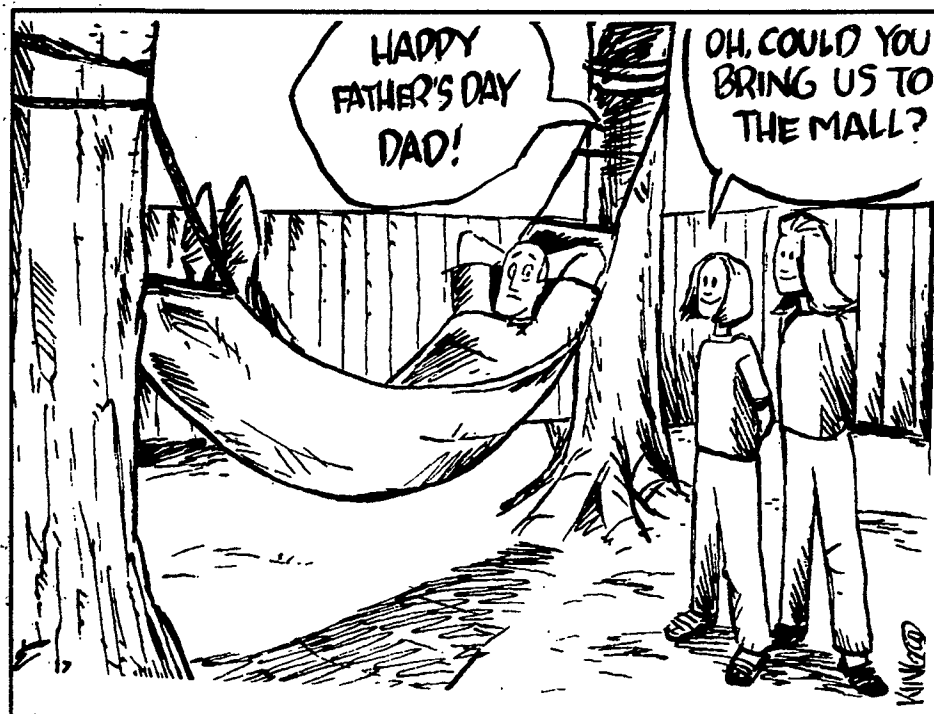
To the editors:

What a beautiful experience it was to be present at the ordination of six Deacons on June 9. How wonderful it was to experience this awesome presence of God in our Church and Diocese.

When the seemingly endless procession of Deacons went forward to greet with peace the newly ordained, I wanted to shout, "Thank you, Lord!" Isn't it obvious that God is answering prayers for vocations in this special way.

I believe, too, God is answering prayers for the ministry of the laity. As the Gospel of John 21:15-17 was read, followed by the Bishop's homily, I was much aware that Jesus is also asking me, among the laity, "Do you love me? Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep." For this call and for our response, let's all pray for each other.

Dorothy Frederick
South Clinton Avenue, Rochester



Try to see issue as God does

To the editors:

As longtime parishioners of Sacred Heart, my wife and I wish to comment on the debate about the renovation of the Cathedral. Partisans on both sides should remember that places of worship are human rather than divine institutions. They express our love for what we worship and it is only natural therefore that we would want them to be as perfect as we can make them. However, given that natural inclination, it is all too easy to confuse our point of view with God's. Jesus said, "For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20).

Although places of worship enable us to experience God's presence in a special way, God's glory shines through all of creation and churches should not distract us from seeing that more mundane, but in many ways greater, glory. When we see

God in the world around us, we are likely to be mindful of the divine more often. God's spirit informs and infuses creation through relationships. A building is a building.

What we have, we have from God. The question then becomes how can we best allocate our resources to advance God's spirit in the world? In other words, how much will the renovation cost, to do what, and is this the best use of those funds? As volunteers with a refugee resettlement program, my wife and I meet many people in our community who are struggling just to survive. We are forced by what we see to raise the question: Is making major changes to a building that is already structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing a good use of our resources?

Joe and Marti DeRoller
Gorsline Street, Rochester

Worried by reporters' experience

To the editors:

The report by EWTN on the latest Conference of the National Catholic Education Association revealed a great deal concerning the activities of this association of Catholic educators. In fact, it made me shudder to find out what takes place behind the scenes. The exclusion of accredited reporters from the seminar on sexuality makes me wonder what Catholic educators are trying to hide, and what's worse, what they plan on teaching our children. The reporters carried credentials from the Association that permitted them access to the seminar, and yet they were denied entry. The reporters caused no disturbance in the hall outside the session room. They quietly and politely informed the officials that they carried the proper credentials, and yet they were denied entry. The whole scene was very disturbing to view. In fact the threat by Association of

officials of calling the police on these accredited reporters was indeed very chilling and reminiscent of a police state mentality.

These are the people who are teaching our children in Catholic schools throughout the nation, and very possibly, here within our own diocese. The mere fact that the accredited reporters were refused admittance into this particular seminar indicates to me that parents who send their children to Catholic schools have much about which to be worried. Education born in secrecy will bear rotten fruit.

Moreover, writing as a retired public school teacher, if this had been a conference of public school educators, they would have been highly criticized for such a hidden agenda. This type of activity is hardly Catholic and deserves to be exposed.

George A. Goodwin Jr.
Laredo Drive, Rochester

No communion without admission of error

To the editors:

If Father McBrien was as well informed in the matter of history as he presumably is in theology, one might take his column of May 24 as a serious attempt to justify intercommunion with the Catholic Church.

Despite Anglican claims to the contrary, the Anglican Church began in the reign of Henry VIII in the 16th century when Henry broke with Rome and proclaimed himself head of the Church in England. The only bishop to oppose him openly was John Fisher, who was martyred as a consequence.

All other bishops supported Henry, in-

cluding the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. He and his allies were excommunicated, making complete the breach. Without the power to ordain, the Church deemed these heretical ordinations invalid.

Therefore, if the Anglicans sincerely wish for intercommunion, they should admit their errors and not expect the Catholic Church to bow to their erroneous assertions. To do so would be to dishonor and ignore the hundreds of faithful Catholics in England who gave their lives for the faith.

Joyce P. Szwagiel
Drummond Street, Auburn

Send your views to letters@catholiccourier.com or mail to P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624