

OPINIONS

Relaxing the rules is wrong-headed

Catholic Courier

©2001, Rochester Catholic Press Association.
 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*
 mladona@catholiccourier.com

Staff Photographer
 Andrea A. Dixon
 adixon@catholiccourier.com

Editorial Assistant
 Louis Litzenberger
 llitzenberger@catholiccourier.com

Interns
 Jeanne Kidera
 Karin vonVoigtlander

Business Department

Office Manager
 Mary DiPonzio
 mdiponzio@catholiccourier.com

Circulation Manager
 Donna Stubbings
 dstubbings@catholiccourier.com

Administrative Assistant
 Arlene S. Gall
 agall@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
 jkluchko@catholiccourier.com

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.

To the editors:

Father Richard McBrien's euphoric review of Eugene Kennedy's book dealing with sexuality and the Church vaguely suggests that if the Church changes its teachings on sexuality to let people follow their sexual impulses, all will be well. Now, of course, Father McBrien doesn't put it quite that baldly, but that's been the general message of dissenters for the last 32 years.

Let's see. If I masturbate, fornicate, commit adultery, engage in sodomitic behavior, or participate in prostitution or bestiality, the teaching Church tells me that I ought to feel guilty and that I ought to repent and to change my life. However, it has been established for over 30 years that the principles of dissent cannot say a firm "No" to any of these behaviors, all of which run contrary to God's law of self-giving love. No wonder dissent breeds uneasy and guilty consciences.

If I engage in unnatural forms of birth control within marriage, the Church continues to teach me (in *Humanae Vitae*, n.14) that I am engaging in behavior that is intrinsically dishonest. Pope John Paul II tells me that in the marriage act, "husband and wife are called to confirm in a responsible way the mutual gift of self which they have made to each other in the marriage covenant" (Letter to Families, n.12).

All of us Catholics know that when we married we took each other for better AND for worse. That means that the marriage act ought to be a renewal of the marriage covenant, for better AND for worse. Further, we can all see that the body language of contraceptive behavior says loudly and clearly, "I take you for better but definitely NOT for the imagined worse of possible pregnancy." Thus, contraception contradicts the original marriage covenant. I submit that such a built-in marital contraception is intrinsically dishonest.

Kennedy-McBrien point to the obvious: there is a problem with the way that human sexuality is being treated in much of the Church. However, their prescription is wrong-headed. They want the Catholic Church to adopt a Protestant ethic in which everyone is his or her own pope. This has been the de facto situation in much of the Church since the massive dissent from *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, and it doesn't work. It hasn't worked in the Protestant churches, almost all of which have "allowed" abortion after their "allowing" marital contraception.

It hasn't worked in the American culture where increasing numbers of children are brought up in homes without fathers or without the father who helped to give them life.

It hasn't worked in the Catholic Church with its horrible rates of cohabitation, divorce, annulments, and remarriages. And it has to be a prime cause of the "priest shortage" problem. After all, why should God call young men to study where his revelation about the demands of love will be systematically undermined?

Give me another 500 words, and I'll propose a positive solution.

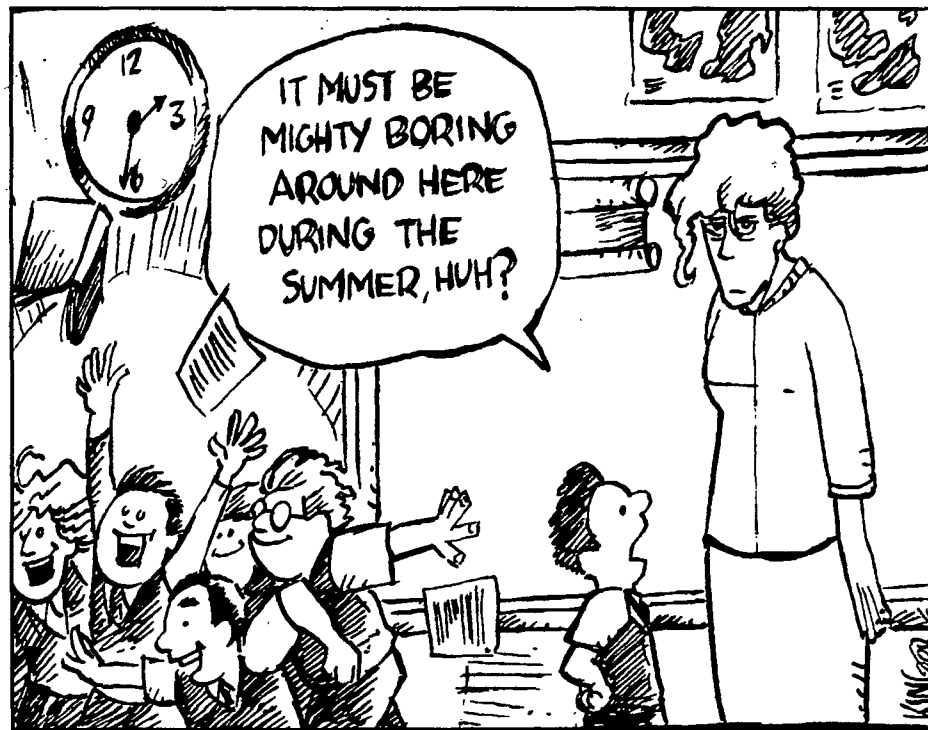
**John F. Kippley, co-founder
 The Couple to Couple League
 Cincinnati**

Disagrees regarding where God resides

To the editors:

Regarding the letter of June 7 by Kathy Dunning of Wayland, I disagree. Churches are God's home. The sanctuary lamp beside the tabernacle indicates consecrated hosts within. After we've received communion, the message at the end of Mass is, "Go out into the world with Jesus in your heart and proclaim His message."

**Rena B. Camblin
 Meadow Terrace
 Palmyra**



Ashamed nation killed killer

To the editors:

When Pope Pius XII proclaimed in 1950 the Assumption dogma, some theologians assumed that this belief, from the very early Christian centuries, was made official precisely at this time because it was only five years after the end of a war which had witnessed profound desecrations of the human body.

I thought of that on this day in which our whole nation, and a large part of the world, was focused on the execution of Timothy McVeigh. To strap down a helpless human being and kill him is a desecration of the human body created by God and made in God's image. I cannot imagine that Jesus would have said to us, "Well done!"

I am profoundly ashamed of my country for being in the company of China, Saudi Arabia and Iran on this issue rather than the nations of Western Europe and Amnesty International. But even beyond that, I am terribly troubled that more people in our Roman Catholic Church have not taken a very strong stand with our Pope and our American bishops who have been leading us to the realization that the human body is not to be mutilated under any circumstances.

I do not presume to judge those whose lives were horrifically changed by violence, whether the Holocaust or the Ok-

lahoma terrorist tragedy, when they speak out of their pain in wanting the guilty to die. Neither do I think that we should base public policy on such very human feelings. Dangerous people can be removed from society without possibility of parole. They should be studied in order to learn how to prevent other similar catastrophes.

Whatever else Timothy McVeigh was, he was a human being and a baptized Roman Catholic. His view of reality and his conscience were extraordinarily confused. We do not know what caused this. But this was a man whose own mother did not come to see him as he was about to die.

His crime was horrible. Should we pray for his soul? St. Therese of Lisieux prayed for the salvation of a triple murderer and whenever she got birthday money in the Carmel would have a Mass said for him. St. Catherine of Siena received a condemned man's head in her lap at his beheading. What would they advise?

Timothy McVeigh received the Last Rites of his church on the death gurney. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). That "us" includes even a mass murderer. Thanks be to God!

**Janet C. Reid
 Highland Avenue
 Rochester**

Rebuild church as well as cathedral

To the editors:

I am not opposed to remodeling the cathedral. A top priority should be to improve the acoustics so the word of God can be proclaimed properly. Jesus is the Word; Jesus is present in the word proclaimed and this is not an unreal presence.

I also believe in the "Real Presence," that the whole Christ and his work of salvation are present in the Eucharistic mystery celebrated in the Mass. This reality should have primacy over any private popular piety focused on adoration. Moving the tabernacle to a side altar is not disrespectful to the "Real Presence." It may even be more respectful to the sacred mystery of the Mass and private devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus said, "Take and eat, this is my body; take and drink, this is my blood." He never called us to adore the consecrated bread and wine. He did ask us to love one another and serve one another as he loved and served us. Yet, quiet time before the Blessed Sacrament can help us do just that.

More important than renovating the church is reconstructing a new way of be-

ing church. A voice from the crucifix asked Francis of Assisi to "rebuild my church, it is falling into ruin." Taking the voice literally Francis responded by begging for stones and materials to rebuild San Damiano and neighboring churches with his bare hands. Francis soon realized that the voice was actually calling him to model a new way of being church. He knew that the best criticism of the bad was the practice of the better. It's all about praxis. Francis did it by being the little poor man living among the poor.

We need to become a people of love, a people of the Beatitudes. Jean Vanier said, "Many people come to L'Arche to work among the poor. They stay connected when they discover they are the poor." Christ said, "blessed are the poor," not blessed are those who serve the poor. We meet Christ in the poor and he makes us aware of our own poverty. In the beautiful philosophy of Jean Vanier and L'Arche we must rebuild the church not one stone at a time but one heart at a time.

**Emmett Neary
 Bakerdale Road
 Rochester**