

# 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.

## Speak out for rights of infants

### To the editor:

Catholic hospitals deserve high praise for not allowing abortions and sterilizations on their premises, but they are remiss in allowing routine infant circumcisions — i.e. healthy foreskin amputations — behind the closed doors of their nurseries.

Under "Respect for Bodily Integrity," The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended amputations, mutilations, and sterilizations performed on innocent persons are against the moral law" (page 553). Circumcision fits the definition of an amputation, which means to cut off. It is done usually for social and cultural reasons, not medical ones. By contrast, a therapeutic circumcision is one done to treat a disease or pathology that is present.

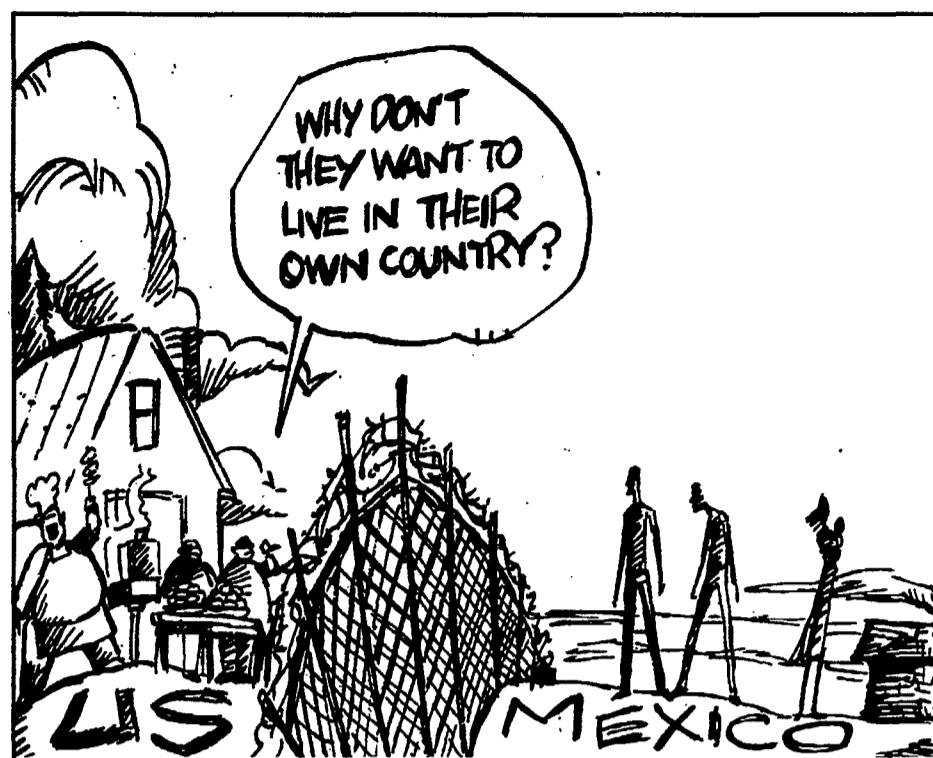
In 1999, after studying nearly 40 years of data on circumcision, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) stated that "these data are not sufficient to recommend routine neonatal circumcision." The American Medical Association concurred with this statement in 2000, and went on to call routine circumcision "non-therapeutic." In addition, the AAP stated that "a number of medical societies in the developed world have published statements that do not recommend routine circumcision of male newborns." These groups include the Canadian Pediatric Society, the Australian College of Paediatrics, the Australian Medical Association, the British Medical Association, the Australasian Association of Paediatric Surgeons, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the College of Pediatric Urologists.

Christians have no religious obligation to circumcise their children. My Catholic Bible states that circumcision is unnecessary, and it refers readers to Acts 15:1-12, Galatians 2:3-10, and Galatians 5:2-6.

Children of both sexes deserve to be loved and accepted the way God has created them. God does not make a mistake every time He creates a baby boy, one that doctors and parents have to correct. In Europe, Asia, South America, and Central America, circumcision is rarely performed. Worldwide, 85 percent of males are NOT circumcised. Only within the past century have American babies been subjected to routine circumcision. In recent years, the U.S. circumcision rate has fallen to below 60 percent as more parents have become educated about the health fallacy of routine circumcision. Nevertheless, the practice still persists, just as female genital mutilation persists in Africa, due to social custom and ignorance.

Some people may believe that because Jesus, who was Jewish, was circumcised, that they too should circumcise their children. They need to remember that Jesus was also crucified. Jesus came to bring a New Covenant of Love, one of loving your neighbor as yourself. Loving a child does not mean strapping him to a board and then painfully cutting off part of his body for social or cultural reasons. That is a very violent way to welcome a child into this world, and not a very loving act. It is time for Catholic hospitals to stop mutilating newborns on their premises, even if it means a loss of income. It is also time for the U.S. Catholic Bishops to speak out for the rights of innocent children to their own intact bodies, whether they be infant males in the United States or young females in Africa.

Petrina Fadel  
Sears Road, Groton



## Infers beliefs of 'somebody' from story on environment

### To the editor:

As an avid reader of the *Catholic Courier*, I'm concerned on how you present/slant your stories and the conclusions that they present. For example, in the article "Faithful keep watch over nature" (July 19) you slant your story — pictures of snowmobilers — on the side of environmentalists. By the way what's wrong with snowmobiling? Global warming is a term that the "far out" environmentalists use to scare people. There are just as many studies showing we are not entering a global warming phase. Anyway, if you recall, the earth has been through many Ice Ages in the past before we had any significant amount of people on earth. You are aware that mankind contributes about 5 percent of the pollutants a year.

What's wrong with tapping Alaska's oil reserves. We have the technology to keep the drill sites clean. How about nuclear energy? It's clean and is safe contrary to what certain groups say. Do I think that fossils fuels are the final answer, of course not. But mankind has entered many ages, copper, iron, oil and who knows what's coming up on the horizon, but my faith is knowing that man will come up with solutions.

You do realize that those who espouse extreme environmentalism, normally are the same group that support abortion, Artificial Birth control, euthanasia and other anti-Catholic causes. Therefore from the articles that have been published over the years I have concluded that:

First: Someone on the staff feels guilty about living in a wealthy country. We are

also the most generous.

Second: Someone on the staff believes that greed is evil but envy is OK.

Third: Someone on the staff believes in letting government programs do the charity work by taxing the rich, which by the way is the most inefficient way to help the poor. I'd bet that most charitable organization's administrative costs runs around 11 percent of every dollar taken in. Government spends around 71 percent to do the same job that churches do. Not an effect use of our tax dollar.

Fourth: Someone on the staff believes that all rich are greedy and all poor people are saints. We would have to define rich though.

Fifth: This publication cares more about non-Catholic issues than serving as a tool to help both the faithful and all those lost sheep who are really in need for spiritual guidance. You ought to look around and talk with real people. We need more than the preaching to the choir attitude! What good does it do to win nation recognition award if it fails in the important areas.

Sixth: Someone on your staff believes that Spanish should be the second language of this country and therefore slight all the Poles, Germans, Italians etc. who came to our shores, work to attain their goals and became Americans.

Seventh: Someone likes Father Shamon's articles. So do I!

No offense meant to anyone. Peace!

Jerry Misik  
Johnson Road  
Palmyra

## Column trivialized commandments

### To the editor:

Regarding the July 19 column (by Sister Patricia Schoelles, SSJ) on "Rules:" It's not hard to understand why Catholics have drifted away from the church when one reads the trite personalized essay on the role of rules as written by a "Religious." The message is wishy-washy and the Ten Commandments are trivialized.

The football example for higher health care costs is ridiculous, especial-

ly when compared to today's social diseases, AIDS, abortions. One can only wonder if we will be better off with no Catholic Church rather than the ambivalent treatment of God's laws as mere guidelines for good social interaction.

In the future please spare your readers from this type of trivial personalized psycho-babble; better to leave the space in the paper vacant.

D. M. Davies  
Fairport

## Adds her family's thanks for minister's aid

### To the editors:

I wholeheartedly agree with Len Schmitt's letter of July 12 concerning Deni Mack, our past pastoral assistant at St. Anne's, Palmyra and St. Gregory's, Marion.

Our family personally received much

of Deni's caring and compassionate attention. She is a gracious, lovely, spiritual woman. We do miss her and wish her Godspeed.

Rena B. Camblin  
Meadow Drive  
Palmyra