

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.



I FEAR NO EVIL
 FOR YOU ARE
 AT MY SIDE.

PSALM 23

Christians are called to higher road

The following essay is the text of a message sent Sept. 15 by Father Edward Palumbos, pastor of Fairport's Church of the Assumption. Father Palumbos sends such messages via e-mail each week to parishioners and friends, and he kindly gave us permission to include this reflection in this week's *Catholic Courier*.

Why would our Good and Gracious God, who loves us all with a love unimaginable, allow such a horrible thing to happen to us this week? This seems to be a question many people are asking of each other and themselves these days. It is a natural response to the disaster that has befallen our nation this week, but it is only the first response.

In our powerlessness and inability to comprehend the magnitude of evil that has brought this about, we search within ourselves for answers. We look for someone to blame, and we want to strike back and with our full strength. We are hurt and hurting — all of us. Oh, God come to our

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assistance!

"Make haste to help us!" says the Psalmist. I am filled with fear and foreboding as I write these words because I know our response — a legitimate one (we are allowed and expected to defend ourselves against evil) — will be mighty and swift.

I hope that we can be precise and not simply return evil for evil. I hope that the God of all compassion will reign in our hearts and those of our leaders. I hope that we will do justice and leave the rest to our God who says in the Scriptures, "Vengeance is mine!" (not ours).

Why did God allow such a thing to happen to us this week? The answer is this: God has blessed us all with many gifts. Perhaps, chief among these is the gift of FREE

WILL. God has placed before us a choice — good or evil. But in God's great love, we are given the free will to choose life.

On Tuesday, several people chose to destroy the lives of thousands of our brothers and sisters to make a point. Now it is our time to choose. How will we use our God-given freedom? Will we respond with hatred and acrid revenge, or with justice and compassion?

It was chilling to see news film of young Palestinian children waving flags and dancing in the streets celebrating "victory" Tuesday. Let those images not be replaced by that of American children doing the same in response to a retaliative strike against whatever country may be harboring the masterminds. As Christians we are called to a higher road: mercy, compassion, forgiveness and love of enemies. May this mindfulness thus balance the scales for us against the very human desire for revenge in the names of the thousands of victims here.

Deportation plan un-Christian and absurd

To the editors:

Nothing's more infuriating than reading letters like Mr. Scoville's in the *Courier* (Aug. 30: "Deport all illegals from U.S."). His attitude is un-Christian and absurd. The reasons:

Many illegals' presence is fostered by American industry taking advantage of the situation, i.e. poverty. These employers are unable to find American workers because of social programs for the poor. Afro-Americans formerly made up the bulk of migrant workers. Today's programs encourage their remaining in an

area because of medical and social benefits.

There are methods for "legalizing" migrant and illegal immigrants by giving them employment visas similar to those given other immigrants. They could renew if, and repeat if, they found an employer willing to hire them. Any social programs would be at the option of local governments depending upon critical need. However, it's doubtful Presidents Bush or Vicente (Fox) would have the wherewithal to develop these programs. The "guts" aren't there!

One wonders what Mr. Scoville's attitude is toward rural poverty. It isn't hidden; it's ignored, eyes closed. Perhaps his attitude, like many other more affluent people, is if the poor got a job their lives would change. Nothing is further from the truth since our peer-oriented society precludes poor children receiving proper educative training or being ostracized by classmates to the point of quitting school which exacerbates the problem. Something quite simple as a running car is a luxury helping them find employment. Frequently the Marts promise poor 40 hour weeks and then do not honor their word, reducing work hours to where it's not feasible to work!

Would Mr. Scoville and his believers prefer the Mexicans become guerrillas and raid the Southwest for food and money. Many movements are based on the promise to pick up a gun and your family will be fed. Instead, they look for work, like our own poor, with pride, refusing hand-outs unless they are desperate. And send money home besides.

The bottom line is who will harvest and provide our food if all illegals are deported, or staff emergency rooms, cabs, computer programmers. Think about it, they are all God's children and deserve a chance.

Robert Landschoot
 Meadow Lane
 Pine City

Mercy sisters in Chile send thanks

To the editors:

To the People of the Diocese of Rochester: *Muchisimas gracias!* Many, many thanks to all of you, who because of your generosity, we the Sisters of Mercy in Chile, can continue being Mercy to God's poor. We are deeply grateful to all the people of the Diocese of Rochester for their contribution to the Diocesan Mission Collection that occurred on May 20.

We are 10 Sisters, five from Rochester and five Chilean Sisters of Mercy. Our ministries include pastoral ministry and catechesis where priestly presence is minimal; meeting basic health needs of the very poor, such as changing bandages, giving injections, care of feet and accompanying

the sick in their last moments; being present to persons with HIV, helping them find dignity, accompanying them in their darkest moments; sheltering young girls so they can continue their studies and giving them guidance as needed; being present to whoever comes to the door needing food or a welcoming ear.

Since we work with those who need our help most we do not earn a salary and are dependent on generous people like yourselves. The mission of the Church in developing countries has always been a priority of the Church of Rochester. We are indeed grateful! Be assured of our prayers.

Sister Theresa Rutty
 Sisters of Mercy in Chile