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### **Catholic** Courier

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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 Ilitzenberger@catholiccourier.com

Interns 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

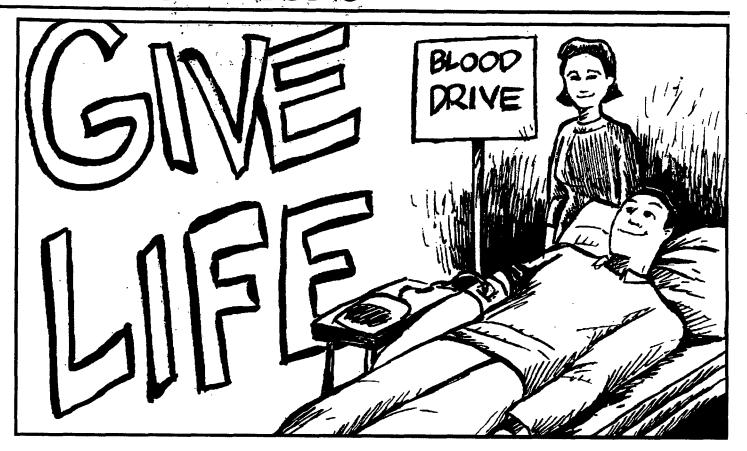
Account Executives Nancy Baeskens nbaeskens@catholiccourier.com

Donald P. Wilson dwilson@catholiccourier.com

Classified Advertising Joyce Kluchko jkluchko@catholiccourier.com

#### **Letters Policy**

The Catholic Courier wishes to provide space for readers



# Saint developed theory to limit war

#### To the editors:

I disagree strongly with George Weigel's column calling for revising and using the Just War Theory (Sept. 20). It is one thing to bring those responsible for acts of terror to justice, so they can witness the terrible suffering they have caused and be prevented from harming anyone again. It is another thing to call for a just war.

The Just War Theory was never taught by Jesus who in fact taught a non-violent love of one's enemies. There is no appearance of the Just War Theory in all of the New Testament. In fact this theory does not appear in Christianity until over 300 years after Christ. Christians in that era, who were closest to Christ, did not justify violence or participate in war because they saw it incompatible with Christ's life and His teaching. The Just War Theory is not a dogma of the church. No Catholic has to believe in it to be in full communion with the church.

St. Augustine – after St. Ambrose – in developing the Just War tradition *never* said there could be a just war, rather he stated *if* Christians were ever to participate in a war these standards would have to be strictly and completely followed. The strong moral presumption was always against war and in favor of peace. It is quite the opposite of what our sad history has shown.

If there ever were to be a just war, the seven conditions for the just war had to each be rigorously upheld. For example, one of the requirements was that lives of innocent civilians were never to be taken directly REGARDLESS of the reason for doing so. If one targeted non-combatants for any reason the war was unjust. There were 52 million people killed during World War II, 48 percent of those killed were civilians. In fact in the last 30 years over 70 percent of those killed in wars and conflict have been non-combatants. The tragedy of September 11 continues this awful pattern. No Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox hierarchy have ever declared one of the wars of its own nation unjust for this reason - or any of the other conditions – while the war is going on.

If the Just War Theory has ever been applied at all, it has been selectively applied to justify one's own position. This is why no nation has ever prepared its military strategy on the basis of these rigorous standards, which would be seen as an unnecessary burden rather than a moral guide. They simply have ignored them. St. Augustine developed the THEORY to limit Christian participation in war, yet this is continually used to justify the violence of war. If one was to follow all these standards completely and strictly, you would end up with the conclusion that a just war is impossible.

The idea of a just war is an illusion that has seduced and lured Christians to try to appropriate a divine approval – God is on our side rather than God is God for all nations and people – that is clearly contrary to the life and teachings of Jesus. It has allowed Christians to arguably be the single largest destroyer of life in wars in the last 1,700 years.

The increasing use of violence creates an insensitivity to the dignity of life and impairs the ability of even those who still try to apply the Just War Theory the way St. Augustine intended it. Justified war is merely a way to perpetuate the cycle of violence that moves us further and further from the non-violent way Jesus lived and taught. As Martin Luther King, a follower of Jesus, stated: "The choice is no longer between violence and non-violence but between non-violence and annihilation."

> Father Jim Hewes St. John/St. Patrick Church Clyde/Savannah

# We must be powerful nation – under God

#### To the editors:

spond.

We are "one nation under God." God says "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who We are one nation that needs to turn back to God.

God says "Love your enemies" (Luke 6:27). "Be merciful just as your Father is

what our all powerful God says. "God is love," the Prince of Peace! There will be peace in our world when we love one another as God loves us. All things are pos-

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. curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:29).

We are one nation uncertain how to re-

God says "Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you ... and if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same" (Luke 6:32-34).

We are one nation that has been brought to our knees.

God says to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Mt 6:12) "Forgive and you shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). "Forgive 70 times 7 times" (Mt 18:22).

We are one nation in need of healing. War does not heal.

God heals. "And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed and he spoke plainly" (Mark 7:35). "...His sight was restored and he could see everything distinctly" (Mk 8:24). "Immediately her bleeding stopped" (Luke 8:44). merciful (Luke 6:36). then your reward will be great ..." (Luke 6:35). We are one great nation. We will show

our greatness, we will show our strength, we will show our power only by doing sible with God. We are one great, strong, and powerful nation – under God! Patricia E. Baloga

Hidden Wood Drive
Rochester

## Thanks writer for pointing out letter's 'bigoted' underpinnings

. . . . . .

#### To the editors:

A big pat on the back to Mr. Landschoot ("Deportation plan un-Christian and absurd," Sept. 20) for picking up on the bigoted and uncharitable remarks in Mr. Scoville's letter of Aug. 30 ("Deport all illegals from U.S.").

Unless Mr. Scoville descends from Native Americans his ancestors came here as immigrants, perhaps without passports nor visas, be it on the Mayflower or through Ellis Island and such. This is a nation of immigrants and that may be the key to its greatness. Is Mr. Scoville willing to give up fruits and vegetables from his diet? His fellow U.S. citizens are not willing to work for such puny salaries and miserable working conditions. Without those willing "illegal" hands, fruit and vegetable growers would go out of business causing large economy repercussions.

I believe the U.S. government is trying to work on a solution to this problem that would be fair and just for both sides. I'm praying it will succeed.

#### C.E. Bidwell

#### falls Road, Trumansburg