

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.

We should battle evil with love

To the editors:

After reading Father Palumbos' exhortation to mercy, forgiveness, compassion and love of enemies (guest editorial, *Catholic Courier*, Sept. 20: "Christians are called to higher road"), I was puzzled as to how we might do this if we are also allowed, according to American constitutional practice along with an adherence to the just war theory — which I personally think is outdated and ineffective with the nuclear age and weaponry — to inflict violence, suffering and death on these enemies we are supposed to love and forgive? Self-defense is not the same as attacking another country or group of people, evildoers though they may be.

Christ also told us not to resist the evil one (Mt 6:39). Shocking as that may be, it makes sense on one level. In this particular conflict, there are strong feelings of loss, grief, anger, revenge, pride and retaliation that seems to be a thrust to war, a war which we may not think as a holy war — although bin Laden has supposedly mentioned this, and some of our country has responded in kind, displaying flags and decals that say God Bless America — yet has all the markings of one. Especially when we seem to think God is on one side of a conflict.

What is tragic to me in the past attack and possible retaliation is, as Thomas Keating, OCSO, said in a homily on the eve of our last Mideast conflict in 1991, that "violence, war and torture are not just injuring people, they are tearing God to pieces. God is total solidarity with the oppressed, the afflicted, the suffering and the poor. Such is his revelation in the Old and New Testaments, and it is epitomized in Jesus' teaching and example. That is why violence is so terrible and it is not just we who are involved; God is totally involved with people and their suffering. That is why even if there is some just reason for violent self-defense, it never changes the fact that it is God who is dying, so to speak, in the victims of the violence; God who is torn to pieces; God, who through identification with creation, is suffering in them."

This quote helped me realize that God invites us to go beyond ourselves, our country, our religion, our ethnicity, to where we see ourselves as a universal human family. Christ's death and resurrection is for all, not simply American Roman Catholics. We are, all of us, the body of Christ, the body of God. When we hurt, God hurts. And when we hurt others, God still hurts.

As for the question and challenge of not resisting evil, I offer this. Christ did not resist evil, and through his suffering and death our world, our universe is redeemed. I think he's still waiting for us to join him on the cross to learn suffering and death instead of inflicting it upon others. I think that's one way we defeat evil; by loving it, by selfless acts of love, as Jesus did.

Tom Agness
Reddick Lane
Rochester

Does Connecticut hold key to vocations?

To the editors:

Nearly every day we read about the shortage of priests in the Rochester Diocese and I often wonder, why?

It seems as though this is not a universal problem throughout the United States because in Cheshire, Connecticut, an order of Legionaries of Christ ordained 37 priests on January 4, 2001. Not only that, but they have nearly 200 young men in their seminary.

Maybe our Bishop should go to Cheshire and see how they recruit men to



Reader missed connection on mission advertisement

To the editors:

Am I missing something? I have just finished reading the paid advertisement in the Sept. 6 issue of the *Catholic Courier* regarding the problems of poverty, hunger, homelessness, etc. of many Jamaican families. I am in no way unsympathetic to their overwhelming problems.

These horrible conditions exist in this very poor country while across our own beautiful, opulent country, millions and millions of dollars are spent by church leaders in the redesigning, reconstructing and "modernizing" their already beautiful Catholic churches and cathedrals. Naturally, maintenance and repairs are necessary and ongoing.

I fail to comprehend how modernizing, reconfiguring of pew placement, relocating tabernacles, removing crucifixes from altar, etc. can be compared to the very real needs of God's people in Jamaica. Where is the rationale, the balance, the justification? Couldn't the millions of dollars spent on the cosmetic construction and remodeling of our churches and cathedrals here in America be better utilized by feeding and housing the "destitute poor" in Jamaica? Since we're ALL God's children, wouldn't this please Him more?

As I said, I must have missed something. I also wonder who or what paid for the full two-page advertisement in the *Courier*. Just curious, I guess.

Joan D. Diehl
Canisteo Street
Hornell

EDITORS' NOTE: The two-page ad — as well as brochures inserted into that week's edition — was placed by Food for the Poor, a relief agency based in Florida. Contact information appeared in a black box in the bottom right-hand corner of the ad, and the brochure also contained a donation envelope. The agency's Web address is www.foodforthe poor.org.

Bad time for donors

To the editors:

Along with last Sunday's bulletin, we received an update of Sacred Heart Cathedral's renovation plans.

Not only are we expected to give to our own renovation project at St. John's in Spencerport but to the Cathedral. This is a time of national emergency, a possible war, when many are losing their jobs, have watched their stocks plummet, and are asked to give to the Red Cross to help with a year-long cleanup of the Twin Towers rubble in New York City.

Many are calling this the "end times." What world is the hierarchy of the Catholic Church living in?

Dorothy Willett
Thornclyff Road
Spencerport

Believes processions drew 'halos'

To the editors:

On May 13th of this year in the Rochester sky, for approximately three hours, people in Rochester observed a very beautiful ring — halo — around the sun. This halo reflected all the colors of the spectrum.

On Monday the 14th, scientists on television explained how these halos are formed in the sky. Halos are not frequently seen in the Rochester skies; however, this

year people saw three beautiful ones in the month of May. On the 13th, 20th, and 27th three consecutive Sundays they appeared. Afterward no others have been seen.

Why did we have three halos on three consecutive Sundays? The difference on those Sundays, in contrast to any other day, was that a procession with Our Lord Jesus, the image of Our Lady of Fatima, and many faithful people, were walking and praying the rosary through the streets of the 19th Ward.

All these wonderful halos remained in the sky until the procession, the prayers, and the service in the churches were at an end. In my opinion, the halos were a sign of approval from heaven of our intention for bringing peace and Jesus back into the streets of the 19th Ward.

Joaquim M. Flores
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