

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.

Violence disregards faith-rooted values

To the editors:

Reason isn't the opposite of faith; unreason is. War, that triumph of unreason, is a drama that re-enacts original sin in its delusional fullness. It is anger and fear in the insidious guise of strategy and control. "Warfare," writes military historian John Keegan, "reaches into the secret places of the human heart, places where self dissolves rational purpose, where pride reigns, where emotion is paramount, where instinct is king." Thomas Merton, though no militarist, re-enforces Keegan's words: "Violence ... can begin only where thought and rational communication have broken down. Any society which is geared for violent action is by that very fact systematically unreasonable and inarticulate."

War and violence disregard utterly the values that faith cherishes and teaches: the goodness of creation, the sacredness of life, the primacy of human dignity, the common good. It rejects the way of mercy and of hope, its presumption being that, in a difficult situation, in the "real world," we all secretly believe, deep down, not that love is at the center of the human spirit, but that power is, and that might really makes right.

In the present crisis, therefore, it is troubling to observe George Weigel (*Catholic Courier*, Oct. 4: "How to use, and not use, just-war theory") intent on crafting rational arguments for organized brutality, Church leaders supportive of war as a "practical" response to widespread terrorism, Vatican spokesmen scrambling to neutralize Pope John Paul II's Christlike and passionate remarks in Kazakhstan against retaliation and violence. As he has stated, along with the bishops, especially since 1991 and the Gulf War, the massive draining of resources, the destruction of life and the environment, and the unprecedented potential of modern warfare for widespread devastation, have made it anything but "practical," and in the light of its historical failure to change conditions for the better in any substantive or enduring way, reveal it as utterly naive. "Never again war," (*Centesimus Annus*) is not



File photo

a neutral statement, especially from a man whose experiences in Eastern Europe taught him firsthand.

The Christian emphasis on international solidarity, the establishment of a world tribunal like that which brought to trial, for example, Slobodan Milosevic, a global task force to deliberate on ways to balance the current, profound maldistribution of resources — these are forceful, courageous, truthful and wise actions which faith has taught us, and that both honor the lives lost here and elsewhere, and would effectively address the deep roots of terrorism now and in a lasting way. Inter-religious dialogue and a commitment to understanding the psychological suffering of persons misled and oppressed by years of powerlessness and injustice would help significantly. Finally, looking deeply at the ways that we ourselves have contributed to the intensity of global and domestic oppression is an urgently needed element in any response, and is eminently possible in the contemporary world of modern communication and po-

tential for mutual understanding. These are the ways of nonviolence, and though they are difficult and demanding, they are not ineffectual, nor passive, nor inadequate. They are reasonable and intelligent, courageous and possible, and they work. Slobodan Milosevic is now in prison.

In a particularly painful and troubled period of American history, a Christian minister, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, made significant progress for all of us through nonviolence. He observed, "We have followed the so-called pragmatic way for too long a time now, and it has led only to greater chaos and destruction." The autumn of 2001 is no time for Christians to forget him, nor the resounding words of our Middle Eastern Teacher and Savior, as he faced the forces that would threaten his life: "Anyone who lives by the sword, dies by the sword."

Judith E. Kiehl, Pastoral Associate
Holy Trinity Church
Webster

Use love, not hate, to end current conflict

To the editors:

The events of September 11 have shaken Americans out of our comfort zone and have caused intense pain and conflict. We must heed Mahatma Gandhi's words of wisdom: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

History has taught us that wars only bring on more wars. On the brink of yet another war, let's remember that this too will be a war where, ultimately, there will be no winners.

It is imperative that we NOW learn this lesson and find a peaceful solution. Now is

the time to use technologies that are scientifically proven to create sustainable peace. Such an approach, which raises the consciousness of every individual to a higher level of coherence, is available and can be mobilized immediately.

We suggest to enlist the WHOLE world to fight evil with prayers, love, forgiveness, non-violence and peace! By using this strategy, "Operation Noble Eagle" will be transformed into "Operation Noble Peace" and

humanity will have practiced/learned Martin Luther King's message: "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that!"

This moment in time is THE moment of truth for all people. It is UP to all people to make non-violence a way of life!

Susan Farley, Secretary
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Feature people who never stray

To the editors:

Regarding your article "Fighting through addiction" in the *Courier's* Aug. 30 edition, I am happy that a young lady is recovering from addiction. I hope and pray that many people can do the same. However, we seem to make heroes out of people who have become addicted to one thing or another and then recover. It seems to me that the people — especially young people — that should be featured in a full-page article and made heroes of, are the ones who had the courage to resist the pressure exerted by

their peers to try drugs, alcohol or sex in the first place. In my way of thinking, it is those people who are the true heroes. They are the ones who endure ridicule by their so-called friends. They are the ones that children should look up to. Yet we keep featuring the person who gives in to these vices and then says "oops." It's as though we are giving the message that it's more "cool" to try drugs, etc. and then recover, rather than to never try drugs, etc. at all.

Rich Negri
West Third Street, Corning

Workshop attendee thanks co-presenters

To the editors:

On Oct. 16, 2001, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop presented by Richard McCorry and Father Douglas DellaPietra. The workshop was entitled "The Human and Spiritual Dynamics of Change."

At the present time I am experiencing changes at my parish which I have been a member of for 38 years. I am also experiencing some personal changes in my life.

This workshop helped me to accept changes as a good thing. A video was shown titled "Who Moved My Cheese." There is also a book by the same title which I would recommend everyone to read.

Thanks to Richard and Father Doug for a very prayerful and learning two hours.

Betsy McCabe
Ford Avenue
Gates

McBrien column offered sound insight

To the editors:

During the past few years as a reader of this diocesan newspaper I have read many letters which were highly critical of the Rev. Richard P. McBrien's articles as well as those which were complimentary regarding his articles.

His column in the October 25 issue of this paper ("Vatican II-type reform would benefit Islam") was a poignantly penetrating and piercing analysis of the pre-

sent conflict between the Western world and Muslim world as it exists in the Eastern world and the underlying causes that precipitated the terrorist attacks here in our country. It's one of the best (columns) he has written for this paper to date and I for one would agree with his statements and final conclusion.

William J. Rivette
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