

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, NY 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.



We must defend the good in love

To the editor:

After reading the misguided appeals to love that are now appearing in many of our Catholic publications — *Catholic Courier* included — and particularly Tom Agness' letter ("We should battle evil with love," October 11), I am compelled finally to write. When I read, "I think that's one way we defeat evil: by loving it, by selfless acts of love, as Jesus did," I could not believe my eyes. Jesus loved evil? Hardly.

Then, on November 1, you carried lengthy appeals to "love" by other readers ("Violence disregards faith-rooted values," from Judith Kiehl, and "Use love, not hate, to end current conflict," from Susan Farley). All argue against American involvement in a war against Osama bin Laden and Afghanistan.

"... let's remember, that this too will be a war where, ultimately, there will be no winners," Farley argues. What short memories we have. It seems to me that we won the Second World War. Yes, we did defeat Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo. Perhaps we should have discussed the matter with Adolf. I'm sure we could have come to some reasonable agreement with him.

For her part, Kiehl quotes Thomas Merton: "Violence ... can only begin where thought and rational communication have broken down." Perhaps Ms. Kiehl would like to sit down and have a reasonable dialogue with the terrorists who destroyed the lives of thousands on September 11 and have vowed to destroy "infidels" everywhere.

Instead, out of love, we are required to defend the good. It is our Christian duty — out of love — not only for justice, but for love of the good. We must never allow evil to overcome good. What kind of person, knowing that his children were about to be attacked, would not defend them? Would Tom Agness stand by and allow

the attack to take place without lifting a hand to prevent it? Would Bishop Clark stand by, knowing that his beloved nieces were about to be attacked, and do nothing to prevent the attack? Of course not. We have a duty out of love to prevent such evil. And we don't wait for the attack to occur to take action.

So also does our nation respond — not out of vengeance for the attacks that have already taken place, although justice demands a response to those attacks. We re-

spond out of love to prevent future attacks. We are compelled in love to act. We would be lacking in love — that is, we would be evil — if we did not. To defend the good in love, I submit, is the very essence of Christianity. To submit to evil is its antithesis.

Love evil? Dialogue with the devil? Not me.

Joseph A.F. Valenti
Park Circle Drive
Fairport

Encourages prayer, letters supporting 'school' protest

To the editors:

Yes, once again SOA Watch, with reverence and solemnity, will hold their annual vigil at Ft. Benning, Georgia, praying for the closing of the so-called School of the Assassins, now operating under a new name, Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. This action will take place the weekend of November 16-18.

Since the tragic events of September 11, our government has called for an all-out war against "terrorism." One wonders, therefore, why SOA has not been closed, a place where millions of taxpayer dollars are being used to fund a training school for terrorists in our own backyard.

Let us continue to be mindful of our

sisters and brothers in Latin America where many have been forced into abject poverty and an inescapable cycle of oppression for political reasons. These policies are largely enforced by the 60,000 Latin American soldiers trained at SOA, many of whom have received extensive training in civilian-targeted warfare.

Let us pray this weekend in solidarity with these valiant people who have travelled to Georgia for the vigil. Please, also, write to your Washington representatives asking them to use their voices to close this infamous school. Refer to: www.soaw.org, info@soaw.org, 202/234-3440.

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester

Poor choice for 'national audience'

To the editors:

We subscribe to the print edition (of the *Catholic Courier*), but I like to share the online version with some friends across the country, especially in recent weeks when you have had articles relating to Corpus Christi or Spiritus Christi.

I had hoped you'd have the "Schism" article online! But you apparently thought that sectional titles were more important for the national audience. Shame! You missed a golden opportunity to get the word out to those people around the country who have tried to follow the Spiritus Christi saga. Thanks for having cov-

ered the situation in the print edition.

Don Muench
Smallwood Drive
Pittsford

EDITORS' NOTE: We haven't thought of ten of users of www.catholiccourier.com as "the national audience." Instead, as a newspaper that's largely subscription-funded, we've viewed them as the non-paying audience and have been reluctant to give too much away for free — especially our cover stories. In this particular case, however, Mr. Muench's point is well-taken, and last week's print cover story is now online. This week's cover story also will be posted to the online edition.

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