

# 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.

## Priest's actions caused pain, anger

### To the editors:

I would like some more information, or perhaps to offer a clarification on your story concerning the history of Father Callan and Spiritus Christi. Both your article and your time line begin with Tuesday, August 17, 1998, but as I remember that was the day Father Callan was removed; while the actual story started many days prior to this event. As I remember, it was Father Callan that made an announcement to his parish that he was being fired prior to August 17th, which at that time was not the truth. It was more correct to say that he was being transferred to another parish at the end of the year. Also this information was to be kept in confidence for a time until decisions were officially made by those involved. It was Father Callan that made a huge issue out of his impending move. All priests know and most people in the parishes know as well, priests are re-assigned many times in their lives. Father Callan had actually been in that assignment for many years longer than allowed by the policies of the diocese.

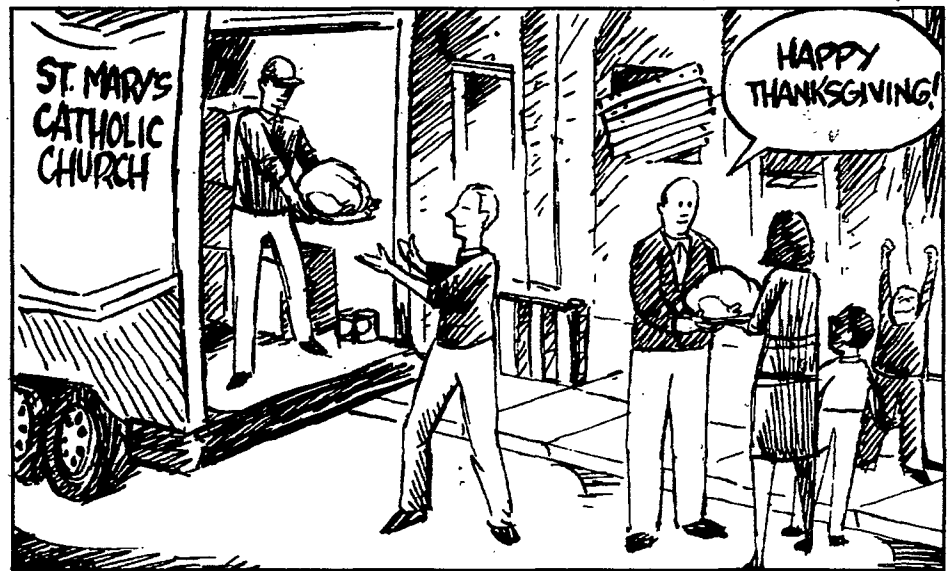
There are many issues at play in this story but I can not help but think that a difficult situation was made markedly worse by Father Callan and the way that he handled himself prior to his being removed on Aug. 17. As I read the newspapers during this time, for at least three days Father Callan spun and twisted the real story. This caused a polemic that was not necessary and resulted in the pain and separation that for some is still present. It was only after three days — while the bishop was away — that the diocese responded with the truth. He was not being fired but being moved as was normal and that the move would take place in June as has been and continues to be the policy of the diocese.

The issues as they were offered to the community were not really the issues — it was not "ministering to gays and lesbians" but performing weddings for couples that are not allowed in the church. It was not "women's roles in the church" but allowing non-ordained to take a part in the Eucharistic celebration that is held specifically for the priest. It was not "outreach to non-Catholics" but an inappropriate way of determining who was to receive the Eucharist — a practice that was offensive to more than just Roman Catholics but most Jews and Protestants as well.

The life of ministry has many changes and challenges but the minister is not the final say — obedience to God and those in authority comes first and it can be hard when they seem in conflict. Scripture gives us one test to see if our work comes from God or from our own desires. What is the fruit? Father Callan's fruit has been anger, destruction, and separation. The mark of successful ministry lies in the life it has after the person who started it leaves. Father Callan could have left Corpus Christi in a positive way and been a blessing to the members of that community as well as being an example to others. He could have taken his ample skills and God-given talents and brought them to bear on another community that could have benefited and grown. He could have continued to bring the Gospel message to many other places within the church he was ordained to serve. Instead he focused only on his desires and his leaving was the cause of senseless pain and needless anger.

The community moves on without him. The diocese grows and is blessed. Corpus Christi is an ongoing example of God's power and love for his people. They continue to be a light to their neighborhood and the community at large. This light and example are in spite of the destructive activity of those that left, not because of their actions and ministry in that church. It seems important to make this distinction and point out when and where the real problems started.

Father Patrick J. Van Durme  
Owego



## What is peace 'technology'?

### To the editors:

I'm sure Susan Farley of Education for Peace has good intentions but, like every other peace protestor I've encountered, she fails to say precisely what we should do, what specific steps we take, in order to bring peace to a world not all of whose inhabitants even want peace. Ms. Farley suggests that we "use technologies that are scientific" to proving to create sustainable peace." This tantalizing assertion mystifies me. What "technologies?" Aroma-therapy machines? And just exactly how do we go about "enlist(ing) the WHOLE world (Farley's emphasis) to fight evil with prayers, love, forgiveness, non-violence, and peace"? One pretty good definition of evil is hatred of prayers, love, forgiveness, non-violence, and peace.

I've clicked around in the Education for Peace website and found nothing to answer these questions. Full of poetry and good intentions, the site offers, as far as I can see, one single fairly concrete proposal: teach peace. It's a good suggestion. I'm all for that, truly. We need to do this in our schools, at home, everywhere. But education, even when it "takes," takes time, and the events of 11 September have laid a terrible urgency upon us.

We need to realize that Bin Laden and his crew see Christians — in fact, any non-Muslims — as the enemy, that for him it's a holy war pure and simple, that he and his terrorists see themselves as the holy ones, and the way they win all and please Allah is by annihilating infidels like you and me. This is his position. The Koran supports it. Don't think so? Visit <http://www.secularislam.org/index.html>, and click on "A Call to the Muslims of the World...". We doubt or ignore it at our peril. It is absolutely preposterous to speak of "teaching peace" to this man and those who are like minded.

In her letter Ms. Farley used no more than a couple of hundred of the 500-word length to which *Courier* correspondents are limited. I wish she had used the remaining 300 to at least attempt to answer the important questions her letter implicitly raises. And if she really does have access to a technology that can "raise the consciousness" of murderous, suicidal fanatics to a "level of coherence" sufficiently high to keep them from wanting to ram jumbo-jets into skyscrapers, I hope she will come forward with it immediately.

Peter Dzwonkoski  
Westmoreland Drive  
Rochester

## Ten-person board supported letter

### To the editors:

Would you please mention that the letter published on November 1, "Use Love, not hate, to end current conflict," which had my name on it, was also signed by nine other individuals? I am the secretary on the Board of Directors of Education for Peace, Inc. The nine others who had signed their names are on the Board and/or the Advisory Board. I do not take personally any responses forthcoming, or those published on Nov. 8 and Nov. 15. However, I did receive a piece of mail with no return address and no signature inside, which was mailed Nov. 5 in Rochester. The white card inside only said, "You need to visit Ground Zero and Go face to face with families!!!!" Whomever sent this to me should have had the courage to say who

they are and could have had a dialogue with me instead of being so angry. For that person's information, some Board Members have visited Ground Zero and many of those who are involved in our Peace Project, are fine and upright citizens trying to educate our youth to not be angry but to use peaceful means to solve problems. Our vision is "Young people realizing their global citizenship; their shared future; and their ability, together, to achieve World Peace." We welcome others to help us achieve our goals. This time I am only writing this by myself, for information and to clarify that I was not the only person who advocates helping people to make non-violence a way of life.

Susan Farley  
Meadowdale Drive, Rochester

## Pray for resolution to hatred, roots of despair

### To the editors:

I am writing to offer another answer to the question which is the title of the lead article of the October 4 *Catholic Courier*, "How do we respond?" to the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

I would suggest that we pray for those who carried out the attacks and for everyone who hates the United States. I do not mean pray that they will realize that "such violence creates not justice but greater injustice," which the statement issued by the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on September 11 states was the bishops'

prayer for those who carried out the attack.

Let our prayers be, rather, that there will be resolutions to that which leads a person to hate the United States.

It seems that most of all we should ask God to keep everyone from despair. Of course, there will be no resolutions if people despair. Further, it would seem that the events of September 11, in which men killed themselves and allowed themselves to be deluded into risking hell, were the works of men in despair.

Grace K. LaDouce  
Park Avenue, Auburn