

# 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*, PO Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

## Current discipline is lacking

### To the editors:

The sacrifice of the Lamb of God upon the cross is a singular historical event. Yet, it exists eternally, and is visibly present to us in place and time in each Mass. We acknowledged our belief in this reality on Sunday, November 25, shortly before its visible presence to us. At the offertory we prayed, *Lord, we offer you the sacrifice by which your Son reconciles mankind.*

Ironically, a few moments earlier, we prayed for the children, who would receive, for the first time, that coming Friday and Saturday, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Why next Friday and Saturday? Were these children excluded from Sunday's visible and singular reconciliation event? The answer sadly is yes, just as everyone else present, was excluded.

The circular letter of March 20, 2000, on the integrity of the Sacrament of Penance, identifies the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, i.e., the Mass, as the cause of the forgiveness of sins. Its introductory paragraph affirms that "Through a mysterious sharing in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, the Sacrament of Penance overcomes the division between man and God caused by sin ... (and graces the sinner with) that reconciliation, which is concentrated in Christ himself, the Lamb without blemish offered for our sins ..."

The sacrificial removal of the impediment to union with God and the cause of the forgiveness of our sins are visibly present to us in place and time in each Mass. Yet, the current discipline of the Sacrament of Penance presents the apparent visible cause of the forgiveness of our sins as the sign of absolution.

That would be fine, if the true and ultimate cause of the forgiveness of our sins were a singular historical event no longer present to us. But it is not so. Thus, the irony.

The true and ultimate cause of the forgiveness of sin is ineffectual as we witness it, visibly and immediately present, in place and time. Its effect is actual somewhere else instead, namely, in a private place, remote in place and time from the cause. Why not make the cause and its effect concurrent?

Cardinal George, at the November Bishops' meeting, characterized the stubbornness of some with regard to another liturgical matter with the claim, "We're not going to change, because that's the way we've done it for the past blankety years." For the subject of this letter, the blankety would be roughly 1400.

The suggested change in the discipline of the Sacrament of Penance must essentially come from the top. But those at the bottom can raise the question and discuss it. Is there anyone out there with an opinion on this? I would gladly send anyone a list of incongruities between faith and practice inherent in the present discipline.

Robert E. Drury  
Pre-Emption Road  
Geneva

## Predicts resurgence of debate on stem cells

### To the editors:

The entire stem cell debate suddenly ceased with the New York disaster, but it will be back. After six months of intense media hype, President Bush issued his statement which cancelled Clinton's earlier order. It set guidelines. Further (President Bush) stated he would veto any significant change made by Congress.



## Church building's design helps her to pray, meditate

### To the editors:

There is a special church that I like to go to when life's daily burdens are overwhelming and I am unable to pray. As I enter into this sanctuary the quietness and beauty fills me with inner peace.

Immediately my eyes are drawn to the stained-glass image of our crucified Lord. His outstretched arms are there not only to shoulder my burdens but also to redeem me. In spite of my personal sinfulness I know that I am loved. I resolve to try to accept my own crosses and to follow Jesus. Surrounding the crucifix is a beautiful blue-ceiling dotted with clouds and statues of two saints which conjures up an image of heaven for me. This gives me the hope of eternity with Our Lord should I remain faithful and follow the example of my heavenly friends.

On either side of the altar are shrines devoted to Our Lady and St. Joseph. The flickering lights of the candles symbolize prayers being sent up continuously to Our Lord through the intercession of His

Holy Mother and His earthly father. I ask Mary and Joseph to guide me as they did with their babe Jesus.

My eyes finally come to rest on the tabernacle prominently placed in the center of the altar. It is here that my Lord waits for me. No words come, no words have to. Jesus knows my own needs more than I do. He addresses those needs through my heart. This I think is the greatest prayer.

You see I like to come to this church because this church is a prayer in itself. The quietness, beauty, images and most importantly the placement of the tabernacle in the center of the altar are conducive to meditative prayer. Today especially our churches should be places of beauty and quiet to help us reflect on our faith and spend time with Our Lord. If we take this time in solitude to be with Our Lord our relationship with our neighbor will only blossom.

Janice Armstrong  
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Churchville

## Doesn't want clone to enhance life

### To the editors:

What came first? The chicken or the egg. And, does it really matter? What matters is that embryos are real people and should NOT be cloned. Every single cell or microorganism, whether human, animal, vegetable, or mineral, is an important part of evolution. But, for anybody to suggest that an embryo is not a human individual is just plain ludicrous. I, person-

ally, wouldn't want my life enhanced by a genetically-engineered human who was then killed so I could feel better. What's the point — is this an eye-for-an-eye, and tooth-for-a-tooth theory gone awry? I'm with the Vatican on its condemnation of embryo cloning!

M. Cathy Helmes  
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## Appreciated articles about SBI's programs

### To the editors:

What a delight to receive the *Catholic Courier's* December 6, 2001 print edition and read the thorough and balanced feature story on St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry (St. Bernard's Institute). Even the accompanying stories added to our knowledge.

Besides all the information, it was so gratifying that we could read about new Catholic initiatives, changes, and challenges without the "head buried in the sand" warnings one reads in many parts of the paper. A candle has been lighted to see the obvious needs. We don't have time to curse the darkness.

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Reactions to Bush's "solution" were mixed. Complimenting it without reservation were the National Right to Life Committee. Complimenting it with reservations included Dr. Dobson, Dr. Falwell, Robertson and others.

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