

# OPINIONS

## Catholic Courier

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 1150 Buffalo Road  
 P.O. Box 24379  
 Rochester, NY 14624  
 585/529-9530  
 800/600-3628 outside Rochester  
 http://www.catholiccourier.com  
 e-mail: info@catholiccourier.com

President  
**Bishop Matthew H. Clark**

General Manager/Editor  
**Karen M. Franz**  
 kfranz@catholiccourier.com

### Editorial Department

Assistant Editor  
**Kathleen Schwar** *Finger Lakes*  
 kschwar@catholiccourier.com

Staff Writers  
**Rob Cullivan** *Genesee Valley*  
 rcullivan@catholiccourier.com

**Mike Latona** *Southern Tier*  
 mlatona@catholiccourier.com

Staff Photographer  
**Andrea A. Dixon**  
 adixon@catholiccourier.com

Photo Intern  
**James Stein**

Editorial Assistant  
**Louis Litzenberger**  
 llitzenberger@catholiccourier.com

### Business Department

Office Manager  
**Mary DiPonzio**  
 mdiponzio@catholiccourier.com

Circulation Manager  
**Donna Stubbings**  
 dstubbings@catholiccourier.com

Administrative Assistant  
**Arlene S. Gall**  
 agall@catholiccourier.com

### Graphics Department

Graphics Manager  
**Kim Parks**  
 kparks@catholiccourier.com

Graphic Artist  
**Linda Jeanne Rivers**  
 lrivers@catholiccourier.com

### Advertising Department

Account Executives  
**Nancy Baeskens**  
 nbaeskens@catholiccourier.com

**Donald P. Wilson**  
 dwilson@catholiccourier.com

Classified Advertising  
**Joyce Kluchko**  
 jkluchko@catholiccourier.com

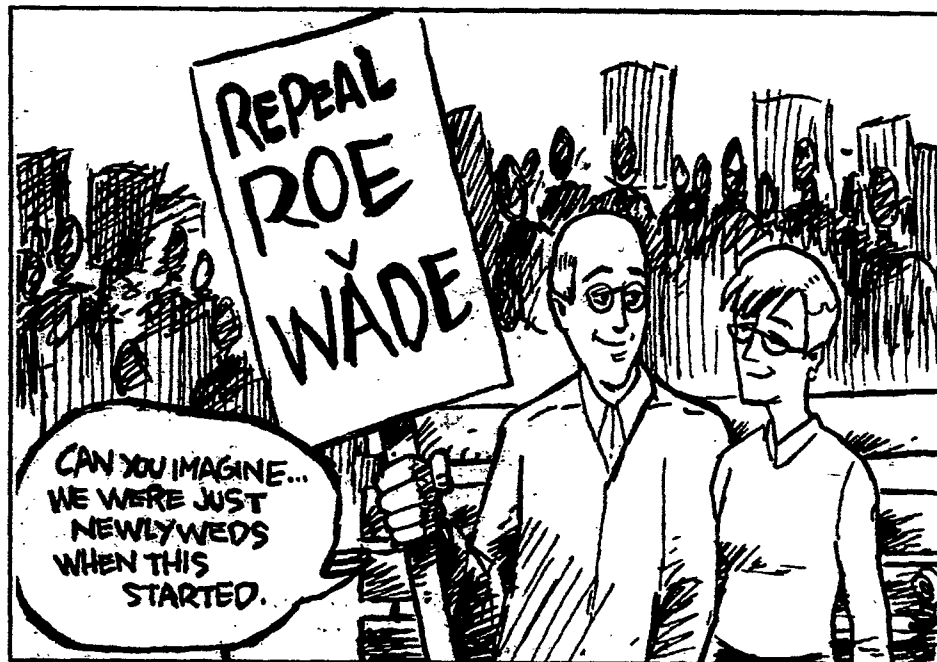
### Letters Policy

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.



## Greater impact found at small Advent service

To the editors:

Advent is a special time in our Church history, and during the past Advent season I attended one of the most meaningful communal penance services I have ever attended. The service took place at St. Gabriel's Church in Hammondsport and was led by Father Richard Shatzel, our sacramental minister. Sister Anne Michelle McGill is our pastoral administrator.

Many adults and young people found a quiet, spiritual time of peace and contemplation at this Advent service. The service included three readings by lay lectors: Isaiah, Luke's John the Baptist and Luke's Mary the Mother, all referring to the coming of Christ and his birth. Accompanying the readings were lightings of the Menorah Candles, with Father saying a prayer in Hebrew, the Advent Wreath, and the Marian Candles. Along with readings and candle lightings, everyone joined in appropriate hymns. Father's three poignant meditations on each Biblical passage tied the entire history together.

Everyone was then ready for an in-depth examination of conscience, and the penance liturgy concluded this hour's service with everyone feeling penitent, peaceful, and relaxed, truly a blessed hour.

On the other hand, attending a large, new mega church in New Jersey for the children's Christmas Mass was far from peaceful or joyful. Knowing it was the children's Mass, we arrived a half hour

early only to find there was not even standing room in the wide side-aisles. The balcony was overflowing, and no extra chairs were brought in for any of the standing areas. The choir was beautiful, but few members of the congregation joined in. The children were brought up to see the manger before the homily, the priest asked them about Easter to see if they were alert, and half of the people were standing, not only during the homily but also during the Offertory, Consecration, and Communion prayers. Most of them were longing to receive Communion and leave, and no one seemed to greet each other on the way out. It was Christmas madness to the hilt!

What am I trying to say about these two services? The communal penance service in a small church was the highlight of my Christmas liturgies; the Christmas Mass at the mega church was an extreme disappointment. You see I am really worrying about the talk of building mega churches to combine parishes in our rural areas. As priests become more scarce, churches become larger, and distances become greater, are we going to have true Christian communities? Maybe the smaller churches should keep their parishes, share their priests, and along with Liturgies of the Word with Eucharist, as is done in Colorado, keep the true sense of community and spirituality that comes forth in these smaller rural parishes.

Betty R. White  
 West Lake Road, Hammondsport

## Let's listen to the angels!

To the editors:

Think of 2000 years ago a young teenager, a bride to be, was pregnant and unwed. In those days, there were two choices — and only two choices — for her fiancé: either stay and be disgraced or leave her. Then, an angel appeared to him and he decided to stay and marry her and be a father to baby Jesus. I am sure he had no regrets about that choice.

In this day and age, people are making a third choice, a very serious choice — one that involves life or death. In today's world, there are angels telling people not

to abort their babies. Maybe the angels are the people praying to overturn abortion or the people who have been touched by abortion and are trying to overturn it. Maybe the angels are the people writing letters to elected officials to protect the unborn or the people picketing in front of abortion clinics.

What did Joseph do? He chose to listen to the angels and stayed with Mary. What is our choice? Let's listen to the angels and stop abortion!

Steve DeLucia  
 Marquart Drive, Webster

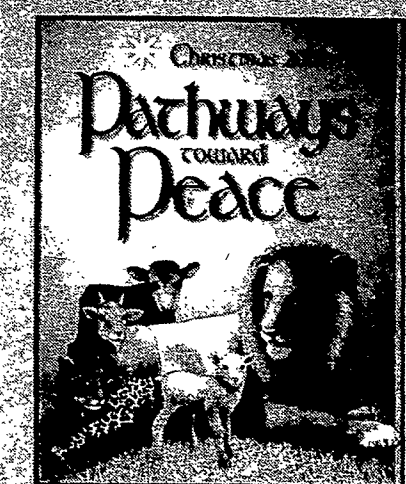
## Amid arguments, Catholics seem to have lost reverence for God

To the editors:

Two years ago while waiting for my flight at New York's JFK airport, I saw a Muslim take out a handkerchief, kneel and bow down in prayer totally oblivious to everyone around. In my mind this has remained a powerful symbol of reverence for God — being humble before God.

Unfortunately, among us Catholics there appears to have been a sharp decline of reverence for God. We don't humble or bow to anyone, even God; instead we indulge in self-adoration at best treating Him as an equal or at worst finding Him irrelevant.

I can only pray that God will intervene,



## Catholics long used the lamb

To the editors:

In your editor's note to James Boehler about the "zoo" picture on the cover of your Dec. 20, 2001 issue, you forgot to mention that the Isaiah passage referred to was the Old Testament reading at Mass on the Second Sunday in Advent. It primed the heart to understand "why is this birth different from all other births?"

I was puzzled why Mr. Boehler thought it was a non-Catholic cover. In the picture, the lamb is the center of focus. It used to be that the lamb was an icon image we Catholics used for Christ. That image occurs in the Mass when we address Christ as "Lamb of God who takes away..."

Also, in Revelation Chapter 5, St. John describes his vision of Christ as the Lamb. So, lamb, a good old Catholic image for Christ. I don't think Vatican II changed that... yet.

Robert J. Hoffmann  
 Fox Run, Rochester

## Cover illustration right for the time

To the editors:

I disagree with James Boehler's letter of Jan. 10 concerning the cover of the Dec. 20, 2001 *Catholic Courier*.

I felt it was both breathtaking and apropos for the times. It caught my eye and made me want to read the inside stories. I cut the cover off and displayed it at my home.

"The lion shall lie down with the lamb." Perfect!

Cheryl D'Amico  
 North Brook Street, Geneva

## Picture was 'lovely'

To the editors:

I thought your cover picture for the Christmas issue was lovely and appropriate for Christmas. I loved it and have taped it on the wall waiting to find a frame for it.

Patricia Duff  
 Chestnut Street, Webster

### Clarification

In the original version of the letter to the editors, the name of the author was Barbara Kloe named in the original version. We asked to change the name to Mr. Kloe but in the process we note that the name was Webster, where the author lives.

and ask that the "progressives," who view symbolism and traditions as sinful, and the "traditionalists," who view any change as sinful, reflect on how their actions have negatively affected the reverence for God in the Catholic Church.

Raymond Liutkus  
 Hardwood Lane, Webster

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