

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.

Restore veneration of 'Infant'

To the editors:

The excesses of Vatican II in self-glorification of people above God also swept away many of our liturgical treasures including the Little Infant Jesus of Prague.

In this season of the Christ Child, I ask that this true likeness of Jesus be restored and venerated. Tradition has it that it was a monk, Joseph, at a Carmelite monastery in Spain, one of four brothers that survived pillage by the Moors, who had a special devotion to the Child Jesus. Once, when he worked in the yard, suddenly a little child appeared to him and asked Joseph to pray with him. Joseph prayed the "Ave" and when he came to the words "Benedictus fructus tui, Jesu" — "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," the child said "That is me" and disappeared. But the face of the child was engraved in Joseph's mind and for years he struggled to produce a likeness. When Joseph was very old, the child again appeared and said "I came to show myself again to you, so that you could finish the sculpture according to my likeness." Joseph immediately finished the sculpture as if in a dream. Then the child vanished. Joseph fell asleep happy and tired and never awoke again.

A Spanish lady obtained the sculpture and gave it as a gift to the Carmelite chapel in Prague. In 1631 Saxons plundered Prague and pillaged the chapel. The statue was thrown out with waste behind the High Altar. Here Father Cyril found it when he returned in 1637 to the abandoned church in Mala Strana from Munich. He took the statue back to the chapel near the Church of Our Lady of Victory. But it was damaged. While praying before the statue, it spoke "Have pity on Me and I will have pity on you. Give Me My hands and I will give you peace. The more you honor Me the more I will bless you." Father Cyril asked Our Lady to give funds to fix the statue. The Divine Infant spoke again, saying "Place Me near the entrance of the sacristy and you will receive aid." A few days later the statue was fixed by a man who came by the sacristy.

Through wars and unrest, the church and chapel were miraculously protected. Many are the miracles recorded. Does history repeat itself? Two statues were found in the trash, both with broken hands, one stripped of garments. I wept.

The 18" high wood and wax figure has been lovingly clothed through the centuries — a white undershirt over a white rocheta, then a silk top with frills around the neck and hands. The fourth and fifth gown is like the priest's pluvial.

If your child asks what God looks like, bring the child to the likeness of Jesus, the little Infant Jesus of Prague.

Dorothy Louis
Wahl Road
Rochester



Author inspires campaign

To the editor:

On Friday, January 11 at 8 p.m. I was "surfing" on the TV and stopped at Channel 49 (EWTN). The program that was being offered at that time was called "The World Over." The main topic that evening centered on the architecture — or changing architecture — of our Roman Catholic Churches here in the U.S. Michael Rose, author of "Ugly as Sin," was being interviewed.

He brought out that ... many of the changes that have been made or are being made were not really ever recommended by the church itself. Where we have heard in the past that "these are the rules" is not necessarily so. These impressions that most of us Catholics have as being told how our churches should look has not come from church authorities, but from architects, influenced lay people, pastors, bishops and cardinals. But not mandated or in most cases even recommended by the church itself.

He pointed out that such things as moving the tabernacle from its most central location, removing altar rails, placing many of our statuary in the church basement, elimination of kneelers, no crucifix in the church, etc. were things that were never mandated and never should have hap-

pened.

Changing our churches from what they were or are now to "meeting halls of the future" as some are being planned is a real travesty. No one is suggesting that we should not have ramps for handicapped or adequate bathroom facilities. We are talking about our house of God.

In the past few years I have attended a number of Catholic churches in Germany, England, Wales and Rome. These churches are the very same as they were when I first became a Catholic 51 years ago. I have heard that many of the cardinals and bishops in the United States are now considering openly to recommend that the tabernacle be placed in the churches' most central location. Have you heard this?

I am going to do three things:

1. I am going to the local Catholic bookstore and buy Michael Rose's book "Ugly as Sin" and
2. To do whatever I can to get back these "changes" that have been made over past years, and
3. Contact my parish council and let them know how I feel.

Would you join me by doing the same?
Kenneth Harris
Evergreen Road
Brockport

Complaint is 'tempest in thimble'

To the editor:

The letter in the January 10 edition concerning the writer's being "... troubled to hear the priest request that the congregation remain standing..." was troubling to me and reflects the unbending, all-knowing attitude of so many conservative-minded Catholics. Consider this in view of all the really troubling events and happenings in this world.

Consider that historically Christ and the apostles at the Last Supper were probably, in the manner of the day, reclining at a table or as DaVinci imagined — seated at a table, and further that the language of the entire event was spoken in the vernacular and not the Latin so dear to so many of our "historically minded" conservatives. For centuries the Mass was celebrated in homes standing or sitting around a table,

or as depicted in the catacombs standing around a plain altar.

Consider that standing in the presence of authority is a mark of respect, and that kneeling is the universal attitude of the lowly subject, the slave, the criminal. We are Christ's brothers and sisters celebrating the Eucharist together.

Finally, consider that the kneeling tradition only took root in the Middle Ages, and that St. Peter's Basilica and most churches in Europe are not equipped with kneelers. The relatively young church in the United States is in the minority on the "to stand or not to stand" issue, and I believe the letter writer's concern does not even measure up to a tempest in a thimble.

John L. Greisberger
Tobey Village Office Park, Pittsford

Put church's ordained deacons to better service

To the editor:

In an age of priest shortages and parishes without pastors, why is the diocese not utilizing its ordained ministers, the de-

acons, as parish administrators/parochial assistants? The powers to be seem more inclined to address the feminist agenda in staffing positions rather than the qualifications earned through one of its own programs. There are plenty of ordained deacons in this diocese who are retired from their secular jobs. Some of those individuals are in need of extra income and cannot find anything that will make use of their training. One particular deacon had to resort to taking an inner city janitor's job because nothing else was available. When the pastoral assistant called and asked about

the level of his skills, I was tempted to tell her he was probably more qualified for her job than she was.

As the push continues for parishes to be run by the laity, more consideration should be given to those who went the extra mile to ordination rather than those who have no qualifications but have been around a long time. Vocations to the diaconate might increase if those already ordained weren't treated as second-class citizens.

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