

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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 1136 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

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

Mike Latona *Southern Tier*
 mlatona@catholiccourier.com

Staff Photographer
 Andrea A. Dixon
 adixon@catholiccourier.com

Editorial Assistant
 Louis Litzemberger
 llitzemberger@catholiccourier.com

Photo Intern
 James Stein

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

Alum sings praises of St. Michael

To the editor:

My dad has often said: "St. Michael's School is Penn Yan's greatest treasure." It is also one of its best kept secrets. Being a graduate of this school, I can understand exactly where he is coming from. I attended St. Michael's from Pre-K to fifth grade and I am confident in saying that these early years of education have played a significant role in the shaping and development of my life.

St. Michael's School, and other Catholic schools, have set a very high standard for academic excellence and achievement. It was through this school system that I, and many others, received a basis for education and life-long learning through notable curriculum and superior teaching. It was also here that values and morals, initiated at home and at Church, were emphasized and reinforced, to not only build successful and intelligent kids, but well-mannered, thoughtful and responsible people.

It was a great treasure to have many aspects of our Christian faith incorporated into our everyday schooling. Group prayers, at least twice a day, visits with clergy, attendance at Mass, celebration of the Sacraments, and a thorough understanding of our religion were all included in the education received at St. Michael's. These important aspects of faith, I feel, have been incorporated in the lives of many to shape respectful and reverent Christians.

Now, as a sophomore in high school, where work is getting harder, time is getting scarcer, and stress levels are sky-rocketing, I am finding that the values instilled by St. Michael's School for academic excellence and spiritual awareness are playing an even more significant role in the shaping of my life.

Peter Osgood
 Walnut Street
 Penn Yan

Send columnist to straighten out pontiff, Vatican

To the editor:

Why does not the all-knowing Father McBrien try to straighten out the Pope and his silly plans for Padre Pio and Juan Diego (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 17: "Saints should be models of ordinary lives")? Perhaps he could just e-mail God and His mother that they have been wasting their time and ours, especially at Guadalupe and San Giovanni Rotondo, and why don't they just get down to real church business. And maybe we could ship Father McBrien over to Rome where he really should be doing his pontificating.

Doris Martina
 Crestwood Circle
 Dansville

Agrees with writer

To the editor:

I totally agree with Mary Wallman's letter regarding shaking of hands (in the Jan. 17 issue of the *Courier*).

The shaking of hands is a total disregard of germ spreading. Loving your neighbors is one thing; giving them your germs, another. Not sure when or where this practice originated, but I too am all for a campaign to end it.

Jean Strong
 Crestview Drive West, Pine City



Upset by 'silence' on march

To the editor:

It is terribly distressing that this Diocese, that this paper, was silent in face of the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the national legalizing of abortion.

This sad annual milestone is the perfect opportunity to promote the sanctity of human life, to reveal the evil of abortion and to remind all of us that you cannot be Catholic and pro-choice.

How different are we from the communities that surrounded the death camps of 60 years ago? How could they remain silent living next to the slaughter of so many innocent? How can we? And our silence isn't bought by fear for our own lives. We are silent by choice. We are unwilling to look at the horror of abortion. We are unwilling to live our responsibility to stand up publicly for the unborn.

Abortion is the defining issue of our

age. Charity, love, justice and mercy, our call as Catholics, require us to act in defense of the thousands that are killed every day. Our silence allows evil to triumph and babies to die.

This year Rochester sent one bus to Washington, D.C. for the annual March for Life. A dismal showing. There was no coverage by the (*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*) or the *Courier*. There was no comment from the Diocese. Silence.

Next year is the 30th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Diocese rallied the voices of all Catholics to be raised in defense of the little ones? Calling together voices of compassion for the mothers, strong with the message of love and forgiveness for so many that are victims of silence.

Dorothy L. Hayes
 Rock Beach Road
 Rochester

Mistaken notion gaining ground

To the editor:

I have seen in various periodicals and regularly enough to be concerned that a mistaken notion seems to be gaining currency. When I saw it again recently in this publication, it prompted this letter.

The erroneous perception is that the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have been an unwed mother which, of course, she was not.

It's important to comprehend this accurately because, if not, it's tantamount to not only suggesting that God would allow His Son's mother to suffer this indignity but also blaspheme the very mother of God.

This issue should already be settled as St. Jerome clarified this over 1500 years ago. With his vast knowledge of all the

languages in which the original biblical texts were written, he compiled such a superior work that it remains to this day the only official Bible of the Catholic Church.

Firstly, Jewish custom and law at that time held that to be betrothed was to be married. Further, an alert reading of the Gospel demonstrates this by implication.

Secondly, in Matthew's Gospel, the angel, a messenger from God, unequivocally tells St. Joseph: "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife ..."

Ergo, as can readily be seen, the Blessed Virgin Mary was not an unwed mother.

Gerard Ehmann
 Caroline Street
 Rochester

Found show 'one-sided, shameful'

To the editor:

I too happened to "surf" into EWTN on Friday, January 18. Unlike your reader (*Catholic Courier*, Jan. 31: "Author inspires campaign"), I found "The World Over" that evening to be a one-sided, shameful display of negativity and arrogance. Yes, mistakes may have been made, architecturally, artistically and even theologically, in the rush to capture the spirit of reform unleashed by the Second Vatican Council. Many of these have been corrected, and there seems to be little value in airing on national television the remnants of squabbles that should have ceased years ago.

In the Roman Catholic tradition there are certain tenets that do not allow for dissent or debate. Art and architecture are not among them. Mr. Arroyo would have served his Church better by including on his show other viewpoints different from those of his single guest.

Unlike your reader, I do not intend to

purchase or read Mr. Rose's book. Both the tenor of his remarks and the title of his book have given me a sufficient overview of its content — ugly as sin.

Father John J. Philipps
 Wickford Way, Fairport

Thanks for facing problems 'head on'

To the editor:

Thank you for facing the problems of Bishop Law of Boston head on by putting the story on the top of the front page (Jan. 31).

Thank you, also, for arranging the front page with a clear area on the top so that my address label does not cover the first headline.

Marjorie K. McMahon
 Knickerbocker Avenue
 Rochester