

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.

Renovation must relate to economy

To the editor:

I am writing in reference to the Thursday, February 28, 2002 *Catholic Courier's* article "Cathedral renovation moves ahead." Apparently and unless circumstances occur to moderate it, the people of the Diocese of Rochester are going to be asked to fund extensive renovations of Sacred Heart Cathedral, costing in excess of \$4 million dollars.

The proposed renovations have implications for not only the Cathedral itself but also for all other churches in the diocese as well. Father John Mulligan states "since Sacred Heart is the mother church for the entire diocese ... it should comply with the church's liturgical directives and serve as a model for other diocesan churches." In short, should individual pastors/pastoral administrators feel so moved, the people of the diocese could be asked to incur costs for not only the Cathedral but their own individual churches as well. The precedent will already have been established.

I have, over the last 30 years, visited the Cathedral. It is a magnificent structure reflecting fine Gothic style. I will concede that some form of renovation is indeed indicated but not to the degree or extent present plans would lead us.

As we journey towards the future, regarding the Cathedral renovation, let us not in the present, break faith with the legacy left to us by those who have gone before us. Let us preserve for posterity that which has been handed down to us for it is our treasure.

Locally, I have seen churches built along modernist lines. I have seen what occurs when churches built along past historical architectural lines are renovated with a view toward bringing them in line with current specious "norms." They each tend, and this is my own personal opinion, to be rather cold, disjointed and empty spaces that do not lend themselves to an experience of the sacred.

In view of 9-11, we live in perilous and uncertain times. Because of this reality our national and local economies have been adversely impacted. From a pastoral perspective, at the same time our Catholic people are being stretched to their limits to meet their own personal financial burdens, they are being asked through stewardship programs to increase their weekly contributions — percentage tithing — to pay rising costs for overall operation of our parishes. Let us not ask them to carry any further unnecessary financial burdens. To do so is scandalous.

One final note: In all the articles generated in relationship to the Cathedral renovation, I have yet to read any citation or any in-depth reference to any Church document that grounds the theological and liturgical basis for the current renovation plan.

Be not afraid.

George J. Gublo
DeWitt Avenue
Elmira

Boston Archdiocese deserves leadership

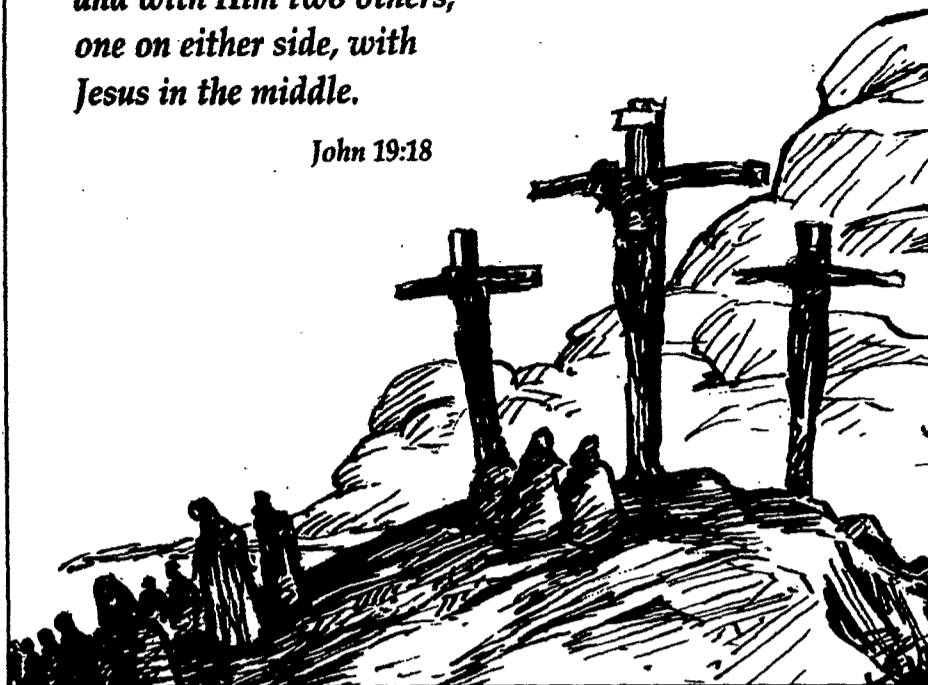
To the editor:

Cardinal Bernard Law accepted his assignment to administer the Archdiocese of Boston. Since he failed to do this for many years, he should resign. The church in Boston deserves more credible leadership.

Thomas G. Shea
Parker Lane
Rochester

*There they crucified Him,
and with Him two others,
one on either side, with
Jesus in the middle.*

John 19:18



Late pastor's devotion was model for their vocations

To the editor:

May this reflection serve as a grateful tribute to Father Benedict Ehmann, our former pastor at St. Mary's of the Lake Church, Watkins Glen, N.Y.

We learned from Father Ehmann that our Sunday Eucharist was the high point of the whole week, that "the Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed and, at the same time, the font from which all her power flows." The Eucharist is the primary school of holiness and an anticipation of the glory of heaven. Father Ehmann placed the Liturgy first in his life and in the life of our parish, giving it first place in regard to time, talent and treasure. He invited all of us to do the same.

We not only learned this about the Liturgy, we experienced it first hand, especially when Father Ehmann celebrated the Eucharist — the reverence, the dignity, the complete attention, the devotion, the conscious love with which he presided over the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist. We experienced the transcendent music of our Liturgy: its lovely, uplifting plain chant. We sensed the glory of the Roman ritual with its simple yet solemn dignity, its processions, its sacramentals and its litanies. We saw the beauty of our Catholic heritage and art, which Father Ehmann brought to the Liturgy: the finely carved crucifix which we venerated on Good Friday; the beautiful wood carving of Christ in the tomb for Holy Saturday Tenebrae; the splendid Easter fire, which almost ignited Father's

chasuble; the ornamented huge Paschal Candle; the glorious Risen Christ statue for Easter; the magnificent sanctuary reredos with the painting of Our Lady being taken into heaven, accompanied by two angels, one carrying a sheaf of wheat, the other, a golden crown.

Father Ehmann knew so well that singing gets the truth from our heads down to our hearts — to our center. Singing makes one's innermost center resound with the truth conveyed by the words. And plain chant does this best. Father Ehmann helped us realize that we were made to praise God and to serve God. Singing is as natural as breathing. Father Ehmann never tired of explaining to us the mysteries of the faith. He prayed the Mass, the sacraments, morning and evening prayer, Benediction, the Stations of the Cross and the rosary with us. Father Ehmann loved God's Word deeply and opened up the riches of the Scriptures to us in his homilies.

How could we not be moved by the truth, the goodness, the beauty of God made so real for us. We celebrated the mysteries of our faith with delight. We were overcome by the beauty of the Lord's house. We absorbed all this beauty by osmosis. No wonder we wanted to be part of it. We were drawn to the Lord and to His church. We wanted to be like Christ, our High Priest. We desired to be like our father in faith, Father Ehmann.

Fathers Richard & Robert Beligotti
Reading Road
Watkins Glen

Father Ehmann was model teacher

To the editor:

Back in those dark and uncertain days of the Depression, in the early 1930s, when the unemployed were selling apples on the sidewalk in front of the Kodak Office building on State Street, Father Benedict ("Bennie") Ehmann was attempting to teach us gangling and unpolished youths, in high school English class, some of the riches of literature.

In a world that otherwise seemed disheartened and unpromising, we learned, from him and Gerard Manley Hopkins, that really it was "charged with the grandeur of God."

From him we began to become aware of the galaxy of writers, like Chesterton and others, and the Christian activists who demonstrated faith in action. The power of certain Catholic periodicals became meaningful to us.

It was he who tried to teach us the craft of writing and the importance of well-se-

lected words. As if it were yesterday, I remember how he, the mildest and most benign of teachers, exploded when Cyril Kastner wrote that "the dead dog was defunct." "Cyril," he cried out, "you can't say that — that is redundant!"

Years, distances, and other concerns separated us. The last time that I saw him, no longer a classroom teacher, he was pastor in lovely Watkins Glen. There, like the medieval Chaucer's "poore Person of a town," I am sure that his parishioners he "devoutly wolde teche."

Father Ehmann, priest, gentleman, "larned man," was a born teacher and admirable shepherd for whom "Christes lore and his Apostles twelve/He taughte, but first he folwed it himselfe."

May he now himself enjoy the eternal riches that he used to promise to others.

E. Leo McMannus
Sail Pointe Circle
Venice, Florida

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