

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.



Is money conflict's root?

To the editor:

Was it Will Rogers who said, "All I know is what I read in the papers"? Well, all I know about the dispute at (St.) John Fisher is what I have read in the *Courier* and the *Democrat and Chronicle* and, most recently, Dr. Nathan Kollar's May 23 letter to the *Courier*. He has an excellent reputation and I believe he can back up his statements.

If it is true that the Catholic studies program, including the creation of a B.A. in Catholic Theology, is "going down the drain," I can only weep for the school and conclude they are losing their Catholic identity.

A few years ago, before St. Bernard's on the Road, each parish had its own study program. ... I recall that we once invited a professor from Fisher to lead several discussions on Social Justice. He commented that the school had to be cautious in this area; that, unfortunately but true, the majority of parents send their daughters and



sons to college to learn skills to help them up the economic ladder. Business ethics would be OK but it they were to teach strict adherence to the tenets of Social Justice, enrollment would decline.

Could money have something to do with the present disagreement? I wonder!

We must plead with the Holy Spirit, through the intercession of St. John Fisher, to turn things around!

Grace B. Carnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester

Notes academic difference

To the editor:

As a recently retired past chairman and theologian in the Department of Religious Studies at St. John Fisher College, I feel compelled to answer Dr. Nathan Kollar's letter (May 23). The letter is inaccurate enough to confuse your readers, so I thought I should set the record straight in those areas.

First: It should be understood that the "academic study of religion" is not "Theology." The former is a study of religion from its external appearances, its beliefs, its rituals, its practices, customs, etc., whereas Catholic Theology is the study of God from Revelation and all other things in their relation to God — classically described as "faith seeking understanding." Though both are academic, one is the study of religion as a human activity; the other is the study of God. Dr. Kollar's use of "Catholic Studies" and the "academic study of religion" tends to confuse

"Catholic Theology" with a study of religion. The difference is significant.

Second: Though personnel matters are supposed to be confidential, it is obvious that the rejection of particular hiring requests made by a department chair do not thereby indicate a lack of interest in or dedication to the promotion of theological study on the part of the President, as claimed by Dr. Kollar.

Third: Perhaps the reason Dr. Kollar's plans to establish centers of studies about religion have gone unheeded is that Dr. Keough's wish is to develop at St. John Fisher a strong Department of Theology. Such a department would provide our students, who are primarily Catholic, the opportunity to deepen their understanding of their Christian Faith as they grow in mind, heart, and spirit in other academic areas.

Father John C. Murray, CSB, STD
Professor Emeritus
St. John Fisher College

Ministry knows a few things, too

To the editor:

We agree with Father Shamon ("A Word for Sunday" June 13, 2002), that a homosexual person is a child of God, capable of love. Unlike Father Shamon, however, we also believe Church teaching that refers to orientation as: "an innate instinct" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1975), "a deep-seated dimension" (Catechism), "permanent, seeming irreversible" (U.S. Catholic Conference 1991), "something not freely chosen" and "given" (Always Our Children 1998); and that "persons find themselves through no fault of their own to have a homosexual orientation" (U.S. Bishops 1976).

We know that professional organizations representing almost a half million health and mental health professionals have all taken the position that homosex-

uality is not a mental disorder and thus there is no need for a "cure." We know that "reparative" or "conversion therapy" is based on an understanding of homosexuality that has been rejected by all the major health and mental health professions. We know that the Bible has nothing to say about sexual orientation, a concept foreign to biblical writers. And finally, we know many people who know they are loved by God exactly as they are — loving, faithful, openly gay/lesbian Catholics. We join our voices with the U.S. bishops who, in "Always Our Children," say to "our homosexual brothers and sisters ... in you God's love is revealed. You are always our children."

Mary Ellen Lopata
Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family
Ministry

Scandal holds blame for all

To the editor:

It is sad to note the media analysis of the predicament in which the Catholic Church finds itself. There is more sensationalism than news. Blame is heaped on the Catholic hierarchy.

But when it comes to blame, there is enough to be passed around. It cannot just rest on the shoulders of the priests, the bishops or even the Pope, alone.

Many Catholics, and I daresay others, knew many years ago, that some unsavory things were going on. But no one spoke up. Most importantly, parents did not speak up publicly. Surely many parents knew; had questioned; had watched. But everything was quiet except for some whispering.

I remember a mother, a casual acquaintance, telling me over 20 years ago, that her son had trouble with a priest. I said, "You must report it." She didn't want to report it. She changed her son's school — just as many bishops did, changing parishes for wayward priests.

I wonder now, if this mother's son is one of those speaking up, suing, trying to resolve the issue for himself.

But I am not blaming the parents or those who remained silent. Twenty or so years ago, we were a timid society. Sex was not a household word. It was demoralizing to even speak of it.

So now, the mea culpas must come from many of us.

Amelia Nugent
LaCroix Court
Rochester

All of us permit evil in society

To the editor:

Why are we pointing the finger just at the priesthood? Married, single, all denominations have abusers. We need to look at the whole picture. Sexual exploitation and/or gratification leading to the killing of a resulting fetus is abuse on a grand scale. I am not making light of the scandal in the Church — to cover over, hiding a wrong, is breaking the commandment regarding truthfulness. Exposing evil, showing sorrow and asking forgiveness is a basic belief of our faith. Once one has received the grace from God to turn his/her life around, who are we to pass judgement years later. A continuing sickness is another story. What is wrong with all of us who see evil in one area of society only and then blame it on celibacy, homosexuality or whatever? Evil is allowed by all of us who focus on ourselves instead of on the way of our Lord. We are all hypocrites. For heaven's sake we need to look at this deeply and clean up all our actions showing more love and compassion and protection from evil for all. I hope that out of this sorrow the Church will take the lead.

Jane Cantin
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Send your opinions to

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