

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.

Could he change his orientation?

To the editor:

We would like to respond to Father Albert Shamon's "A Word for Sunday" article that appeared in June 13 *Catholic Courier*.

Father touches a lot of issues, however the one that got our attention states "According to the best authorities, homosexuality is acquired. Homosexuals are made, not born ..."

"Always Our Children, A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children" is a statement of the Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (Fourth Printing, October 2000). On page 6 in the middle of the page it states "There seems to be no single cause of homosexual orientation. A common opinion of experts is that there are multiple factors - genetic, hormonal, psychological - that may give rise to it. Generally, homosexual orientation is experienced as a given, not something freely chosen. By itself, therefore, a homosexual orientation cannot be considered sinful, for morality presumes the freedom to choose."

For those of you who reduce sexual orientation to a choice, a character issue, a bad habit or something that can be changed by a 12-step program, I'm puzzled. Are you saying that your own sexual orientation is nothing more than something you have chosen, that you could change at will? If that's not the case, then why would you suggest that someone else can?

George and Ellen Curran
 North Middletown Road
 Media, Pa.

Scandal causes pain for priests

To the editor:

I have read daily, watched it on TV, day after day, about the priests who did the most horrific things to a child. Believe me, it has had a terrible effect on me as well as many other people.

I've also thought so much about the pain that our very good, faithful, obedient-to-God priests must be going through.

We must pray for them, encourage them, support them as we walk daily with them. We've all had unfortunate incidences and problems within our families; when one member of a family hurts, everybody hurts. When one of our priests hurts, they must know, since we parishioners are their family, we hurt also. Be there for them; they need us, our love and friendship more than ever.

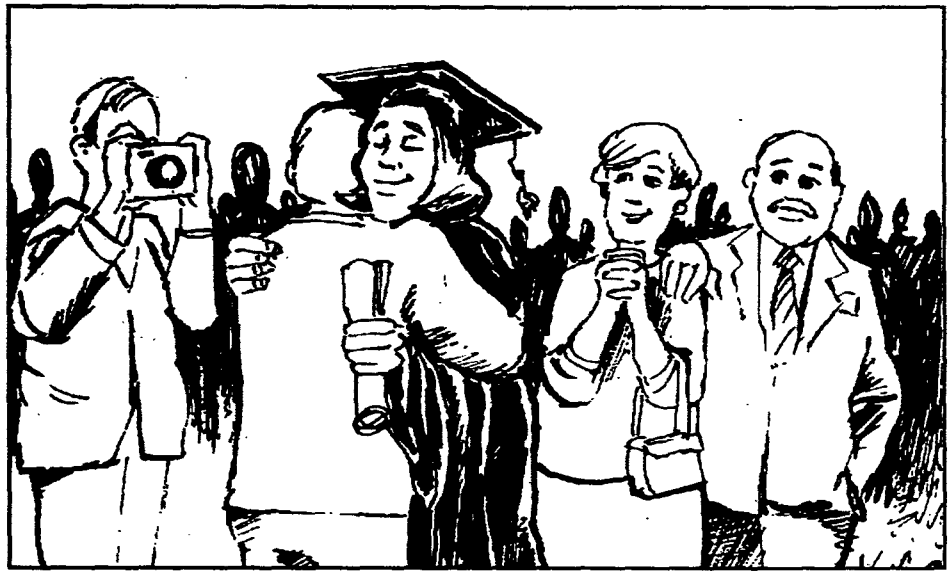
Dorothy Brock
 North Landing Road, Rochester

Priest's CD inspires

To the editor:

Father Douglas Della Pietra, a priest of this Diocese, has just released the first CD of original music he has written and performed, entitled "The Table" (see *Catholic Courier*, June 13: "Father Della Pietra's CD benefits migrant ministry"). I have found this music captivating, food for the soul, entertaining, and thought provoking. His songs present a vision of God who is loving, accessible, and who invites us to accept ourselves just as we are. Father Doug's music comes as a peaceful and refreshing oasis in these troubled times.

Richard McCorry
 Eastbrooke Lane, Rochester



Homosexuality not the issue

To the editor:

I have always enjoyed reading the *Catholic Courier*. I particularly enjoy Bishop Clark's column. There was a time that reading the *Courier* was like being on retreat; it helped in dealing with the stress of the day. Lately each issue has some controversial column that causes one stress and anxiety. One prime example is Father Shamon's (June 13) column entitled, "Homosexuality is not the norm in priesthood." What on earth prompted this, Father? Is this some kind of "smokescreen" drawing attention away from abusive pedophile priests? If you've ever read Father Shamon's column in the past as I have, you realize he professes to be an expert on a number of topics. Now, he's an expert on homosexuality? He states, "according to the best authorities, homosexuality is acquired." Please state your resources. Perhaps you should study the latest reports on the subject, not what you learned in the seminary 50 years ago. A

gay or lesbian person no more chooses this lifestyle than the heterosexual chooses to be straight, or a brown-eyed person chooses to have brown eyes. It is determined at the time of conception. Father, why do you even make an issue of a priest's sexuality? There are many fine gay priests who keep their vows of celibacy and do not molest children. Likewise there are fine heterosexual priests who also honor their vows of celibacy and do not abuse children. Finally there are pedophiles, priests of either sexual orientation, who have a sexual appetite for children. They do not honor the vows of celibacy. The abusive priest issue has nothing to do with homosexuality or heterosexuality. So, why devote an entire column on the subject? You do a disservice to not only gay people including gay priests, but to the readers of the *Catholic Courier*.

John T. Senka
 Route 224, Montour Falls

Why would they choose to be gay?

To the editor:

In the issue of June 13, Father Albert Shamon said, "According to the best authorities, homosexuality is acquired. Homosexuals are made, not born." I don't know which authorities he is referring to, but I have always read that homosexuals were born that way. Who in the name of heaven would choose such a life style? I am sure that everyone knows that homosexuals are hated by some and even cause

them harm. Remember poor Matthew Shepard, he was not only harmed, but left to die tied to a fence.

There are some who ridicule them and will not associate with them. They are discriminated against constantly.

Come on Father, do you really feel homosexuality is acquired?

Grace C. Ranalletta
 South Winton Road
 Rochester

Stick to subject or change name

To the editor:

What did Father Shamon's column, "A Word for Sunday," of June 13, 2002 have to do with the Scripture readings for the Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time? It absolutely escapes me how his opinions on homosexuality helped his readers to enter more fully into that Sunday's Eucharist. If you want to provide Father Shamon with

space for his opinions, you have every right to do so. But either give his column a new name or at least remind him that the column is supposed to inspire a deeper understanding of the Sunday readings of God's Word.

Father Robert J. Kennedy
 Blessed Sacrament Church
 Rochester

Get involved and stop the fingerpointing

To the editor:

Regarding the letter to the editor by James Carroll in your June 13 edition: I happen to have the same name, a similar-sounding address, but a totally different view of our church leadership. I believe that in general our Bishops and Cardinals shepherd their dioceses, clergy and laymen, with compassion, integrity, justice and prayerfulness. When the writer refers to a "doctrine of cover up," he takes the easy road. Unfortunately finger-pointing

conspiracy-mongers are all too prevalent both in society-at-large, and in our church. Their single-mindedness does a disservice to the issues and people involved. My advice to such people is to get involved in church and community leadership. Join some Parish organizations and community action groups, study the issues, but most of all quit the finger-pointing.

James P. Carroll
 Maplewood Ave.
 Spencerport

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