

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.

Church's failures led to new type of abuse

To the editor:

Deeply anxious that many beliefs and norms of the faith are under duress, protected by a sense of ecclesiastical immunity founded in canon law, ill-advised by behavioral scientists whose quality and validity are open to question, comforted by a sense of non-confessional confidentiality, immersed in bribery to avoid scandal at all costs while setting in motion an inevitably far more devastating one, the church has totally failed to deal with the primary problem, the care and welfare of its children victims.

And so now on to scapegoating with fervor. A deeply entrenched prejudice directed at homosexuals in general has resulted in the determination that they are unfit for the priesthood. As this purification process is to focus at the seminary level, one certainly wonders if such vehemence suggests for some a fear of having their own orientation discovered.

Most driving this aspect of the issue hope to reform the Church along strict conservative lines and in the typical authoritarian manner, the very mechanisms that led to the present crisis. They do this despite the knowledge that child sexual abuse, an all too common event in our society, is not gender specific with respect to both the abuser and those abused as well.

The Church's reaction to the problem of priest sexual abuse has unfolded as a process abusive in itself. Foremost it has continued the abuse of its children victims and their parents and guardians by the illogic of its responses at all levels.

Secondly it has heaped official abuse upon a whole community of people of homosexual orientation, already historically devastated by bias and abuse.

Lastly, it has directed abuse at its own priests, those uninvolved but suffering deeply from this scandal, by adding a new dimension for some that their own orientation makes them unfit to serve.

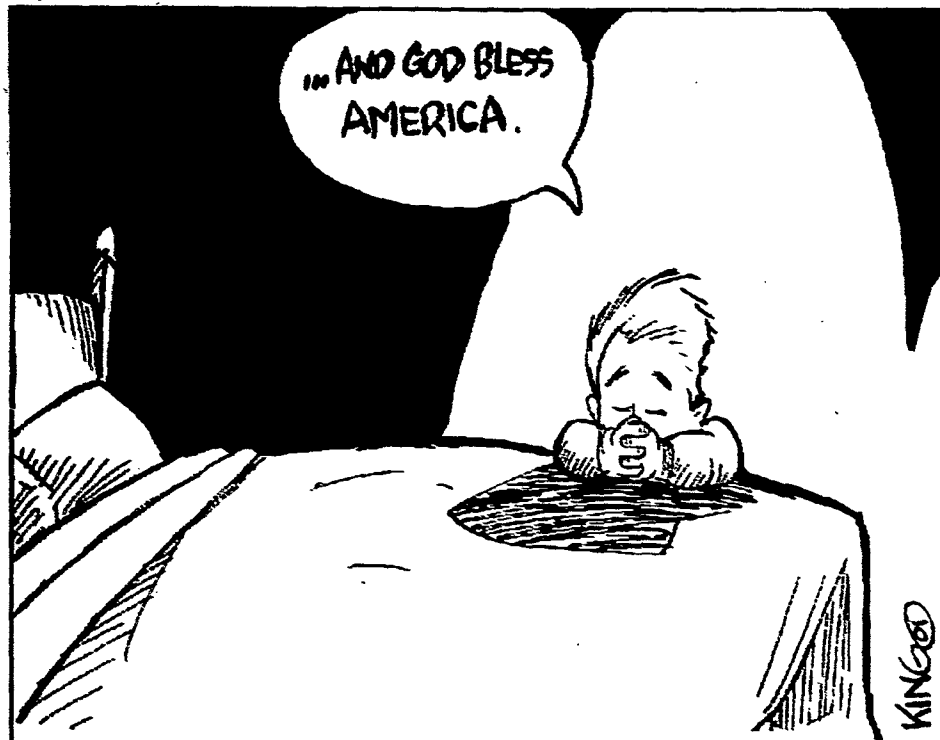
Some straight advice for those at the highest levels in the Church: Cease the arrogant denial. Admit to your mistaken notions. Stop saying that bishops have no real authority over what their priests do. Apply the same admonition up the line to those responsible for subordinate clergy and other personnel. Stop citing canon law as equivalent with or of higher authority than civil law. Finally, cease your attack on issues of orientation. Remember your priests who faithfully serve, and never forget how we your Church view the special nature and position of our children and their well-being.

The process of repair is now underway. The bishops of the United States have arrived at a decision. Zero tolerance has been replaced by zero ministry. Victims voice their unhappiness with these conclusions. The final say is Rome's in this wearying overtime games of strikes, outs, and almost outs.

Whatever is ultimately decided, an encompassing apology by a yet to be elected pope somewhere into the future will be required as a minimal beginning. Failure to move firmly will result in a more contracted Church, holding in its core center only those who believe without question.

Charles DeMarco
Shorewood Drive
Webster

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations. Its author identified himself as a Catholic and a retired physician.



Don't 'water down' prayers

To the editor:

This is with regard to the vocation prayer card being promoted in the Rochester Diocese by the Vocations Office. The prayer, in part, reads, "Call from among us priests, sisters, brothers, deacons and lay ministers."

The Church will go on, however few the brothers, sisters, deacons and lay ministers. The Church will not survive without priests. The core, the essence, the life, the vitality, the very heart of the Church is the Eucharist. The Mass is the life blood of the Church. The actual unfolding of the Eucharistic Mystery is completely and totally dependent upon the

ordained priesthood as instituted by Jesus Christ.

Actually, we all have Church vocations as we profess and live faithful obedience to the teachings and traditions of our beloved Roman Catholic Church. However, it becomes a limp, watered down vocations prayer when all vocations are corralled into it.

The shortage of priests is of crisis proportions in our diocese. Our united prayers for vocations must be specifically in support of priests and for more priest vocations, period.

Joanne Lepkowski
Ross Street, Owego

Consider senator's voting record

To the editor:

I commend Sen. James Alesi for his "yes" vote on the "Unborn Victims of Violence Act" that passed the New York state Senate 40 to 19 on May 5. This legislation would prohibit the assault or homicide of an unborn child during the commission of a crime against the child's mother. However, Sen. Richard Dollinger led the opposition to the bill.

In April Sen. Dollinger vociferously opposed the nomination of Father John Bonnici to the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York. Father Bonnici serves as Director of the Family

Life/Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of New York. Sen. Dollinger charged that Father would use his Board position to "implement policies that will be damaging to women and homosexuals." The majority disagreed with Sen. Dollinger and confirmed Father Bonnici.

These two examples illustrate Sen. Dollinger's hostile voting record on fundamental issues of human life. Catholic voters should know that Sen. Dollinger honors the abortion agenda over Catholic teachings.

Jeanne D. Sweeney
Nob Hill, Rochester

Believes it's time to rid seminaries of gays

To the editor:

Mary Ellen Lopata, of the Catholic Gay and Lesbian Family Ministry, recently (June 20) opined that "We know the Bible has nothing to say about sexual orientation."

This, of course, is a lie as revealed in the Old Testament regarding Sodom and Gomorrah and in the New Testament's Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans 1:21-32 regarding unnatural intercourse.

Now that homosexuality in certain seminaries has been exposed, it is time to rid ourselves of this plague.

Michael S. Rose's book "Goodbye, Good Men" tells how homosexual politics discriminates against healthy, heterosexual priests.

Until our Church purges itself of the gay and lesbian disorder, the salvation of

souls including the homosexuals will be unnecessarily compromised.

Robert Bart
Ithaca

Praises late monsignor

To the editor:

Monsignor William Roche was a kind and holy man whose good works will live in the hearts of men forever.

The God he served so faithfully all the days of his life sustained him on his last journey from California to Rochester.

Welcome home, Father Roche. "Enter into the joy of your Lord."

Eileen Lord
Green Knolls Drive, Rochester

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