



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

More Legists

present discipline.

"The lack of priests," the Pontiff noted, "is certainly a sadness for any local Church," but to be utterly rejected is "the framework of systematic propaganda which is hostile to celibacy. Such propaganda finds support and complicity in some of the mass media." The shortage of priests that has afflicted the Church in the post-conciliar period, he pointed out, "was based on an erroneous understanding of — and sometimes even conscious bias against - the doctrine of the Conciliar Magisterium. Herein lies undoubtedly one of the reasons for the great number of defections experienced then by the Church, losses which did serious harm to the pastoral ministry and priestly vocations, especially missionary vocations" (address of Nov. 5, 1990). How ironic that writers like Father McBrien who presume to speak for "the spirit of Vatican II" are at complete odds with the actual teaching of the Popes and the most recent Écumenical Council supporting mandated priestly celibacy for priests of the Western Church (see the Vatican IFdocument "Life of

Priests," 16).

Father McBrien is indeed a "professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame." However, not receiving nor having requested from his bishop necessary certification as a Catholic theologian, he cannot be regarded as one.

James Likoudis Montour Falls

Theologians try to learn from reality

To the editor:

While procreation is occasionally the purpose of sexual intercourse, Catholic married couples say, in reality, most of the time the purpose is to sustain and enhance their mutual love and commitment. As part of their discernment responsibility, theologians began to explore this witness and came to understand that reality. Learning from both married couples and theologians, the bishops affirmed this reality during Vatican II when they put the unitive value of sex on a par with procreation. That's how the theological process works.

While self-indulgent sex is

occasionally the purpose of same-sex sexual behavior (and opposite-sex behavior too), committed gay and lesbian couples say, in reality, most of the time the purpose is to sustain and enhance their mutual love and commitment. As part of their discernment responsibility, some theologians are exploring this witness and trying to understand it. That's the theological process at work - trying to understand and interpret reality and making sense of it in relation to God, neighbor, and self. That's what Pat Schoelles explains in her July 3 column.

Could this process result in a change in teaching as it

did concerning the purpose of sex in marriage? We'll have to wait and see. However, Pat Schoelles concludes in her article, ignoring this reality puts us at risk of becoming a "polarized, absolutist society."

Mary Ellen Lopata Catholic Gay & Lesbian **Family Ministry**

Gays not so by choice

To the editor:

One of the things that has struck me over the years about most of the letters to the Courier is their gloomy joylessness. Christian Faith

would hardly get this impression from most of the letters to the editor in the Courier. A case in point: the vicious attacks leveled at Sr. Patricia Schoelles for a recent article on homosexuality. Whatever people may think about the content of her article, why such vitriolic reaction? After all, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says that people who are homosexual "do not choose their homosexual condition." The American Bishops in a 1976 pastoral letter said: "Some people find themselves through no fault of their own to have a homosexual orientation." Also one can say that St. \$ Paul through no fault of his own did not know that homosexual people "do not choose their homosexual & condition," when he condemned homosexual activity in Romans 1:27. We of course have no way of knowing whether, if he had had * A this information, he might * have written differently.

Rev. William H. Shannon French Road Rochester

Where are supporters?

To the editor:

What? Not one voice raised in support of Sister Schoelles? I don't have the column ("Debate on sexual behavior needs thoughtful approach," July 3, 2003) here to consult; I mailed it to a friend. But I was delighted to see a sensible, thoughtful point of view like that. Surely I am not the only one.

Dorothy Reid Reservoir Road Geneseo

The Catholic Courier provides space for readers to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome original, signed letters about current issues affecting

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions expressed.

Letters must not exceed 300 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.

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