



Rebecca Gosselin/Catholic Courier

MORE LETTERS

'Thinking stuff' merits the first read

To the editor:

Reader Dorothy Reid of Geneseo is right. It is so good to read opinions from the various columnists that appear in the *Courier*. Sister Pat Schoelles has taken a good, deal of heat for her comments about homosexuality and deserves to hear from those of us who are pleased to read her thoughtful and intelligent comments. I apologize for being silent for so long. These columnists are frequently the targets of negative letters, yet their education, experience, knowledge and courage are shared with all of us. We are not required to accept all that we read, but it is great to have these opinions available so that we can be better informed Catholics. I read the thoughts presented by Fathers McBrien and Shamon as well as Sister Schoelles before the news. Some positive comments about them in the letters to the editor instead of all the complaints would be a nice change. Hats off! to the *Courier* for continuing to print this great "thinking-stuff" for

our enrichment and thanks to Ms. Reid for bringing it to our attention.

Anne VanDurme
Jefferson Street
Dansville

Three writers cover range of faith views

To the editor:

Embarrassed by a letter from Dorothy Reid ("Where are supporters?" July 24) regarding the apparent lack of support for the arguments posited by Sister Schoelles' sensitive column of July 3, 2003 ("Debate on sexual behavior needs thoughtful approach"), I am forced to agree with the letter writer that Sister Schoelles did indeed present the subject in a compelling, faithful and Christian manner.

Sister Schoelles, along with Father McBrien and Father Shamon, have consistently presented the Catholic faith, in all of its breadth, in instructive and homily-like presentations. I look forward to their continued presence in the *Courier*.

Now that makes at least two of us, Ms. Reid.

Alfonso R. Borrelli
Blue Pond Manor
Scottsville

God is present in times of uncertainty and insecurity

Our school moved this week, and it was pretty chaotic. All the securities we ordinarily rely on were gone — our e-mail was down, our phones were moved before we were, staff members absent-mindedly drove to the former site rather than the new one. Goodbyes to friends at the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School were emotional and sad, and we all felt a sense of loss as we departed from our beautiful and familiar setting.

I kept reminding myself that we were moving because of some very positive developments indicating that St. Bernard's is ready for its own place.

This is not the case for many people. Over the course of history, to undertake a move because things are going well is fairly unusual. Refugees and emigrants most often leave their homes because of threat, fear, poverty or starvation. After experiencing our very minor sense of disequilibrium, I am aware that it takes a huge incentive for people to uproot from one location to another.

Leaving the security of familiar places and arrangements to face the anxiety of a journey is a taxing venture. Like the song from "Cheers," we all long to be where "everybody knows our name."

It is strange to discover, though, that the Bible has a different idea of being uprooted. In Scripture, God very often encounters human beings when they are



Patricia Schoelles, SSJ

The Moral Life

not at home. The very origin of the Hebrew people began with a call to Abram to leave his home to travel to an unknown destination. In the process of that journey, which had to be more than a little unsettling, God began to form the chosen people.

Moses and the Israelites were happy to depart from the slavery they had known in Egypt, but quickly resorted to complaining as they moved through the desert. During their 40-year journey, they learned to let God be their guide, to let God supply for their needs and to become a people rather than a collection of individuals.

Mary and Joseph just "happened" to be on a trip when Jesus was born. The message there is that God is born into our lives when we are away from the securities and supports of ordinary life. God comes to us in unusual or special ways precisely in those moments when we are facing anxiety, insecurity, disruption or loss.

In the many feeding miracles of the New Testament, the people who receive unexpected nourishment are

usually far from the town, distant from their local eateries. There, they learn that God will feed them, that their needs will be met, that God is trustworthy and that they can rely on God.

The musings of our few days of transition have suggested that while moving is disruptive, filled with anxiety and sometimes downright scary, we can learn from the stories of Scripture that God is present when we are away from home and facing insecurity. My favorite story is from Matthew 14, when Jesus walks across the water toward the disciples' boat. Peter wants to get closer to Jesus, so he embarks on a walk across the sea himself. While out there, he loses heart and begins to sink. Jesus reaches out and saves him.

I like that story because it's clear that Peter was already a friend of Jesus before he left the safety of the boat. In the process of facing the waves of the sea and his own irrational position, Peter came to a new knowledge of himself, and of Jesus. What he might have realized is that he was weaker than he thought, but Jesus was his savior. Big realizations for anybody!

Unlike us at St. Bernard's, you may not be physically moving anywhere. But other insecurities in your life may invite some new awareness of yourself and God.

Sister Schoelles is president of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry.

Letters Policy

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 church life.

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.

Mail letters to: *Catholic Courier*, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624 or e-mail to letters@catholiccourier.com. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for verification.