



Rebecca Gosselin/Catholic Courier

MORE LETTERS

teaching and speaking with its voice of authority.

**James Lynn
Smith Street
Mumford**

Wants story on life issues

To the editor:

Your lead article ("Agencies seek solutions to environmental concerns") in the Sept. 18 issue was quite informative and we certainly learned more about ways in which hospitals are working to protect the environment. We'd also like to see an article about the ways in which Catholic hospitals are incorporating Catholic teachings regarding today's pressing social justice and life issues, especially where they are being pressured to compromise moral laws in favor of secular laws.

For example, Catholic hospitals are struggling to serve the health care needs of people in poor neighborhoods and to respect life by offering hospice care instead of mercy killing and health care/counseling for expectant mothers instead of abortion. Perhaps you could do another lead arti-

cle describing the ways in which Catholic hospitals are trying to serve the poor and uninsured and to protect the dignity of human life, from conception to natural death.

**Bruno Petrauskas
Austin Drive
Penfield**

Likes images

To the editor:

Every week along with the letters on the commentary page there appears a beautiful color photo of a flower. A literal feast for the eyes amid the printed words. I'm sure many others also are appreciative and thankful for the visual treat. Thank you.

**Barbara Fraenhof
State Route 17C
Owego**

Easy answer

To the editor:

Question: How to get rid of Weapons of Mass Destruction without any bloodshed?

Answer: Close all abortion clinics.

**Joseph Benedict
West Buffalo Street
Ithaca**

The joy of teaching in the early fall

I'm convinced that there's no better place in the world to work than on a college campus in the month of September. The same probably could be said of elementary- and secondary-school settings, but I'm more familiar with colleges and know how good it is to return after the summer break.

In September, everyone is refreshed and ready to go. Old friends reconnect; new friendships are ready to be made. Student newcomers are only four years out of eighth grade — not as intimidating as they may appear.

In September, no team has yet had a losing season. No student has yet flunked a course. No faculty member has yet been denied a raise or promotion. And although some may not have a parking space next to the building where they teach and others may have experienced bookstore glitches, most faculty are happy, content and grateful to be engaged in the privileged work of contributing to the development of human potential.

If only the September glow could run straight through to March, it would be paradise!

Thoreau once remarked that "most men lead lives of quiet desperation." If he were writing today, he might also include women in that assessment. Even if you disagree with his "most" quantification, you will have noticed, if you spend any



Father William J. Byron, SJ

For The Journey

time at all on a college campus, that more than a few of the folk Thoreau had in mind seem to wind up on college and university faculties.

Too bad that these few don't catch the spirit of service and share the deep sense of vocation that add meaning to the lives of so many faculty professionals who have something that no amount of money or acclaim could give them.

It has to make you wonder, when those long winters of campus discontent set in, how professors whose teaching enriches the lives of others can let the life of their own minds just go flat.

The great American church historian, Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, reserved his severest criticism for faculty colleagues who "simply stopped reading; they don't read anymore." And his friend, Msgr. George Higgins, the expert on Catholic social thought who specialized in labor issues, once remarked to Ms-

gr. Ellis and me: "I've never been bored a day in my life. How can anyone be bored when there are so many books yet to be read?"

If your early-fall reflections bring back good memories of student days, take a moment to send a note of appreciation to teachers and other guides who made those days memorable. Think now of ways you might assist classroom teachers to supplement their income by consulting during the year and taking on vacation projects for pay in the summer months.

And do all you can to prevent educational pay levels from falling too low. Money is not the only thing, but it is not an unimportant consideration in attracting and holding good teachers.

All of us, regardless of where we work and what we do, can find help in fending off the demon of "quiet desperation" by reading *Self Renewal*, John Gardner's small classic (Harper, 1963). He ends the book on this note: "One may not quite accept Oliver Wendell Holmes' dictum — 'Every calling is great when greatly pursued' — but the grain of truth is there."

And that's a truth most educators gladly recommit themselves to at this time of the year.

Father Byron is columnist for Catholic News Service and may be reached at wbyron@loyola.edu.

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.

Letters Policy