

Letter To The Editor

April 6, 2007-Church has room for girls and boys to participate
Letters, Stamford Advocate

To the editor:

There is a lot of "sound and fury" over the publicity about girls being replaced as altar servers (Advocate news story, Feb. 24). Some churches are urging only boys serve on the altar as an inducement to vocations.

I say there is room for both.

In the Gospel of Matthew (19:13-15), Jesus rebukes his disciples for trying to prevent the children from coming to him. He said, "Let the children be, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for as such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Note: He does not say, "boys only." He wants the girls, too, not only in the garden but also on the altar.

I applaud the Voice of the Faithful for castigating those churches that deny girls from serving on the altar of Christ. And I chastise the letter-writer for calling the VOTF the "Voice of Dissenters" for doing so (Letters from Readers, March 5).

When the VOTF organized (in response to the sexual abuse scandals) its desire was to work hand-in-hand with diocesan officials in partnership (laity and hierarchy) in solving problems. But Bishop William Lori refused their offer, saying, "The goals of the group are not in keeping with church teaching." This is the same kind of Pharasaic accusations often used to put Jesus to the test. I admire the VOTF for speaking out against wrongdoing in the church and proposing to work jointly in seeking solutions.

It was the disassembling of traditions, customs and practices of the founding church by the Second Vatican Council, and the soul-wrenching exposure of the cover-up by many bishops of the priestly sexual abuse scandals, that caused the dwindling numbers of the priesthood. The U.S. Conference of American Bishops has been Frisbee-tossing these problems for decades without resolution.

These are the real problems with the church. Chasing little girls off the altar and maligning the VOTF are not the answer.

John P. Gawlak

Stamford