

Editorial & Opinion

Cites Scriptures to dispute column's thrust

Letters

Evangelization is affirming faith

To the editor:

Pentecost '88 has brought the word evangelization into the limelight. People stumble over its pronunciation and wonder about its meaning. But the process of evangelization is easier than its pronunciation, and its meaning is simply sharing God's love.

There are as many forms of evangelization as there are evangelizers. No two evangelizers are exactly the same, because no two people have the same vision of God or the same relationship with God. The message of God's love that we proclaim depends on our personal relationship with God.

The call to evangelize is an invitation to share in Christ's ministry. It is a call to spread the Good News by speaking, listening, praising, empathizing, encouraging, sympathizing and expressing love for others.

Evangelization starts with the self. It is being aware of one's talents, knowing they are gifts of God to be used for the glory of God, discovering one's purpose in life and putting it into action.

Evangelization takes enthusiasm. An awareness of God's constant presence in our lives and His personal interest in us transforms us from ordinary beings to persons of enthusiasm, a word that comes from the Greek "enthousiazin," which means "to be inspired by God or possessed by God." To be inspired is to recognize the Spirit of the Lord in our lives and to burn with the special flame that is constantly being rekindled as one sheds the light of Christ in the lives of others.

Evangelization is not something you do once a week at church, or once a month at committee meetings. It is something you do all the time, just by being yourself, as long as that self is attuned to God.

Evangelization is not preaching at everyone you meet, knocking people over the head with religious talk, or boring people to death.

Evangelization is sharing faith, affirming faith and inspiring faith. It is sharing one's views about God, affirming others in their devotion and inspiring love for God in the hearts of others.

Lucile Zimnoch
Lancaster Road
Wethersfield, Ct.

Father McBrien put cart before the horse

To the editor:

I feel I must reply to Father Richard McBrien's article in the June 16 issue of the *Courier-Journal*, entitled "Devotion to Jesus or the Kingdom?"

He implies that we are to put the Kingdom of God ahead of Jesus. I believe he is putting the "cart before the horse." He states that "Jesus did not preach himself." In John 14:7 Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." In John 10:9, Jesus said, "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved." There are many other scripture verses where Jesus did indeed preach himself.

After we truly invite Jesus into our hearts as Lord and Savior, then we desire to love, forgive, have mercy and compassion, etc. This is the Kingdom of God. It's not either/or, it's both.

Muriel Schultz
Kentwood Drive
Rochester

C-J Letters Policy

The *Courier-Journal* wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome all signed, original 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

To the editor:

As a born-again Christian (John 3:2-12, 1 Peter 1:17-25), I read with much despair Father McBrien's Essays in Theology (on) "Devotion to Jesus or the Kingdom?" (C-J June 16), reflecting upon his belief as to Jesus' proper status within a "mainstream" Christian's life today. Unfortunately, he neglects to accurately portray our Lord as He is today, in His glorified state, as our perfect High Priest, the second person of the Triune God (Hebrews 1:1-4). Doesn't Father McBrien realize that the Jesus that humbled Himself and became man for the purpose of our atonement and salvation will never again be seen, let alone dealt with, as He who walked the Earth as the obedient Son of God (Revelation 19:11-21)? That the whole purpose of His ministry was to glorify the Father (John 17:1-26) as He is now glorified (Hebrews 1:6-12) and at the same time to carry out the Father's perfect Redemptive Plan? I respectfully ask one and all to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as he or she reads Isaiah, chapters 63-66, the entire book of Hebrews and the first five chapters of Revelation of Jesus to John. Jesus is now clothed in Majesty and Righteousness (Psalm 93), is our one and only mediator with the Father (1 Timothy 2:5 and Hebrews 7:24-28) and is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2) He is no longer the meek, humble servant, but the living, most high God (Revelation 1:5-14)!!!

If one is truly Born of the Spirit, you rejoice in the completeness that Jesus represents and allow the in-dwelling Holy Spirit to manifest Him to others by the Spirit's fruit (Galatians 5:22-26). This is what Christianity is all about. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" Jesus is our all (Ephesians 3:1-21, Colossians 2:4-10)!!! Please, let us not make the mistake of equating Christianity with religion. One of the aspects of religion is that it bases a man's acceptance by God on behavior. Christianity bases a man's acceptance by God on belief, the Father's gift of Jesus' faith to us (Romans 3:21-31, Galatians 2:15-21, Ephesians 2:4-10). Jesus' work as a humble servant is complete. The virtues He taught and fruit of the Spirit that will characterize the true

Christians walk, flow in hand as "rivers of living water," as a natural course. To imply that a Christian's life is incomplete or should be separated from our wholeness in Jesus simply because His earthly ministry was characterized by obedience, meekness and an upward direction of all glory to the Father only, is to totally ignore the magnificence and awesomeness of His completed work on the Cross (Colossians 2:6-10) and His present glorified state (Philippians 2:9-11). Father McBrien's essay is all well and good in the context of the suffering servant, but please, He is risen, He is alive, He is the glorified Son and He is seated — work complete — at the right hand of the Father. What Jesus then commanded His disciples not to do with Him, we now must do — that is to glorify and magnify His name alone (Isaiah 42:8; Psalm 35:27, 28; Philippians 1:19-21)!

"Love, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, justice and hope" must also follow as a proof of our born-again nature and cannot be separated from Jesus perfect Being.

I would like to close in a spirit of love by bringing to mind these truths as found in God's

Word as related by the apostle Paul via the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Hence, now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed you from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2) and "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, Abba, 'Father!' The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him" (Romans 8:14-17).

"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth" (John 4:23,24).

Albert Neri
Sansharon Drive
Rochester



Orders of Middle Ages offer examples of obedience

To the editor:

Over the past eight years I have made it a pastime of mine to study the growth and development of the Church. From what I have seen and read there has been a growing resistance toward papal authority, and in general most of the Churches teachings regarding obedience. This resistance really became widespread during the time of the Protestant Reformation and has had plenty of support unto this day.

I have a thought that I'd like to share, not to provoke anyone, but rather to draw attention to a way that works, at least for me.

Back in the Middle Ages, only one identifiable Church was visible, but within that Church there lay many religious orders with certain identifiable charisms. These religious orders flourished due to the very nature of their birth. They were an ordered expression of the

Gospel, unique from each other but complementary and supporting the mission of Mother Church.

What kept them vibrant and enduring was of course the Holy Spirit but with that, the order set forth in their rule and constitution. Each religious order lived out its mission in a covenant relationship with Mother Church and each other. Thus, they worked in the vineyard of the Lord in harmony, but to that each individual in those communities had to make that rule and covenant their own, and for the love of Christ, be obedient to the demands of that rule and covenant.

In these times the form of the Church has grown and matured to what I would compare to say for instance, an infant to an adolescent Church. In all Christianity the Catholic Church is a unique covenant community with a rule and constitution. Obedience is still an

important part of that covenant also. Not a blind obedience like that of a child, rather a chosen more mature form born out of mutual respect and love. I will add though, if adolescence is by nature, a time of growth, pain, testing, doubt and confusion. This would also be quite natural in the development of the Church, but let's not be too comfortable with this notion, for a wise man once said; "Sometimes a mother nourishes and takes care of her son and after he has grown up he does not obey his mother because of his pride, he makes fun of her and looks down on her. The mother is like the Church and the son is the faithful, after she has nourished and taken good care of them, they later look down on her and make fun of her and do not want to be obedient" (Blessed Brother Giles, "The Little Flowers of St. Francis," by Raphael Brown).

When I have made being Catholic my expression of the Gospel and live that out in a covenant love for my shepherd and fellow pilgrims, only then will my obedience be sweet and pleasing to God. I pray that I complain no more for this makes bitter my gift of obedience.

Mark A. Petersheim
Damsen Road
Rochester

Group protests 'brutal treatment' of Andrews

To the editor:

We are writing to object to the brutal treatment of Joan Andrews, a prisoner of conscience, in Broward Correctional Institute, Florida.

Two and a half years ago, Joan pulled the plug from an abortion suction machine and was sentenced to five years in prison; that same day, the same judge who sentenced Joan gave four-year sentences to two men convicted of having been accomplices to murder.

After a brief stay in a Delaware prison facility, Joan was returned to BCI in June. Even though she never left police custody, Joan was

subjected to an internal strip search by one male and five female guards. Her clothes were ripped off and she was held down while a "cavity" search was conducted. This degrading, dehumanizing act of violence was "like an act of rape," she wrote in an argued letter to her sister.

As people in the community recognizing the connection between abortion and war, Joan personifies for us a life dedicated to a consistent life ethic. This 40-year-old pacifist — "I'm against all war, even if the war is just" — was active in both anti-war and civil-rights movements.

Anyone wishing to protest this degrading assault on her person should write to Governor Robert Martinez, The Capital, Tallahassee, Florida 32301 and urge most vociferously that Joan be released immediately.

Faith and Resistance Group
St. Bridget's Drive
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above letter was sent by: Father Bob Werth, Father Dan O'Shea, Jan Bezila, Deacon Eugene Fuerst, Kathleen and Bill Cusack, Father Tony Valente, Carol Crossed, Father Tony Mugavero, Judith Kiehl, Father Jim Callan, Karen Webb and Dr. Mike Affleck.

Asks deacon to 'shake' her way

To the editor:

I read with interest your article (C-J June 30: "Deacon continues quest for recognition of black Catholics") regarding "Deacon John Holmes has been trying to shake the Catholic Church from the outside ... Now he's going to try from the inside."

A program which ordains a married man yet discriminates against a single, religious person merely on the basis of sex, leaves some doubt in my mind as to its being sexist.

If "there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all 'one' in Christ Jesus;" and seeing that even Rome, now, has declared sexism a sin, Deacon John, shake a little my way.

Marion L. Brown
Irving Road
Rochester