



Column on clerical morale ignored 'loyal' priests' difficulties

To the editor:

True to form, Father McBrien's column (*Catholic Courier*, Feb. 16: "Church's life suffers from low morale among priests") examines an issue imperfectly because it is not comprehensive, nor is it objective.

It is suffused with empathy for the clergy who disagree with the Pope, and disdain for the clergy to who hold differently. Reference is made only to the tribulations endured because of the presence of priests "loyal" to the Holy See. I should think that the tribulation endured by the "loyal" priests would be much greater since it is evident from the actions of the American Catholic Bishops in conference that a ratio of 70 percent or more is lukewarm at best to the interests of the Papacy.

Father McBrien in his column is "disturbed" that bishops cannot be selected by priests and lay ministers thereby preventing the selection of those "loyal" to Rome. That sounds like something that occurred about 400-500 years ago and the principals were Martin Luther and Henry VIII.

It is difficult for me to understand how an individual like Father McBrien can have such an abysmal understanding of the structure of the Church. He apparently believes it should be democratic, not hierarchical.

If that is to be preferred why did Christ bestow on St. Peter the "office of Peter?" Why did He not tell the Apostles to vote on the course of the Church? We know what Jesus did say on the subject. John 21:15-17 tells us.

What Christ said established the primacy of Peter. And this is what cloy those of Father McBrien's ilk. They cannot "dictate" or "manipulate" Catholicism. There have been plenty of instances when they have done just that where they have gained the ascendancy.

When you compare their program for Catholicism with Rome's you are compelled by basics alone to admit that it does not even cast a shadow to Rome's. Why? Because it is subjective. It is what someone

like Father McBrien, who is as fallible as you and I, has concocted. Yet, in effect, we are asked to accept this procedure of electing bishops to that of Christ's in John 21:15-17. And yet this is typical of what the Bishops and their bureaucracy would serve us.

As an example, observe what happened to the U.S. Bishops letter on women. After issuance of the Pope's letter — "The Dignity of Women," which rightly demolished its ersatz premises, the Bishops and their bureaucracy are scrambling to free themselves from their own net of falsity. (See C-J, Feb. 2, page 5).

Immersed in all of this is a "crisis of faith" that is enormous in its dimensions and implications. Not only is the Papacy removed from steering the ship of the Church to be replaced by a "popular" coterie of bishops, but where is there room for the mysterium so essential to our faith in such an environment?

An organization of this type to guide the affairs of the Church in America would soon degenerate — if it has not already — into an arena for the various factions to display their "political" aptitude.

Reader deplores letter's offensive language

To the editor:

I was amazed to read in Mr. Aquila's letter (Feb. 23 *Courier*: "Fr. Haring errs in bending theology to the popular will") the defamatory language he used when he spoke of Father Bernard Haring: "... Father Bernard Haring's dishonest position on birth control." It is difficult to imagine a more gratuitous insult to as distinguished a scholar and author as Father Haring. Mr. Aquila has every right to disagree with Father Haring's position on *Humanae Vitae*, if he chooses, but his offensive language is to be deplored.

Father Haring's field is moral theology and he has written extensively in this area on such subjects as Penance, Christian maturity, Christian renewal, sacramental spirituality and Christian protes... HIS writ-

Opening windows allowed post-conciliar 'whirlwind'

To the editor:

Little did Pope John XXIII realize that his "aggornimento" — opening the windows of the church to let in some fresh air — would result in such a whirlwind.

Many of the changes introduced after Vatican II were very good and perhaps overdue. But many things, though mindlessly demoted by some, are still very much "in" — prayer, daily Mass, the rosary, the stations, frequent confession, the first Fridays devotion, benediction, etc.

Some things that have occurred, however, have not been beneficial. When attendance at Mass on Saturday was first approved to fulfill one's obligation, it was meant for those who had to work on Sunday and found it very difficult to attend or who had a very special reason. Now, almost everybody takes advantage of this relaxation and thereby eliminates God from Sunday. Not only that. They do all kinds of things that would better be left undone — mow the lawn, shop, wash the car, clean the house, etc. I'm not referring necessarily to the letter of the law in keeping the sabbath holy, but to the spirit of reverencing God, enjoying His creation, and rejoicing with our family and friends. In the time of Moses, the sabbath was to be a day of complete rest. "Anyone who does work on that day shall be put to death." (Exodus, 35:2). Granted that has been changed. But it does give one some perception of how seriously it was once regarded.

Another example. The Church still regards all Fridays as days of penance by abstinence. Those in Lent are mandated; those outside of Lent are counselled. If we do eat meat on one of the counselled Fridays for one reason or another, we should substitute another good work or penance.

How many do this? What would we do if we were still bound by all the food restrictions and regulations imposed on the Hebrews? (Leviticus, Chapter 11).

More seriously, the contraception mentality among our people has resulted in the participation by some in the heinous sin of abortion. How accurately Pope Paul VI perceived the evils involved with contraception. The notion of not wanting a baby easily leads to abortion if pregnancy occurs. And if we can kill babies, why not the old, the disabled, the handicapped, etc?

The liturgy and the rubrics of the Mass, our central act of worship, have been developed and refined over some 2,000 years with the guidance and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. It ill behooves any priest to substitute his own way to that of the Church.

Unfortunately, there has been an erosion in the acceptance of the teaching magisterium. We seem to forget the Authority behind the Church. "I will entrust to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you declare bound on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19).

When the Church imposed the disciplines of fast days, the Eucharistic fast, abstinence on Fridays, and the evils of sin and their consequences were more often heard in our churches than they are now, there was no shortage of vocations as there is today in the relaxed "it's your own responsibility" atmosphere. It makes one wonder!

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Rte. 14

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into a bureaucracy.

3) An organization that has nearly completed a plush headquarters behemoth in Washington, D.C., estimated to cost \$30 million to ensconce its bureaucracy.

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No to dogma by consensus

To the editor:

Congratulations! At a sad and increasingly decadent time when the irreligious adrift would establish dogma by consensus, you allow the lightweight McBrien — who is presented as your theologian by choice — to propose the selection of Bishops by popular vote! A marvelous presentation indeed for our diocesan paper as it inaugurates its new and meaningful logo — the *Catholic Courier*. Indeed! A rose? by any other name...

Thank God, however, that the Church founded on Peter stands firm against such idiocy. "Stat crux dum volvitur orbis!"

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