

Story on Jesus and culture mislead, lacked orthodoxy

To the editor:

The more I read our diocesan newspaper, the more I wonder at the direction it seems to be taking. I am led to ask, "What is the purpose or objective of the *Catholic Courier*?" As a youth leader, I continue to hope that the focus shifts more toward challenging instruction and education in the faith, and away from the ambiguous, pseudo-intellectual, pseudo-theological ruminations that serve only to confuse rather than to edify the reader, especially the young readers with whom I deal.

The title of a recent article, "Culture colors face of Jesus," (May 25) suggests that our Lord changes as our culture changes. The article includes quotations that reinforce this impression. We are informed that the "myth of Jesus" must be retold by each generation, and that the "new images are intended to counter something that rings false to the culture or to the artist." Furthermore, we are assured that "divergent views of Jesus are not necessarily bad, nor is one individual portrayal necessarily more valid than another."

I am not aware, nor would I ever suggest to the young people I instruct, that they should feel free to interpret God as they would like. There is no saying of Christ's that sounds even remotely like, "I am Whoever you want Me to be." Instead, the teachings of the Church guided by the Holy Spirit seem to present a rather definitive picture of Jesus Christ. It is intellectually insulting and morally misleading to suggest that it is wise for Catholics to seriously consider filmmakers as a valid authority in defining the Divine Person of Jesus.

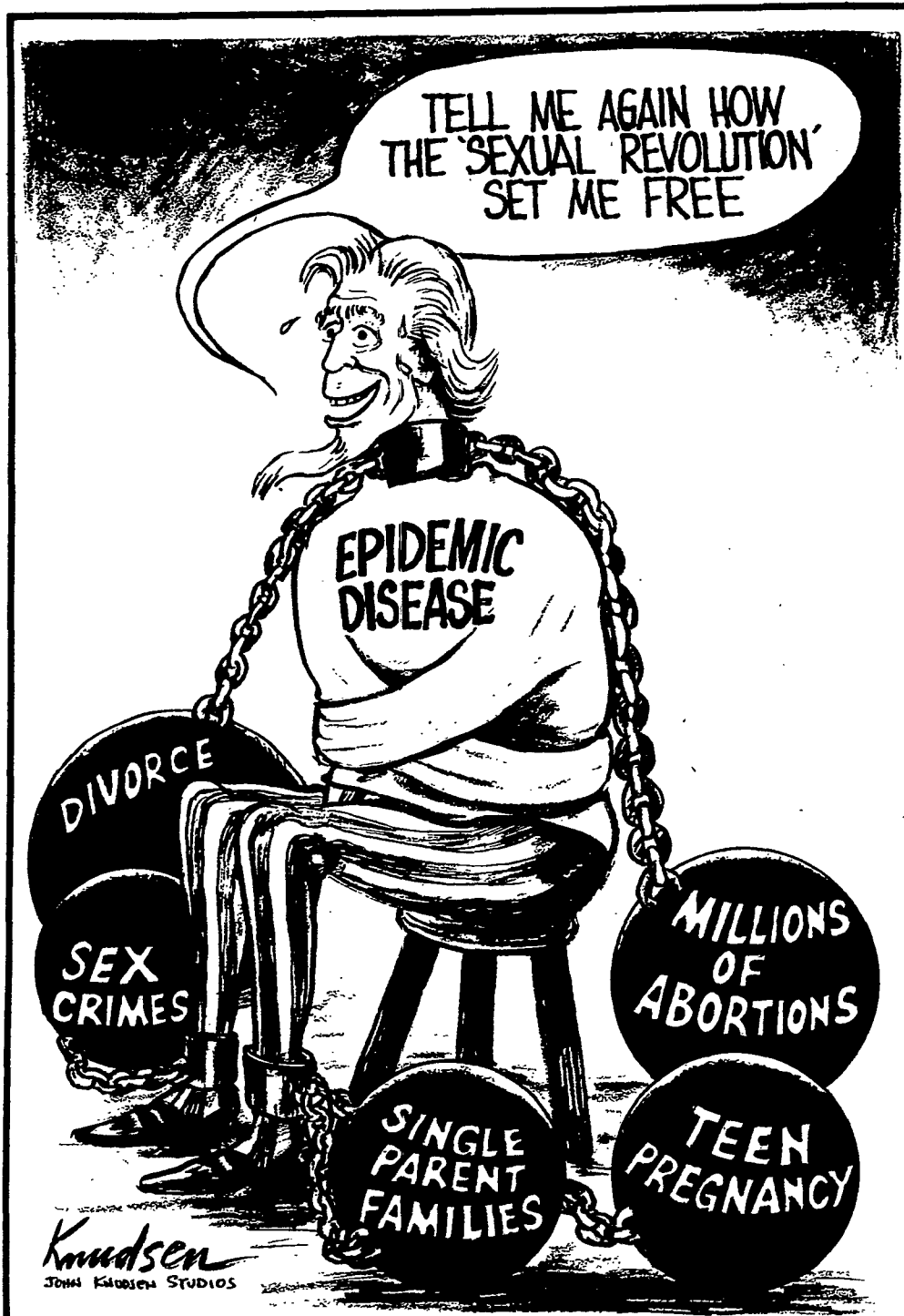
To be allowed to interpret God subjectively would certainly appeal to the baser instincts in the human heart, however.

Think of the behaviors, attitudes, and positions we could attribute to God and excuse in ourselves if God would cooperate and become what we wanted Him to be. He might even become a She, and we could begin to revise Scripture, prayers, and the liturgy to fit the God of our creation! Furthermore, we could reason that if God changes with the culture, then surely we could argue that it was the culture that prevented that particular Jesus from establishing a line of female priests and bishops, but that our Jesus advocates changing all of that too, perhaps by having all of us become more Episcopalian.

Sound familiar? Wait! We may be on to something here. Now that I think about it, this "culture changes Jesus" article does follow the current diocesan trends of moral relativism, situational ethics, anti-Papal authority, theological subjectivism, and secularization of the Divine. So it could be said that our diocesan newspaper is "feeding its sheep," but what's on the menu — or its political/theological agenda?

So my questions remain: How does the *Catholic Courier* feed our youth? What education is it providing? What direction is it encouraging? Whose faith is it defending? In challenging love, the same questions must be asked of our bishop, to whom we should be able to look confidently for all of these. Yet to allow the one diocesan publication to mislead, misdirect, and misinform its readers — with articles deliberately lacking in Catholic Truth, orthodoxy, and faith — is a serious failing on the part of the local Catholic leadership.

Edward R. Gaffney
Main Street
Gorham, N.Y.



Father McBrien is 'professor of wishy-washiness, fence-straddling'

To the editor:

"Lord, give us the courage to change those things that can be changed, the patience to pray for change in those things we need to change but can't, and the wisdom to know the difference." That prayer is a paraphrase of a prayer many of us are familiar with, but few of us use.

Father McBrien is Professor of Wishy-washiness. Instead of teaching the Catholic version of Christianity, he teaches the wisdom of fence-straddling, and the saintli-

ness of pluralism.

God's Word to the church in Laodicea was: "...I know your deeds; I know you are neither hot nor cold. How I wish you were one or the other — hot or cold! But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth!..." (Rev. 3:15-16).

I can remember, as a child, deploring the sight of, or reading about, someone being executed for a crime while pleading for mercy. There was always a priest present,

Good confessors promote vocations

To the editor:

Who Is He and We Shall Praise Him? There is a force in the Church for drawing souls to the priesthood and religious life, among its many other benefits, that is overlooked in our churches today. The spiritual formation of a soul is effected by having a regular confessor — a priest who is there when and where he is expected to be present with a sign indicating who is there.

People choose their confessor as carefully as their physician. Be sensitive to our needs in this regard and in the years to come, you will reap a harvest.

Mary Rose Locke
Park Avenue
Rochester



Catholic Courier Letters Policy

The *Catholic Courier* 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 choose letters for publication 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 of the letter writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: **Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624.** Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.

praying for the soul of the condemned person as the State was exercising the power given it by God, to carry out the just punishment of society for a crime considered serious enough to warrant the ultimate penalty of death.

There is certainly nothing wrong with working toward ending the death penalty, so long as we never lose sight of the need to heal the souls of those who are guilty of such serious crimes against humanity that our hearts cry out for vengeance!

Nor is there anything wrong with working toward an end to war and injustice but the only control we have in this is through

Protests attacks on Bishop Clark

To the editor:

I am writing to protest recent attacks on Bishop Clark concerning his orthodoxy in allowing women to serve as lectors and Eucharistic ministers. In a recent class taught by Father Thomas Mull it was explained to us that while women may not be ordained to ministry they are permitted to serve within parishes. Bishop Clark has chosen not to ordain men or women to these ministries on a diocesan level thus leaving parishes free to choose men and women to serve in these capacities. At a recent meeting the American bishops had with the Pope this issue was discussed. The Pope did not make a decision on this issue thus leaving the pastoral practice to the discretion of the local ordinary.

Knowing what a sensitive, caring shepherd Bishop Clark is I find it very painful to see him attacked by members of his flock.

Glenna Wickline
Mill Street
Candor

intense daily prayer and remaking of our own hearts into hearts that love with the burning Love of Jesus!

After all, war and injustice has been with us since the sin of our first parents, and will continue to be with us so long as our hearts remain cold.

Our society has legalized the killing of innocent souls whose only crime in this world was being conceived in the God-given sanctuary of the womb — which ALL of us enjoyed for almost nine months inside our own mother! Our society has abused its God-given power to create JUST LAWS by creating the heinous law of legalized abortion, while we stood by watching — too often, approvingly!

Now Father McBrien, who is head of Theology at Notre Dame, instead of practicing the gift God gave him as a priest, teaches — not Theology, but pluralism and fence-straddling. Jesus was sternest with those who were given the duty to teach the Truth, but instead, taught the art of "not rocking the boat".

Let us ALL pray for the wisdom to know the difference between those things we can change and those we can't. But above all, let's pray for the gift of LOVE. Let's face it. The only one we all know, who truly possesses this, is Mother Teresa!

John G. Lentricchia
Bly Street
Rochester

Thanks for column

To the editor:

This is just a short but very sincere thank you for columnist Father Richard P. McBrien's "Essays in Theology." His inspired insight and awareness give me great hope and challenge by consciousness to also be aware and inspired.

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