

Catholic graduates shifting to political right

By Father Richard P. McBrien
Syndicated Columnist

If current projections hold, the Catholic Church of the 21st Century will be a church without nuns — or at least without nuns as we have known them over the course of the present century.

The impact of their absence will be especially felt in two related areas: education and the social apostolate.

It is also an arguable proposition that nuns have been the most significant and effective Catholic educators in this century, both in parochial schools and in parish catechetical programs.

It is also an arguable proposition that nuns have been among the most committed of Catholics in the struggle for social justice, human rights and peace.

When it comes to the social teachings of the Catholic Church, embodied in papal encyclicals, conciliar documents, and episcopal pronouncements, many Catholics only give what Cardinal Newman once referred to as "notional assent."

They accept the teachings intellectually, but never make them the basis for action.

By and large, that has not been the case with Catholic sisters. They have given what Cardinal Newman called "real assent," not only accepting the teachings intellectually but also making them the basis for action.

The dedicated sisters (and one lay woman) who were raped and murdered several years ago in El Salvador are among the more dramatic examples of what "real assent" to Catholic social doctrine means.

These Catholic women literally put their bodies and their lives on the line for the poor and the oppressed.

Who among the younger generations of Catholics will carry forward their work into the 21st century? Who will hand on this kind of faith in parochial schools and in parish religious education programs? In other words, who will teach subsequent generations about a faith that does justice? Undoubtedly, some of us are looking to the current students and recent graduates of our Catholic colleges and universities to fill the gap now being left by the nuns.

One hopes that our expectations are well-founded. But they might not be. Those who teach young Catholics at the college and

university level today find them — for the most part — wholesome, bright, energetic, and friendly. But they are also more career-oriented than they were in the 1960s and 1970s. Many in the current generation of students seem more interested than their predecessors in securing high-paying jobs that will make it possible for them to maintain the standard of living to which — thanks to their parents — they have grown accustomed.

A survey conducted almost two years ago by the student government at the University of Notre Dame disclosed that about

40 percent of the students come from households with incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year, and about 22 percent come from households with incomes in excess of \$100,000.

That these students are moving steadily to the right on the political spectrum is also supported by the data. The same student government survey found that only about 16 percent of the students regarded themselves as liberal, while 26 percent considered themselves conservative. (The rest called themselves moderates.) This shift to the right was also noted in a recent survey

Wise men see star as sign that a royal infant shall soon be born

By Cindy Bassett
Courier Columnist

God calls to each of us constantly. Sometimes the call is dramatic, such as in the case of miracles. Most of the time, God calls to us in the tiny realities of daily life. It is our response that determines who we are. This Advent, let us examine how we respond to God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

"Why has King Herod summoned us?" Samuel asked the priest as they wound their way through the crowded streets of Jerusalem toward the palace.

"He is certain to ask you, as a teacher of the law, what the sudden appearance of the star means," his companion replied.

"Herod does not like the way this magnificent star has overshadowed his own sense of glory," he added with a smile.

"Well then we must do nothing to ruffle his vanity," Samuel cautioned. "It was, after all, King Herod who restored our temple so that we can worship in peace."

When the two men reached the city square, close to Herod's palace, a small crowd gathered to read the notice that had just been posted by Roman soldiers.

"What's going on?" Samuel asked someone.

"Emperor Caesar Augustus has ordered that a census be taken of the entire Roman empire. Everyone is required by this decree to return to his place of birth for the count," he told them.



ESSAYS IN THEOLOGY

of Notre Dame alumni.

Those who perceive their own economic interests to be at odds with Catholic social teachings are less likely to emphasize those teachings as they hand on the faith to the next generation.

More about this next week.



THE BIBLE CORNER

them.

"We have followed his star for nearly two years," one of them began. "It is a strange and wonderful thing. As we traveled, the star moved slowly ahead of us as if to guide us."

"Has it stopped now over Jerusalem?" the king asked nervously.

"No, but we are certain that the king of the Jews will be born someplace nearby," he replied. "We bring him gifts and come to worship him."

Herod was beside himself. Suddenly, he noticed Samuel and the priest standing there. "Where did your prophets say the Messiah would be born?" he asked.

"The prophet, Micah, told us it would be Bethlehem," Samuel replied.

King Herod, the master of control, turned his attention back to the other three visitors. "Go in peace. Keep following this star until you find the baby. After you have done so, return here to me so that I can go and worship him, too."

It wasn't until everyone had gone that King Herod's real feelings erupted. "I am the king of the Jews!" he exclaimed.

Scripture reference: Matthew 2:1-8; Luke 2:1-3.

Meditation: Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world." (John 8:12).

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Closing Celebration Of The 25th Anniversary Of The Constitution On Sacred Liturgy

For the past year the Diocese of Rochester has celebrated in various ways the 25th Anniversary of the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy. On Sunday, 3 December, 1989 we will be closing this celebration with a Diocesan gathering at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

All are invited to participate in this day.

DATE: Sunday, 3 December, 1989

PLACE: Sacred Heart Cathedral, 296 Flower City Park, Rochester, NY

TIME: 2:00 P.M. Reflections on the Liturgical Renewal -

Rev. Benedict A. Ehmann - Rectory Hall

2:45 P.M. Reception - Rectory Hall

3:30 P.M. Evening Prayer - Most Rev. Matthew H. Clark -

Sacred Heart Cathedral

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