

Obedience is issue of spirituality



To the editor:

Concerning Pope John Paul II's "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian:" As a student at a Catholic college I have seen firsthand the confusion that results when Catholic theologians and religious instructors decide to chart their own courses rather than follow the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Many of my peers have left the Church because of the chaotic spiritual leadership of dissenting clergy and laity.

This is not a liberal or conservative issue but rather an issue of spirituality. Jesus Christ, who alone should be the center of all Christian theological and religious discussion, was not a political liberator espousing any particular form of government. He also did not come as an economic liberator bent on establishing an earthly utopia. Christ came into the world to redeem the human race and in doing so he rejected using worldly means to achieve a spiritual goal. The late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen reminds us in his "Life of Christ" that Satan tempted Jesus in the desert to use "short cuts to the cross" in order to more

easily win followers. ...

Christ rejected these temptations (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) but today it seems that we often attempt to use these shortcuts to justify Christianity to an increasingly skeptical world. In doing so, we dilute our religion and deaden our souls to the power of the Holy Spirit. This leads to doubt and confusion. ...

The foremost responsibility of a newspaper like the *Catholic Courier*, in addition to reporting diocesan events, should be to foster the spiritual growth of the diocesan community. This cannot be done without a greater emphasis on Christ and His teachings as given to us by Pope John Paul II and the Roman Catholic Church. Rather than promoting the views of a well-known Notre Dame theologian who often seems to care more about our relationship with this world than our relationship with Jesus Christ, why not carry more spiritually oriented columns? For example, a weekly column on the teachings of our Pope would be an excellent addition for those of us struggling to live our Catholic faith.

We must never forget that our Lord will not force us to follow the example He gives us. Remember, many of His disciples left because they could not accept His teaching that they would have to eat His flesh and drink His blood. If we really love Jesus more than ourselves, we will always be able to obey Him and His Church, even when it seems difficult. Such a submission is not in any way degrading, but instead brings the spiritual joy that always accompanies "dying to oneself" and seeking to glorify God rather than ourselves.

Robert Pokalsky
Webster



Should custodians replace theologians?

To the editors:

Your lead story on 8/9, "Reining in dissent," seems fair. It mentions that some theologians see the "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" as a repressive, censorious throwback to the pre-Vatican II Church.

If so, good. Goethe said, "Better repression than disorder." The disorder in the church since Vatican II has been disgusting. The changes in the liturgy, some of them spur of the moment, the desacralization of the church to allow such things as talking, handshaking, applauding, kissing, the outright disobedience as in altar girls, and above all the vandalizing of the churches of their Catholic atmosphere, all make censorious repression by the Vatican a laudable purpose and a goal to be achieved.

A few years ago, something like 742

theologians opposed the Pope in, I believe, the Charles Curran affair. This is a real pile of theologians. How can these people attend Mass?

"Modernization" occurred in and out of the church after 1950, which might be called a watershed year. Liberal modernism means rejection of the past. It means rejection of the great glories and achievements of the church for a sleazy, semi-Protestant socializing outfit.

What went on in Vatican II and since has been a conscious effort to Protestantize the church. It has been said the Conciliar church is a second Protestant Reformation. So it seems. Three of my grandparents were Protestants. I choose to be a Roman Catholic in the old-style church, not in a noisy, hybrid hive.

Liberalism is creeping decadence. It is so in the church. What good is a

theologian, anyway? The church might better hire custodians who would be worth their keep and be harmless to the church.

John F. Starkweather
Middle Road
Rush

Don't force laity to choose sides

To the editors:

This letter concerns "all the fuss" concerning the "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian." As one of the "faithful," I'm a little scared of the outcome of this power play.

Battle lines have been drawn with the liberal moral theologians on one side, and the conservatives on the other — with the "people in the pews" in the middle. Both sides are pushing too hard just as Martin

Luther and Pope Leo X did. Is history going to repeat itself? Will the liberal theologians push so hard that the Pope will push back with a papal declaration on the infallibility of "Humane Vitae?" The fallout from that is too terrible to imagine.

At this point do either of these groups have the teaching of the "faithful" in mind? Maybe each is too wrapped up in their own viewpoints. This is nothing but a power play, and there will be no winners. When countries are at war, aren't both sides asked to please negotiate? Why aren't our own church leaders following their own advice?

Father McBrien is 'loose canon' on church's deck

To the editors:

For several years now you have carried in your pages the views of the ultra-liberal theologian, Richard McBrien. I'm sure there are many other Catholics in the diocese who, like myself, have found themselves puzzled as to what this man could possibly say before your editorial board would tell him to find another organ to spread his heresy. His outlandish views on abortion, contraception, priestly celibacy and overall feminist ideology have already done great harm to the faithful.

The authorities at Notre Dame Univer-

sity have placed this man in a position where he has poisoned the minds of countless Catholic students to such an extent that the famous school has lost almost all of its previous glory as a place of learning named for and dedicated to our Blessed Mother. McBrien is in the forefront of the modernist crowd who seem to delight in pope-bashing and magisterium demeaning. He has twisted the teachings of Vatican II into an unrecognizable hodge-podge of anything but Catholic Doctrine.

When we are looking for reasons for the shortage of vocations to the priesthood, the

answer, or at least part of the answer, may be before our eyes. Perhaps the McBriens, the Weaklands, the Curran and the Greeleys are too visible, while the many like Cardinal O'Connor of New York, and Fathers James Collins and Joseph Egan of Elmira are being "out-shouted."

Let's face it — Richard McBrien is a loose cannon on the deck of true Catholic dogma and is a very real danger to the salvation of the souls of many of your readers.

Roger M. Sheehan Sr.
Euclid Avenue
Elmira

Peggy Szczesniak
West Lake Road
Conesus

Requests 'recipe' column on spiritual growth

To the editors:

I was so interested to read Mr. Robert Pokalsky's (letter of August 2) in which he suggested the *Catholic Courier* had a responsibility to print that which would "... foster the spiritual growth of the diocesan community ..."

Spiritual growth has been a topic I have

Are sermons, giving linked?

To the editors:

In regards to your article on Catholic giving, could the reason for our poor showing at the collection basket, in comparison to our Protestant friends, be that they hear markedly better sermons each Sunday than we do?

Kathleen P. Allen
Chesham Way
Fairport

contemplated for a very long time. One of my favorite questions has been "What is your 'recipe' for spiritual growth?" The process of collecting answers from others and contemplating how my own answers have changed over the years has also contributed to my own growth. Therefore, I would be so interested in any type of regular column which would address issues concerning spirituality. Thank you! I look forward to your response.

Laura McCormick
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Scottsville

EDITOR'S NOTE: We do not anticipate adding any regular columns to our current complement. Frequently, however, our page-one articles and monthly "Insight" features focus on spirituality.

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