

# Vatican II affirmed traditional Catholic beliefs

To the editors:

Father McBrien, in his essay of May 2, complains that there are "Catholics who still cling to a Catholicism of miraculous medals ... of devils and fallen angels, of Marian sightings, of Papal commands ..." He further fears that this is all part of a "secret agenda" to bring back such Catholic practices, an "oldtime religion where there was never any question that the Catholic Church was the one, true church, with all the answers to all the important questions we have about life, both here and hereafter."

Father McBrien seems to assume that Vatican II somehow abolished the "old" Catholic Church and brought into being a totally new Church, something that will appeal, as he says, to "college educated Catholics, whom scientific surveys reveal to be among the most actively committed to the Church."

The Documents of Vatican II, available in paperback form, are the actual documents released by the Council containing the teachings of that Council. They do not seem to support Father McBrien's claims.

Let's take devils, for instance. Vatican II Documents say, "From bondage to the devil and sin, Christ delivered us." The Church Today 22. Or, "Although he was made in a state of holiness, from the very dawn of history, man abused his liberty at



the urging of Personified Evil." Church and Man's Calling. 13. There are many more references. Jesus Himself claimed to cast out devils. There are more than 85 references to devils in the New Testament. By what authority does Father McBrien sneer at their reality?

And what about "Marian sightings?" Hasn't Lourdes been acknowledged by the Catholic Church as a place where Mary miraculously appeared?

About "Papal commands": Vatican II states: "For in virtue of his office as Vicar of Christ, and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he can always use this power freely." The Church 22. Does this sound as if Vatican II abolished "Papal commands"?

Jesus said, "I am the Way the Truth and the Life." And He founded His Church on Peter the rock, and left the Apostles and their successors to teach the Good News. Assuming that Father McBrien means by the "important questions of life," the questions about why we are here, where we came from and where we are going, the Church has always claimed to have the answers. Vatican II says, "The Spirit guides the Church into the fullness of truth ..." "Go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, he who does not believe will be condemned." Mark 1:4, Missions 5. "Christ the mediator, sustains on earth His Holy Church ... through her he communicates truth and grace to all." The Church 7.

Does this sound as if we had been mistaken over the centuries and now must cast about in today's murky philosophies to find answers to "the important questions"?

Vatican II was intended to "open Church windows," but in order to let the light of Christ shine out on a disordered world. It was certainly never intended that the errors of the world should be let in to sink the Church.

"It is a question of bringing the modern world into contact with the vivifying and perennial energies of the Gospel ... we reaffirm our confidence in our Savior who has not left the world which He has redeemed." Pope John, convening the Council of Vatican II.

"The great problem confronting the world after nearly two thousand years remains unchanged. Christ is ever resplendent at the center of history and of life. Men are either with Him and His Church, and then they enjoy light, goodness, order and peace. Or else they are without Him, or against Him and His Church, and then they give rise to confusion, to bitterness in human relations, and to the constant danger of fratricidal wars." And finally, "The greatest concern of this Council is that her sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously ... it is necessary that the Church never depart from the sacred patrimony of truth received from the Fathers." Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council of Vatican II.

Does this sound as if Vatican II somehow abolished the Catholic Church as we have known it?

Doris Pace  
Keuka Park

## Diffuse tensions before hostilities begin

To the editors:

Once again, war, devastation and famine are stalking the people of the Horn of Africa. As the haunting eyes of these hungry people look out at us from newspapers and the TV screen, we ask why it is that after years of aid the situation has wor-

sened in this corner of the world?

Not surprisingly, war is the primary cause of the famine. When war is a daily part of life, it is difficult to battle drought and feed the growing numbers of displaced people fleeing the conflicts.

It is war that drives these families from their lands and forces them to eat their seeds rather than plant them. It is war that consumes large amounts of government funds which could be used for agricultural development, health, and education. It is war that disrupts relief operations.

During the last decade, the United States and the Soviet Union fanned the flames of conflict in the Horn of Africa by providing stockpiles of weapons which are now being used by these governments against their

own people and democratic movements.

There is still time for the United States to play a constructive role in defusing this situation and promoting peace. This would be far better than waiting until American troops are called into yet another region of the world when hostilities get out of control.

The Horn of Africa Recovery Act of 1991, currently before Congress, would encourage peace initiatives and development in the region. Let's encourage Senators Moynihan and D'Amato (U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510) to support this bill.

Kathleen M. Dubel  
Bread for the World  
Elmira

## Priest applauds vocations issue

To the editors:

Many thanks for the fine reporting and for the full coverage given to vocation awareness in the Thursday, April 18th issue of the *Catholic Courier*. The entire staff deserves to be commended for "a job well done."

I have received many favorable comments about the vocation (section) and the religious order directory. In addition, my office has received numerous inquiries about the pre-theology program and the priesthood vocation discernment programs offered at Becket Hall.

It is so good that the *Catholic Courier* views vocation education/awareness such a high priority as to dedicate an issue to assist with the responsibility of fostering vocations to the religious life and priesthood. I hope that you will consider this a project worth repeating annually.

Father Thomas J. Valenti  
Assistant to the Bishop for Vocations  
Diocese of Rochester

## AARP article calls for euthanasia

To the editors:

The AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) May bulletin has a page 1 article "Death in the Family." It gave me the shudders when I did read between the lines. It is propaganda to encourage the legalization of killing our elderly people.

The terrible truth is that because the insurance companies would save lots and lots of money if my parents lives and those of all the elderly in this country are legally killed off and their lives shortened they would like to see this happen. It is in the final years and months of our human life

span that medical costs are the highest.

What ever happened to "Thou Shalt Not Kill?"

What ever happened to the respect for the sanctity of human life?

I dropped my AARP membership. Euthanasia is already legal in Holland. So as a result many elderly people die at home of curable diseases because they are afraid their doctor will kill them.

Mary Rita Crowe  
East Main Street  
Rochester

## 'Bear' books solicited

To the editors:

As a retired elementary teacher, I enjoyed reading to my students and have missed it. Therefore I began to visit the Corpus Christi Child Care Center.

I wanted to expand my visits and even try another center. Thought that I would call it "Have Bear - Will Travel" bringing my Paddington Bear and share his adventures. Impasse! Unable to purchase Michael Bond's classics.

Parents - do you have any copies your child might be willing to donate for this cause? Paddington and I would really love to visit the children.

Janet R. Straub  
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Rochester

## Panel lacked women

To the editors:

The information panel on "The Future of Catholic Schools" (May 1, St. John Fisher College) consisted of five men.

Over the years thousands of women have supported the Catholic schools system as teachers, administrators and volunteers. We need to hear their voices. They should have been represented on the panel.

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