

Neoconservatives misinterpret letter

By Father Richard P. McBrien
Syndicated columnist

Politically conservative columnists have always been suspicious of governmental intervention in the marketplace, urging instead a maximum measure of freedom for entrepreneurial creativity and expertise.

Similarly, conservative politicians have run against Washington and "Big Government" for years, while business leaders have fought with determination to keep government at more than arm's length (except when they need a Lockheed-style bailout).

It would be wonderfully convenient for them if the pope's new encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, did, in fact, read like the editorial pages of *The Wall Street Journal*, but it does not — no matter how much of a neoconservative "spin" they try to put on it.

The encyclical is filled with references to the role of the state and of government in defending the interests of workers (n. 10), in imposing controls over market forces "so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole of society are satisfied" (n. 35; see also n. 34), in protecting the environment against exploitation for profit (n. 40; see also n. 37), in combating monopolies and in providing basic services when "social sectors or business systems" are

unable or unwilling to do so (n. 48).

The pope argues that "the more that individuals are defenseless within a given society, the more they require the care and concern of others, and in particular the intervention of governmental authority" (n. 10).

Therefore, it is "the task of the state to provide for the defense and preservation of common goods ... which cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces."

Indeed, the pope warns of "an 'idolatry' of the market, an idolatry which ignores the existence of goods which by their nature are not and cannot be mere commodities" (n. 40).

When left to themselves, such forces will prefer profits over people, as in those all-too-frequent instances when companies abruptly move from one area to another, leaving behind a devastated local economy and thousands of unemployed workers.

Pope John Paul II insists in *Centesimus Annus* that "even the decision to invest in one place rather than another, in one productive sector rather than another, is always a moral and cultural choice" (n. 36).

Does that sound like *The Wall Street Journal*?

The pope also has some strong words of criticism for the advertising industry, which provides so much of the forward

thrust of the democratic capitalist machine.

There is, he says, too much artificially stimulated consumption in societies like ours. Such consumption is often unnecessary, wasteful, and spiritually debilitating, ensnaring us in "a web of false and superficial gratifications" (n. 41).

"It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed toward 'having' rather than 'being' and which wants to have more not in order to be more, but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself" (n. 36).

The negative consequences of such consumerism are global as well as personal. If we do not change our lifestyles, our models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which govern societies today, the pope warns, we will not be able to meet our obligation in justice "of helping entire peoples which are presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development."

"Much," he says, "remains to be done in this area" (n. 38).

One final item which neoconservative writers have completely ignored in their commentaries on the new encyclical: the pope's reiteration of his moral condemnation of war, including the recent war in the



ESSAYS IN THEOLOGY

Persian Gulf, which he mentions by name. "I myself, on the occasion of the recent tragic war in the Persian Gulf, repeated the cry: 'Never again war!'"

War, he reminds us, "destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred, thus making it all the more difficult to find a just solution of the very problems which provoked the war."

He acknowledges at the same time that "at the root of war there are usually real and serious grievances," including "poverty and the exploitation of multitudes of desperate people who see now real possibility of improving their lot by peaceful means."

Therefore, he calls upon the more secure nations of the world to create the necessary conditions for development to help those economically desperate peoples and countries.

Paul and Barnabas journey to Antioch

By Cindy Bassett
Courier columnist

Paul and Barnabas stayed and ministered to the new church in Antioch for more than a year. The followers of the Way, as they were known in Jerusalem, first came to be called Christians in Antioch.

These Christians in Antioch met regularly for prayer. One day they came to Paul and Barnabas and said: "It is time for you to leave us. Go to other places and people and tell them the good news about Jesus Christ."

Later on that same day, Barnabas said to Paul, "It will be difficult to leave these people. I have grown to love their simple kindness and faith."

"Don't worry, Barnabas," Paul replied. "Someday we will come back here. For now, there is much work to be done."

So Paul and Barnabas sailed to the island of Cyprus, walking from town to town and preaching about Jesus. Many of the Greek-speaking Gentiles decided to join the church.

Great crowds turned out to hear them wherever they visited. The two men were even invited to speak at the synagogue in some of the towns. But the Jewish leaders did not accept what Paul preached about Jesus. And when they saw the popularity of Paul and Barnabas among the people, they even tried to have them arrested.

In some of these towns, the Jewish leaders stirred up the people against Paul and Barnabas so much that they were forced to flee for their lives. Before they left, however, Paul and Barnabas always told the people about Jesus.

Barnabas was discouraged. "There are just a few who have heard us and believed," Barnabas asked Paul each time they left a town, "Will the church survive here?"

"You worry too much, my friend," Paul smiled. "Someday we will be back and then you will see for yourself."

When they came to the Greek town of Lystra, a huge crowd soon filled the town square to hear them preach. Paul noticed a crippled man, who was listening intently to all that he said about Jesus.

When Paul finished preaching, he went up to this man and commanded: "Stand up!"

The crowd was amazed when they saw this man, who had been lame from birth, walking normally. They cheered and applauded.

Some of the people shouted: "These men are really gods standing among us! It is Zeus and Hermes on earth in human bodies."

"No, we are only men!" cried Paul.

The people were so excited that soon everyone had taken up the chant. They presented flowers and gifts, leaving Paul and Barnabas extremely dismayed.

When someone brought oxen and prepared to make a sacrifice in honor of them both, Paul ordered them to stop.



THE BIBLE CORNER

"We are nothing more than human beings just like you! Don't you understand? It is through the power of God that this miracle occurred. This man has been healed in Jesus' name so that you would believe in him."

A few days later, Paul and Barnabas decided to go back to Antioch to visit the people there. They followed the same route back by which they had come.

Finally, Paul and Barnabas arrived back in Antioch, where their long journey had begun. The people were overjoyed to see them. Paul told them all about the first missionary tour of the Christian church.

Scripture Reference: Acts, Chapters 13 and 14.

Meditation: We are only human beings. All gifts come from God.

Rochester Monument Co., Inc.
Formerly Located at
1575 Clifford Avenue
Over 56 years of Service
All Work done on premises
by Master Stone Carver
Robert Micoli-President
1130 Ridge Rd., Webster
872-1827

WE CAN HELP YOU
PRE-PLAN
YOUR SERVICE
3 Generations
Serving the Community
Profetta Funeral Chapel
671-2811
1650 Empire Blvd. • Webster

Attorney & Counselor At Law
RON BUTTARAZZI
GENERAL PRACTICE OF LAW
Full and comprehensive legal services for all your personal, family and business needs.
"Counsel and support when you need it most."
CALL: 232-4640
Wisdom, Justice, Judgement, Equity
Prov. 1:3

FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE
The funeral Directors listed herein offer pre-need and at-need services and counseling in accordance with the Catholic faith.

GATES Alvah Halloran & Son, Inc. Funeral Home H. Daniel Halloran 2125 Chili Avenue Rochester, N.Y. 14624 (716) 247-7590	DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc. (Across from St. Theodore's Church) 219 Spencerport Road Rochester, N.Y. 14606 429-6700	GREECE Arndt Funeral Home 1118 Long Pond Rd. (south of Maiden Lane) Parking for over 100 cars Greece, N.Y. 14626 Ronald John Arndt (716) 225-6350	Vay-Schleich and Meeson Funeral Home Inc. "Greece's Largest and Most Complete Facilities" 2692 Dewey Avenue 1075 Long Pond Rd. (716) 663-2100
IRONDEQUOIT McLaughlin Funeral Home Inc. John J. McLaughlin 871 Culyer Road Rochester, NY 14609 (716) 482-1847	Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc. Edwin Sulewski 2100 St. Paul Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 342-3400	Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home 1270 Norton Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 544-5000	ROCHESTER Crawford Funeral Home, Inc. "Our Family Serving Your Family" Located at 495 N. Winton Rd. (Between Atlantic & Humboldt) (716) 482-0400

MONUMENTS
HART MONUMENT CO.
2301 Dewey Avenue
Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery
Since 1856
865-6746