

# Some stay within the church to undermine it

By Father Paul Cuddy  
Courier columnist

Is there a schism within the Catholic Church in the United States?

Webster defines a schism as a "formal division or separation from a Church or a religious body." Many schismatic sects have split from the church in the States.

The most bizarre schism today is Father George Stallings' new Afro-American religion, which appears to get weirder and weirder. What we do have within the church are Catholics who remain within the body of the church, who do not accept her teachings and discipline, who will not leave, and who remain within to undermine the church.

We can see an example of this in the Oct. 6 issue of *National Catholic Register*, which reported on a conference, entitled "The Future of the Church." Held in Washington, the September conference was sponsored by Time Consultants. Approximately 1,300 Catholics attended the gathering.

Father Richard McBrien, who compares the pope and the Roman Curia to the failed coup plotters in the Soviet Union, served as the keynote speaker.

Father McBrien declared: "We Catho-

lics have been living these past years (i.e. since the election of Pope John Paul II) through a prolonged slow-motion coup of our own against the reforms of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council by the ideology of the defeated minority at Vatican II and their heirs.

"Many of the same elements that were at work in the failed Soviet coup are also at work in ours. The reactionary loss of power, and the silencing, the censorship, the loyalty oaths, the search for enemies, the reimposition of a party line, the promotion of hard-liners, the appeal to the glories and greatness of another time, and the attempt at restoration."

**Comment:** The statement about the "search for enemies" sounds like Father McBrien has a case of "McCarthyitis." If he means the constant Catholic doctrine enunciated by Scripture, Trent and Vatican II as "the party line," what other line should the church have?

When I served as an Air Force chaplain in France in 1945, my Protestant assistant was a Baptist. One day in discussion he expressed his disbelief in the divinity of Christ.

Surprised by his opinion, I asked him: "How can you, a Baptist, deny the divinity of Christ?"

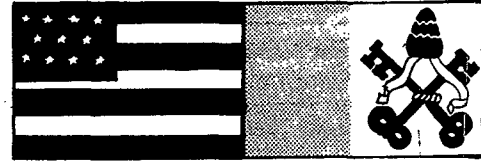
"I'm a Baptist preacher," he replied. "Every Baptist church is autonomous, and we are not pledged to a particular creed. We are free to preach as we wish."

The Catholic Church is not a collection of free-wheeling, autonomous churches, but the Body of Christ — united with the pope as the center — in the faith as handed down throughout the ages. Before he receives Holy Communion each priest prays: "Make me faithful to your teaching, and let me never be separated from you."

Father McBrien: "There's too much power in the papacy. Popes should not name the bishops. The bishops should be appointed by the people that they are going to serve. And they should send a letter to Rome just to let them know, a courtesy before they announce it ... The pope should simply send his blessing, send a message, a telegram."

**Comment:** Father McBrien has been whining for years about the institutional church's slowness in implementing the documents of Vatican II.

The very first of the 16 documents, "On the Church," reads: "The college of bishops has no authority unless it is simultaneously conceived of in terms of its head, the Roman Pontiff, Peter's succes-



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

sor. In virtue of his office, that is as Vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has supreme and universal power over the church, and he can always exercise this power freely." (#)22)

One should wonder about a theologian who keeps appealing to Vatican II yet rejects its teachings.

Father McBrien accuses Rome of "searching for enemies." He displays a profound animus against theologians who disagree with him. His special *bete noire* is Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

Father McBrien said to reporters: "Keep in mind Cardinal Ratzinger was a teenager during the Third Reich. We don't know what he was doing. Was he in Hitler Youth? Some suggest he was."

What a ghastly insinuation!

# Pharaoh's stubbornness brings hardship upon Egypt

By Cindy Bassett  
Courier columnist

When the flies first began swarming over Egypt, Pharaoh dismissed it as a minor inconvenience. Soon, however, the pestilence inhabited every crack and corner of the houses. After the droning continued for days, the king was forced to summon Moses back to the palace.

"Alright, go and worship this God of yours," Pharaoh said. "As soon as you get rid of these flies, I will allow it."

But as soon as the droning ceased, Pharaoh changed his mind. This time Moses stood before the king and told him, "If you persist in your refusal, all of your livestock will be destroyed. And a great cry will come up from your own people against you for causing this calamity. As for the Hebrews, not one of their animals will be lost."

When Pharaoh learned that the horses, camels and donkeys were dying without apparent cause, he dispatched some of his officials to the Hebrews in Goshen. Even when they returned to report that the Hebrew livestock was healthy, Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrew slaves leave Egypt.

"What is Moses doing now?" Pharaoh

snapped at one of his aides. No one seemed to be able to explain the unusual actions.

Moses was standing in front of the king with a handful of ashes. As they all watched, he suddenly tossed them into the air, saying, "Because you have not listened to the command of my God, you and all of your people will be afflicted with boils. No one will be spared from these festers and sores."

Pharaoh's own magicians were the most vociferous. Even the bottoms of their feet were covered with boils. When Pharaoh sent for them, they came crawling on their knees. They were grumbling loudly against the king.

"We told you that our magic could not prevail against this Hebrew God!" one of them shouted. "There is nothing to be done now but let these slaves go."

Pharaoh didn't change his mind even the next morning when the storm began. It rarely rained in Egypt. That a rainstorm came in the first place was a phenomenon.

The lightning tore a huge hole in the sky and unleashed an even worse punishment. The hail that pounded down on the land was so powerful that every growing plant was wiped out. The hail's impact killed all

of the remaining livestock.

"Please, I was wrong to refuse you!" Pharaoh cried when he saw Moses. "Stop it and this time I promise you can go!"

Pharaoh broke his promise the very minute the rain and the hail stopped. When the locusts came, they were like nothing ever seen in Egypt before. They covered the ground in a thick shroud and devoured any plant still living after the hailstorm. In the aftermath, no vegetation could be found anywhere — except in the land of the Hebrews.

Now even Pharaoh's closest advisers entreated him to change his mind. "What will be gained from keeping these slaves any longer? Soon we will have nothing left, while they live in peace in Goshen!" they told him.

The little drama was played out again between Pharaoh and Moses. As soon as Moses called upon God to remove the plague, Pharaoh had a change of heart.

The next plague that occurred in Egypt was an assault on Pharaoh himself. He who was supposed to be descended from the Sun god, Ra, was powerless to do anything about the darkness that filled everyone with a chilling terror.

Three days of Pharaoh calling on Ra



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had done nothing to bring back the light. The people were huddled together in misery in their homes, not daring to move or even utter a single word.

This time when Pharaoh summoned Moses, he said, "I never want to see your face again. If I do, on that day, you will surely die."

"Very well," Moses said and turned on his heel.

The final plague, worse than anything imaginable, was still to come.

**Scripture Reference:** Exodus, Chapter 8:20-Chapter 11.

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