

## Current pope made out well in '94

By Father Richard P. McBrien  
Syndicated columnist

Three weeks ago I did a column on 1994 as the Year of the Pope. This week's column continues a sometime tradition of reviewing the previous year's columns to see how the current and past popes fared in these weekly essays.

Last year I probably made more references to Pope John Paul II, to other popes, and to the papacy generally than in any previous year.

The column for the week of Jan. 24, on the Vatican's diplomatic recognition of Israel, praised Pope John Paul II for his outreach to the Jews.

The column for March 14 — the first of several on the history of the papacy — reflected on the papacy's decline at the turn of the last millennium by contrast with today.

The column for April 18 contained positive references to John Paul II for establishing the Pontifical Council on Culture and to Paul VI for his 1975 apostolic exhortation on evangelization.

The column for the week of April 25 praised John Paul II for his extraordinary efforts on behalf of Catholic-Jewish reconciliation. It referred to him and to John XXIII as "visionary leaders."

The column for May 9 reviewed the papacy's unhappy history regarding the Jews, but singled out for praise Popes Pius XI (who condemned Nazism), John XXIII, Paul VI, and, again, John Paul II.



### ESSAYS IN THEOLOGY

The column for May 16 contained a defense of John Paul II's affirmation of altar girls, against criticism of his decision from the far right.

The column for May 23 listed a series of papal "firsts," including, for example, Pius XII as the first pope to appear on television.

The May 30 column honored the memory of Benedict XV for bringing peace to the church following the Modernist crisis earlier in this century.

The June 6 column asked about the meaning of the expression, "loyalty to the pope," but contained no specific reference to the current or to past popes.

The next week's column was prompted by the pope's fall, in which he broke his thigh bone, and by in-

creased speculation about his health and his likely successor.

The column for June 14 reflected on the pope's letter to the bishops regarding the ordination of women, discussing the claim of some to its infallibility and its pastoral implications.

The column for June 27 made one glancing reference to John Paul II in connection with the murder of bishops in Rwanda.

The July 4 column on Cardinal O'Connor's scheduled retirement this month spoke of his close bond with John Paul II, and predicted that the cardinal would not be required to step down when the time came.

The July 11 column continued the historical reflections on the papacy, focusing attention on the popes who reigned at the turn of the previous millennium.

The column for July 18, on the tobacco industry, contained a quotation from John Paul II's encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, insisting that the common good must come before profits; the next week's column referred again to that encyclical and to various others as well.

The column for Aug. 1 made reference to John XXIII's opening speech to the Second Vatican Council, and the column after that pointed out the frequency with which John Paul II employs the biblical parable of Lazarus and the rich man to underscore our responsibilities to the poor.

The column for Aug. 23 contained a reference to John Paul II's first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* and high-

lighted his constant emphasis on individual human dignity as being at the heart of the Gospel.

The column for Oct. 10, on individualism in American culture, contained a marginal reference to the social encyclicals of John Paul II. The following week the column returned to the pope's health and historical precedents regarding papal succession.

The Nov. 7 column was another historical piece, this time on one of the most unusual events in the church's history, the post-mortem trial of Pope Formosus.

The Nov. 28 column focused on the controversy over inclusive language in biblical translations, and contained a reference to Paul VI's approval of the New American Bible in 1970.

The column for the week of Dec. 12, on a new cardinal-theologian, Yves Congar, referred to Paul VI's well-known admiration for the French ecumenist.

Finally, the column for the week of Dec. 26 drew once again upon the papacy's history, centering its attention on Boniface VIII, a medieval pope whose concern for personal stature tended to obscure his authentic contributions to the church.

To the extent that any popes came in for criticism here in 1994, those popes all have one thing in common: they died and have gone to heaven. The only living pope we have made out very well — contrary, of course, to the assumptions of those who aren't regular readers of this column.

## What if Jesus was a home builder?

By Gregory F. Augustine Pierce  
Syndicated columnist

In the current issue of *The Marketplace*, a wonderfully provocative magazine "for Christians in business," published by Mennonite Economic Development Associates in Winnipeg, Canada, there appears an article by Perry Bigelow titled, "Blueprint from above: A Chicago home builder tries to imagine a construction company managed by Jesus."

"I continuously ask the question," Bigelow begins, "What kind of a home-building company would Jesus establish and own?"

Bigelow writes:

\* "I believe Jesus would build homes that satisfy a family's needs, not its luxuries."

\* "I believe Jesus would appeal to good, human qualities in his marketing; he would not appeal to greed, covetousness, status or pride."

\* "I believe Jesus, as the owner of the business, would pray the only prayer about wealth in the Bible: 'Give



### FAITH AND WORK

me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' (Prov. 30:8-9)."

\* "(Jesus) would certainly follow his own advice about not storing up treasure for ourselves on earth but in heav-

en (Mt. 6:19-20), not worrying about food or clothing for tomorrow (Mt. 6:25-34), and not building bigger barns in which to hoard his Father's resources (Lk. 12:16-21)."

According to Bigelow, Jesus would have been a most remarkable capitalist: "I believe Jesus would capitalize his business responsibly so that his employees could have steady work. Following God's concern for more equal distribution of resources (2 Cor. 8:13-14), the balance of his profits would be invested in helping the poor and spreading the gospel (1 Tim. 6:17-19). He probably would not hoard, save or invest profits outside the capital needs of the business (Lk. 12:16-21). He would practice justice and equality in paying wages and sharing profit with employees (Col. 4:1)."

Well, maybe.

Maybe Jesus would have run his business that way. Maybe he even would have been successful doing so.

The fact is, though, that neither I nor Bigelow nor anyone else will ever be sure what Jesus might have done

as a businessman, because we have no reason to think he ever was. (Sure it can be argued that Jesus spent the first 30 years of his life as a carpenter in Nazareth, but no one really knows. I just came across a Russian book that claims that Jesus spent that time in Tibet in the remote Himalayan mountains!)

The fact is that we'll never know what Jesus did or what kind of home builder or whatever — Jesus might have been. Jesus is just not someone on whom most of us seeking to follow him in our work, personal and family lives can specifically model ourselves and our daily actions.

Here's what I believe. I believe that Jesus would say to Perry Bigelow and to anyone else who wants his advice on how to live: "Never think that you have done enough, that you have loved God or neighbor sufficiently, that there is nothing more that you can or should do; yet, at the same time, you have already done enough, you are already saved and forgiven, you can relax and be at peace, you are loved."

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May 28-June 11, 1995 (15 days) - Led by: Dr. Joseph G. Kelly  
\$2995\* per person, double occupancy includes:

Round Trip air fare from Rochester  
8 nights in Jerusalem, 3 nights in Galilee, 2 nights in Tel Aviv (with breakfast daily and 5 dinners)

Complete sightseeing in air-conditioned coach, including all entrance fees. Lectures throughout.

Visits to: Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Bethany; Jericho, Qumran, Masada and Dead Sea. Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Mt. Tabor, Nazareth, Safed; Haifa, Caesarea and Tel Aviv.

\*Total cost is based on current airfare. Adjustments in price may be necessary when fares are revised in March, 1995. Travel arrangements by DiMaria Travel, Rochester, NY and Galilee Tours, Boston Ma.