

# OPINIONS

## Catholic Courier

©1996, Rochester Catholic Press Association.

1150 Buffalo Road  
P.O. Box 24379  
Rochester, NY 14624  
716/328-4340  
800/600-3628 outside Rochester

### President

**Bishop Matthew H. Clark**

### General Manager/Editor

**Karen M. Franz**

### Editorial Department

#### Associate Editor

**Lee Strong**

#### Copy editor/Staff writer

**Kathleen Schwar**

*Finger Lakes*

#### Staff writers

**Rob Cullivan**

*Genesee Valley*

**Mike Latona**

*Southern Tier*

#### Staff Photographer

**Matthew Scott**

### Business Department

#### Circulation Manager

**Jeanne A. Mooney**

#### Telemarketing Manager

**Lenna Hurley**

#### Office Manager

**Mary DiPonzio**

#### Secretary/Receptionist

**Donna Stubbings**

### Advertising Department

#### Advertising Director

**Ray Frey**

#### Account Executive

**Laura J. O'Loughlin**

### Production Department

#### Graphic Designers

**Kim Parks**

**Amy Sundstrom**

### Letters Policy

The Catholic Courier wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome original, signed letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the letter writers' opinions.

Letters must not exceed 500 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

## Readers react to Fr. McBrien's visit, views

### Bishops clearly criticized 'Catholicism'

#### To the editors:

St. Bernard's Institute's "On the Road" program has invited theologian Father Richard McBrien to speak in Rochester in October as part of St. Bernard's "commitment to high quality life-long faith formation." Perhaps those from St. Bernard's Institute involved in bringing Father McBrien to Rochester are unaware that according to the U.S. Catholic bishops Committee on Doctrine, some of the most well-known work of Father McBrien is considered less than conducive to quality faith formation.

Back in 1985 the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine issued a public statement on Father McBrien's popular book *Catholicism*. While the bishops praised certain aspects of Father McBrien's work, they also expressed the hope that future editions of *Catholicism* would include clarifications in some areas. McBrien's presentation of the virginal conception of Jesus, the perpetual virginity of Mary, the foundation of the Church, and the binding force of Marian dogmas were among those areas where the bishops saw a need for clarifications.

Now, eleven years later, the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine has again released a public critique of the book *Catholicism*. The bishops state that Father McBrien has not corrected the problems identified in 1985 and has in fact released

### Recent column deserves praise

#### To the editors:

Re Fr. McBrien's recent column concerning Christian unity (*Catholic Courier*, Sept. 5, "Body of Christ inclusive of former outsiders"). Bravo! Good work.

Look. Drop the term Roman Faith or Catholic Faith. The Roman Church is the Roman Catholic Church. The Church Divided is the body of Protestant church groups. Not all Protestant church groups are within the compass of the Church; but some are. The Eastern Church is the Eastern Orthodox Church. Thus you have Christendom.

W. G. Beeney  
Rock Beach Road, Rochester

### Pastor displays civic dedication

#### To the editors:

I realize you mention in your very fine front page story on "Civic Minded Priests: Community Work Appeals to Many" (Aug. 22) that your focus was *diocesan* priests but I feel compelled to share with your readers one particular "order" priest who, also, is extremely "civic-minded."

Father Robert Hale, CSB, pastor of Christ the King parish in Irondequoit has served as an official and unofficial police chaplain for many years and in many locations. Just to name a few: Father Bob rode with the Ontario Provincial Police in Toronto during the years he was pastor at St. Basil's Church; he has had connectedness with FBI agents; and currently he serves with the Irondequoit Police Department. And always Father Bob is the epitome of compassion, support, professionalism and humor.

I applaud all the men who were highlighted in your story but salute, as well, all those unsung heroes — like Father Bob — who also choose to carry their priesthood out of the churches and into the streets.

Kathi Piehler, Fairport

a third edition which introduces further misrepresentations of Catholic teachings. The bishops found examples of inaccurate or misleading statements, an overemphasis on plurality within the Catholic theological tradition, and an overstatement of the significance of recent developments in Catholic tradition. The full texts of the 8/1/85 and 4/18/96 bishops' critiques can be found in the *Origins* journal which is available at the St. John Fisher College library.

According to the May 1996 *Catholic World Report*, Father McBrien has told the *New York Times* that he sees no problems with his book. Wouldn't it be productive to more humbly consider the merits of the words of the bishops since it is part of the role of the bishops of the Catholic Church to serve as teachers and guardians of the Catholic faith? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* re-

minds us that bishops with the Pope have the task to guarantee believers the "...objective possibility of professing the true faith without error." (890) Does Father McBrien believe that his work is beyond the guiding input of our U.S. bishops?

The members of St. Bernard's Institute may be sincere in their efforts to promote the life-long faith formation goal of our recent Rochester Synod. However, one has to question the wisdom of inviting Father McBrien. How can someone whom the bishops say does not present our faith accurately possibly help in the formation of our faith? Doctrine is important, as it helps us understand the greatness and beauty of God's plan of salvation. Let's hope for better things from St. Bernard's in the future.

Robert Pokalsky  
Five Mile Line Road, Penfield

### Book is a 'broken compass'

#### To the editors:

I read in my Parish Bulletin and it came up at my Prolife Meeting Father Richard P. McBrien is coming to St. Bernard's in the Strong Auditorium on Oct. 18, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

He describes the Church as becoming more lay-oriented, more responsive to the needs of humanity and more ecumenical.

The very fine magazine "Inside the Vatican," Aug. & Sept. 96 issue has an article on Father McBrien's new book, the more popular one volume "Encyclopedia Catholicism" which the U.S. Bishops Conference this spring issued a condemnation of certain portions of the book.

This book is reliable as a broken compass because it will do harm for decades and should be following Holy Father, Pope John Paul II.

The caption of the article states, "This is Not a Book to Trust." That is enough for me to get my antenna up. Strange things are happening and yet I continue to pray for our Priests who are under such pres-

sure.

I had the opportunity to go to the Fatima Shrine, Youngstown, N.Y. to a Healing Mass, Celebrant Father Benedict Groeschel on Friday and Sat., 8/16 and 8/17. His homily had the Majesty of God in it.

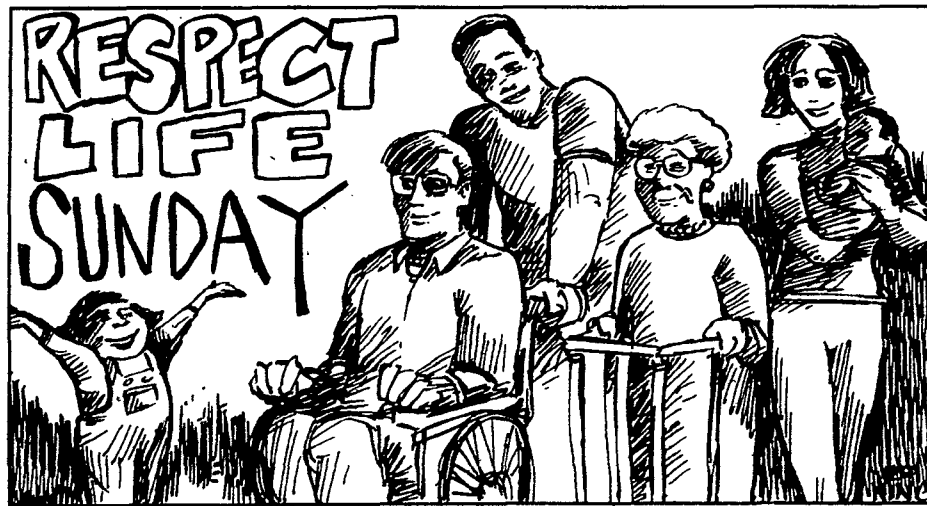
When Truth is being crushed then we who have the courage to defend Truth will have to stamp out its errors.

Father Groeschel's last words to us on Sat. "Be careful, be careful in what you are doing." Let us remember Pope John Paul II 3 words in His Book, "Crossing The Threshold of Life." BE NOT AFRAID.

Therefore, our God we give you thanks and we praise the Majesty of Your Name. (1 Chronicles 29: 11-13 (NAB))

Bernice Kleinhammer  
Laurelton Road, Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: The time and day of Father McBrien's talk in Strong Auditorium was listed incorrectly in early releases. A corrected release was sent out: Father McBrien will be speaking in Strong Auditorium from 10 a.m. to noon Oct. 18.



### Bishop Clark shows courage

#### To the editors:

I wish to offer hearty applause to our Bishop Clark for his forthright support for the ideas Archbishop Quinn (formerly of San Francisco) in his Oxford speech, and for the wonderful and bold initiative of Cardinal Bernardini (of Chicago) with the Common Ground Project. (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 22, 29 and Sept. 5 editions)

The fearful and timid responses of heavyweight Cardinals such as Maida, Hickey, Law and Bevilacqua contrast with the courageous and hopeful and confident tone of our own Bishop Clark. No bishop in this country is any more loyal and devoted to the Church and its teaching authority than is Bishop Clark. But, he is a thinking and discerning bishop

and for that all of us should be supremely grateful — not only to him but to our all-loving God.

I am also delighted that he has chosen to speak out and write about these two important actions that have occurred in our Catholic Church in America. He is one of the very best bishops in the country.

Indeed, we need dialogue — long and careful discussion about how our Catholic Church understands itself and makes decisions and crafts its teaching responses.

I hope to hear more from Bishop Clark on other matters of importance to the future of the Church in this country and the world.

Donald L. Muench  
Smallwood Drive, Pittsford