

COLUMNISTS

Young conservatives need sense of history

Father Willard Jabusch, director of the Catholic student center at the University of Chicago, has contributed a provocative article to *America* magazine, entitled "Young and Conservative" (10/11/97).

His thesis is that "the revolution (initiated by the Second Vatican Council) is over," and that "it has been over for some time."

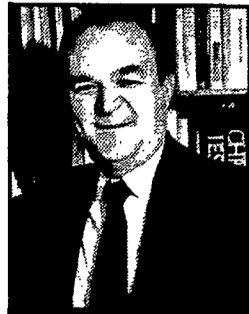
According to Father Jabusch, many over-45 Catholics (among whom he is numbered) do not seem to have recognized what has happened.

"The baby boomers have had their day," he writes. "Generation X is here, demanding to be taken seriously."

He suggests that for many younger Catholics the "remote and dusty" conciliar agenda "elicits a polite yawn." Indeed, a significant number of them actually prefer some of the preconciliar devotional practices, such as Benediction, holy hours, and the rosary.

Thus, "when their grandparents reminisce about the serenity and clarity of Catholic life in the 50's, they listen attentively." (However, scientific surveys done by Father Jabusch's fellow Chicago priest, Andrew Greeley, indicate that most grandparents are happy with the changes in the church.)

Younger Catholics, Father Jabusch asserts, are not interested in "churchy" issues



essays in theology

BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

(which he dismisses as "intramural spats"), but are fascinated instead by "religious lore" around such things as scapulars, the blessing of throats, and Lourdes water.

While conceding that only a small minority of younger Catholics can be described as reactionary, he insists that "many, if not most, young adults who are still coming to church are conservative and at least slightly right of center."

"Is this fact to be lamented?" he asks. "Is there serious cause for concern?"

Father Jabusch believes not. On the contrary, these younger Catholics "should ... be welcomed rather than feared for the substantial contribution they can make to Catholic life and thought."

One cannot comment on the thesis of the article without first mentioning its several side-swipes at liberal and feminist

stereotypes.

He implicitly chides Call to Action's annual convention for its "highly predictable" speakers (including the "requisite disciplined clergymen" and "some angry nuns demanding ordination"), its booths for gay and lesbian and pro-choice causes, its "liturgical dances," its "spirited songs," and its "jabs at the hierarchy."

The focus of his attention seems to be religious women. He states, without citing any statistics, that nuns constitute the largest group in attendance. Their ranks, he says, are "rapidly thinning" and "their hair is graying."

He mentions in passing the "mean" nuns of the past who hit Catholic school children with rulers, but is clearly vexed by a more recent type with "bleached blond hair," sporting "a chic jogging suit" — "not at all like the pictures of Mother Teresa."

Such *obiter dicta* are not insignificant. They disclose a mentality behind the thesis and in support of it.

When the author asserts that "the revolution is over" and that "it has been over for some time," to what does he refer? Nuns in jogging suits and bleached hair?

The conciliar revolution (better: renewal) was as much an act of retrieval as of advancement. Vatican II retrieved a more traditional understanding of the nature and

mission of the church, one rooted in Scripture, in the classical writings of the first several centuries, and in lived experience of the First Christian Millennium.

The council reminded us that we — all of us — are the church. All baptized persons constitute the people of God, with a full share in, and responsibility for, the church's prophetic, priestly, and pastoral mission.

That is why the rite of the Mass had to be substantially reformed. The Mass is not — and never was intended to be — an affair of the priest alone. The Mass is not something we simply attend or "hear" out of moral obligation.

Nor is the Mass an exercise in verbal and gestural mystification. It is an act of communal worship and thanksgiving. As such, its language must be intelligible and its ritual must allow for, and encourage, full and active participation.

Younger Catholics who mistakenly believe, for example, that the Mass is a private devotion need to be educated in the tradition. Until they begin to understand that tradition through other than pietistic or neo-Scholastic lenses, they will have no "substantial contribution" to make to "Catholic life and thought."

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Apocalyptic literature advises us to watch, pray

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 13:24-32. (R1) Daniel 12:1-3. (R2) Hebrews 10:11-14, 18.

The readings of the last few Sundays of the year have a little bit of apocalypse and a little bit of advice.

Apocalypse means revelation — an unveiling of what is to be. Apocalypse differs from prophecy in that it uses coded language, for it originated as underground literature in times of persecution. Daniel is a book of apocalypse. It was written around 167 B.C. during the terrible persecution of Antiochus. Daniel describes the persecution as a "time unsurpassed in distress."

Daniel promised that Michael, the guardian angel of Israel, would arise and put an end to the persecution — "your people shall escape." Those who had died for the law during the persecution, "they shall awake and live forever in glory" (the first mention of resurrection in the Old Testament). As for their persecutors, they "shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace."

So, what is the advice? "Be watchful, pray constantly" (alleluia verse).

The 13th chapter of Mark's Gospel is also apocalyptic literature. Besides being coded literature, apocalypse has its own



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

peculiar props. For instance, Dracula stories always use a castle in ruins, a dark forest, flying bats, screeching owls, moonless night, howling winds and wolves.

Apocalyptic literature always had cosmic fireworks: You can expect the sun to be darkened, the moon to shed no light, the stars to fall from the sky, the hosts of heaven to be shaken. For such literature deals with ends: the end of a world, the end of a persecution, the end of an evil generation, and the ushering in of a new world.

And the advice? Apocalyptic literature is hope literature: a story meant to give hope to Christians suffering persecution. God knows. He knows when the end of evil will come. Trust him.

Once the lone survivor of a shipwreck

was washed up on a small uninhabited island. He cried out to God to save him. Every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none came. Eventually he built a small hut and put his few possessions in it. Then one day, he arrived home to find his hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. He was angry and grief-stricken. Early the next day, though, a ship drew near the island and rescued him.

"How did you know I was here?" He asked the crew.

"We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

We don't know the future, but God does. We are in his eternal care. But what are we to do in the meantime?

"Be watchful, pray constantly." "Be watchful" is more than a call to vigilance because we never know when death is coming. It is a call to be aware of all the times the Lord comes to us each day.

A coach once took his team to a trophy case, to see pictures of past school heroes.

"All of these young men were as you are today," he said, "starting life with great promise. All of you will someday be as they are. They're all dead and so will you be. What do you think they would say to you?"

As they looked, the coach rasped,

"Carpe diem ... carpe diem."

Seize the day! Are we making the most of the days God has given us?

Evil will end — that's the message of apocalyptic literature. Its advice is, "Be watchful, pray constantly."

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, November 17

1 Maccabees 1:10-15, 41-42, 54-57, 62-63; Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday, November 18

2 Maccabees 6:18-31; Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday, November 19

2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31; Luke 19:11-28

Thursday, November 20

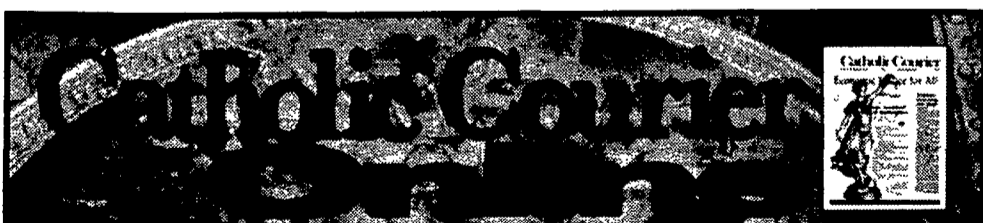
1 Maccabees 2:15-29; Luke 19:41-44

Friday, November 21

1 Maccabees 4:36-37, 52-59; Luke 19:45-48

Saturday, November 22

1 Maccabees 6:1-13; Luke 20:27-40



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Women Needed for Hormone Therapy Research

As they search for the combinations of hormone replacement therapy that are both safe and effective, the Reproductive Endocrinology Unit and Menopause Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center seek women to participate in a study.

Volunteers must be healthy, post-menopausal women between the ages of 40 and 65. After a physical examination, women will be randomized to one of 8 treatment groups and receive various combinations of an FDA-approved estrogen and/or progestin, or placebo.

During this one-year study, volunteers are seen every three months. Benefits to volunteers include free Pap smears and lab tests, free mammogram, and possible relief of menopausal symptoms based on the medication(s) they receive. Compensation of \$450 is available. Women who have had a hysterectomy are not eligible.

Women interested in participating can call Kathy DeRider at 275-4149.