

COLUMNISTS

Retreating into a ghetto

There was a famous headline in a Catholic diocesan paper some years ago, before the Second Vatican Council: "No Catholics Killed in Oklahoma Tornado." Another read: "Cardinal Spellman Flies Over North Pole."

Such headlines were frequently cited in the 1950s as examples of what the Catholic press should not be doing, namely, fostering and encouraging a Catholic ghetto mentality. At the same time, a relatively small group of creative, forward-looking editors was undertaking a renewal of the Catholic press.

By way of example only, their number included Donald McDonald, of the Davenport, Iowa, *Catholic Messenger*, Msgr. Francis Lally, of the *Boston Pilot*, John Reedy, CSC, of *Ave Maria* magazine, Msgr. John S. Kennedy, of *The Catholic Transcript* in my home archdiocese of Hartford, Conn., and Robert G. Hoyt, of *The Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City-St. Joseph) and founding editor of *The National Catholic Reporter*.

Unfortunately, that earlier ghetto mentality resurfaces from time to time in different forms. A recent instance is the announcement by Thomas S. Monaghan, former owner of Domino's Pizza and founder of Legatus, a conservative Catholic business group, that he is donating \$50 million to establish a new law



BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

essays in theology

school in Ann Arbor, Mich., in the hope of producing lawyers who will learn to apply the law in accordance with Catholic principles of morality.

The clear implication is that existing Catholic universities, like Georgetown, Notre Dame and Boston College are not doing the job. In Mr. Monaghan's mind, they must be somehow less than fully Catholic in their institutional commitments and core curricula.

His new venture is to be called the Ave Maria School of Law. If the idea is such a good one, why not extend it to other fields as well? Here are a few tongue-in-cheek possibilities: The Pater Noster School of Medicine might teach its budding Catholic doctors how to treat such ailments as appendicitis, gout and herniated discs according to strict Catholic moral principles. It could have a logo

with St. Peter's Basilica and the papal keys on all of its stationery and grade transcripts. Its all-Catholic faculty would take an oath never to read, much less write for, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* or the *New England Journal of Medicine* since they are said to publish occasional articles that are in conflict with Catholic moral teaching.

The Te Deum School of Business Administration could inculcate in its students an aversion to the taking of interest for loans of all kinds, in keeping with the teaching of Pope Benedict XIV in his encyclical *Vix Pervenit* in 1745.

The Ora et Labora School of Science and Engineering would develop a curriculum based on the premise that Aristotelian science, mediated through medieval Scholasticism, provides the most efficient means of building bridges, dams and roads, and of finding cures for cancer and heart disease.

In all such institutions a photo of the pope might be displayed along with the crucifix in every office and class room, but this policy would perhaps need to be reviewed upon the election of a new pope.

To be sure, Mr. Monaghan's basic concern is a valid one. To the extent that Catholic principles of faith and morality are applicable to the great issues of

the day, those principles should as far as possible shape and influence the study and solution of those issues.

And that is why we have such an intricate system of Catholic education at all levels, from the elementary to the graduate. It is a system of which the Catholic community, especially in the United States and Canada, can be justly proud.

But there are some nay-sayers who complain, without any hard and convincing evidence, that the overwhelming majority of Catholic schools, especially at the university level, have sold their Catholic birthright for a mess of pottage. They ominously predict that Catholic higher education will go the way of universities, like Harvard, that were founded by Protestants as religious institutions.

The Catholic approach, however, is always one of both/and, not either/or. Commitment to academic excellence — whether in the study of law, medicine, or the humanities — need not be inconsistent with an equally strong commitment to Catholic identity.

Indeed, there is a great deal of room between surrendering to a culture and retreating to a ghetto within it.

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

Be an enthusiastic father

12th Sunday of the Year (June 20): (R3) Matthew 10:26-33, (R1) Jeremiah 20:10-13, (R2) Romans 5:12-15.

Sunday is Father's Day. Let us recognize those fathers who have taken their responsibility to their families just as seriously as they take their responsibility to God. Many fathers have done just that and we salute and honor them on Father's Day.

In the Gospel Jesus says three times: "Do not be afraid." One of the great roles of fathers is to banish fear from the home and to bring a sense of security to wife and children. Like Jesus, every father worthy of the name says to his family in effect by his love, his work, his faith, "Do not be afraid."

Most fathers will say in effect to their families what Jesus said to his disciples, "What I say to you in darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops." Jesus was talking about being enthusiastic about the faith. When somebody has something important to proclaim, they often shout it from the housetops. Jesus was saying that people, especially fathers, should be like that. Fathers should be as open to their families and to others about their religious connections as they are about their favorite sport.

Jesus is looking not only for fathers who



BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

a word for sunday

have a positive feeling about their faith but also are willing to let it affect their whole family and society.

Gus Frerotte of the Washington Redskins was taken to the hospital with a neck injury. In his exuberance after scoring a touchdown against the New York Giants, he butted his head against the padded wall that surrounds the playing field and sprained his neck. It's fun to watch athletes who get excited about what they are doing. How good it is to meet fathers who are so happy at being fathers. Jesus wants enthusiastic people, especially fathers, for a spirit is caught quicker than taught.

Psychologist William James said: "It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult undertaking which, more than anything else, will determine its successful out-

come."

Dr. Judith Briles lists in her book, *The Confidence Factor*, a Ten Commandments of Confidence. I think five of her commandments can apply to fathers.

1. To your own self be true. March to your own tune, not someone else's.
2. Think positive. Do not let negativism drag you down.
3. Be realistic. Face the facts.
4. Don't be afraid to take credit for your accomplishments.
5. Take care of yourself: Eat right, exercise, sleep, play, laugh.

I like to add five more suggestions:

1. Pray daily to the Holy Spirit and Mary.
2. Pick out religious readings that emphasize the joyful aspects of our faith.
3. Be joyful even when you tend to feel gloomy.
4. Cultivate friends who share your philosophy of joy. Avoid the nay-sayers, the put-down artists, and people-knockers. Seek out the joy-givers and let them refresh your battered spirit.
5. Share joyful news. Joy is contagious. Write upbeat letters. Make upbeat phone calls. Speak well of others in their presence.

Jesus wants enthusiastic fathers, fathers

with a healthy appreciation of themselves and others. He wants fathers excited about and involved with their wives and families.

The primary source of all this enthusiasm is God. Enthusiasm comes from the Greek words meaning "the God within." The sure path to an enthusiastic fatherhood is to open up ourselves to God.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, June 21
Genesis 12:1-9; Matthew 7:1-5

Tuesday, June 22
Genesis 13:2, 5-18;
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

Wednesday, June 23
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18;
Matthew 7:15-20

Thursday, June 24
Isaiah 49:1-6; Acts 13:22-26;
Luke 1:57-66, 80

Friday, June 25
Genesis 17:1, 9-10, 15-22;
Matthew 8:1-4

Saturday, June 26
Genesis 18:1-15; Matthew 8:5-17

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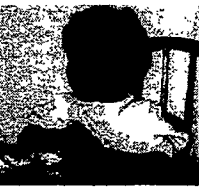
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