

OPINIONS

Catholic Courier

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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.

Columnist misstates record on Tridentine

To the editors:

In the June 24 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, Father Richard McBrien uses his "Essay in Theology" to criticize "conservative Catholics." One might immediately object to his pigeonholing of Catholics who are in good standing with the Church into arbitrary categories, but this has been Father McBrien's stock-in-trade for so long that such criticism of other people might be second-nature to him by now...

Father McBrien incorrectly states that Pope Pius V created a "new Mass" in the 16th century. The so-called Tridentine Mass was merely a codification of the pre-existing Missal into a more uniform rite. It was the Missal of Paul VI in 1969 that was, in fact, a "new Mass" which was described in the words of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as: "what happened after the Council was something else entirely: in the place of liturgy as the fruit of development, came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic, living process of growth and development over the centuries, and replaced it — as in a manufacturing process — with a fabrication, a banal, on-the-spot product."

Father McBrien states that the new Mass of Paul VI is "actually more traditional than the former." He is again mistaken here because the new Mass broke with liturgical tradition, and prior to 1969 it did not exist. Msgr. Klaus Gamber, one of the greatest liturgists in the Church over the past century has clearly stated that the new Mass is not a traditional rite, but was composed in 1969.

He states: "The publication of the Ordo Missae of 1969, however, created a new liturgical rite. In other words, the traditional liturgical rite had not simply been revised as the Council had intended. Rather, it had been completely abolished, and a couple of years later, the traditional liturgical rite was, in fact, forbidden" (The Reform of the Roman Rite, page 34).

Additionally, one would be very hard-pressed to show where such practices as female acolytes and lectors — the latter expressly forbidden by St. Paul — the offertory and consecration prayers used in the Novus Ordo, Eucharistic Prayers 3 and 4 which were composed in 1969 by Father Cipriano Vagaggini, and the exchange of "pro omnibus" for "pro multis" in the consecration, can be found in Roman liturgical history.

The so-called Tridentine Latin Mass traces its roots back over 1,500 years to the Missal of Pope Gelasius in the 5th century. As recently as October, 1998, Pope John Paul II encouraged Catholics to participate in this ancient Rite of Mass that sustained the Church through so many eras. The June 7 edition of *Time Magazine* gives a very positive report on the growing number of Catholics who are returning to the Latin Mass. The *Time* article points out that the number of dioceses supporting the Tridentine Rite has increased by 70 percent over the past 10 years.

Through the kind permission of Bishop Matthew Clark, the Tridentine/Gregorian Latin Mass is celebrated every Sunday and holy day at St. Stanislaus Church in Rochester. All are welcome to come and participate in this beautiful liturgy of our ancient Catholic heritage.

William Basile, President
Una Voce Rochester
Bedford Street
Rochester



Why not a Catholic law school?

To the editors:

In his "Essay in Theology" of June 17, Father McBrien criticized the generous donation of Mr. Monaghan to fund a new law school where law will be taught in the context of Catholic teaching. Father McBrien makes fun of this idea depicting it as fostering a "Catholic ghetto" mindset. He uses his scouring tongue to ridicule the idea of a university where medicine, economics and other subjects would be taught exclusively in the context of Catholic teaching. Father McBrien has encyclopedic knowledge; one tends to agree with him.

After all, wouldn't it be horrible if Catholic medical schools actually had a Catholic orientation opposing contraception, abortion, euthanasia, kickback payments to doctors and other immoral practices?

Wouldn't it be a tragedy if Catholic economists actually rose up against the unjust system of international trade and the usurious rates of credit card companies, especially now when personal bankruptcies are at an all-time high?

You convinced me, Father McBrien, we must avoid these outcomes at all costs. Where will these trends leave Catholicism in America? We may actually start behaving like Catholics at work! Horror

of horrors.

What's next? Belief in the Real Presence? Reading the Catechism? Following the Magisterium?

I understand the need for a Catholic newspaper to present a liberal point of view; however Father McBrien's essays are only litanies of what "those other self-proclaimed Catholics," the narrow minded, misinformed — dare I say it — traditional Catholics are doing and how evil it is!

Week after week, he comments on generous acts, from those of seminarians willing to make a serious commitment to God to those of a business man making a donation to Catholic education, and characterizes them as misguided, antiquated or evil. Why?

Does he have nothing positive to contribute? Is it that his vast knowledge can only be used to criticize others who think differently than he does? For all his liberalism, can Father McBrien tolerate dissent to his point of view? I think not!

Editors, couldn't you get a liberal columnist with something positive to say? Liberalism must have something better to offer than criticism of people who oppose it. Doesn't it?

Guillermo Montes
Westfield Street, Rochester

Teach logic behind Real Presence

To the editors:

Alice Herman's letter (July 1: "Behavior undercuts devotion") about the Eucharist and the Gallup poll's indicating a meager 33 percent of U.S. Catholics believe in the Real Presence of Christ highlights the need to augment the teaching. In a science and logic-oriented world which bids for our minds, we act wisely and prudently by showing that such a belief is consistent with logic.

For example, believers are willing to credit God with power to create the universe from nothing. So, for anyone with that degree of power, it follows that God can easily disguise Himself under the appearances of bread and wine. Humble believers will also grant that substance, and how sub-

stance appears and tests, is also obviously in God's control. Finally, it makes plain good sense for God to choose a "disguise" because he requires faith — yet wants to be with us in an intimate way. The Eucharist is that way.

No believer can argue to the contrary without denying God's powers. By teaching the logical aspects, we arm the apparently high percentage of doubting Catholics with the ability to present a rational case, first to themselves, then to a ridiculing world. Whatever the true percentage of doubters, the poll is alarmingly high enough to merit the additional teaching on this core doctrine of our faith.

William F. Folger
Newberry Lane, Webster

Conservatives seek to preserve heritage

To the editors:

Alas! Conservatives are taking another lashing with a wet noodle from Father Richard McBrien. His patronizing reference to those he refers to as "having not had the advantage of any advanced training in the study of sacred Scripture" takes them to task among other things for following the Council of Trent in seeing the Mass as "more of an unbloody sacrifice than as an act of thanksgiving."

The two aspects of the Mass are NOT mutually exclusive. The Mass is both "an unbloody immolation ... in which Christ offers Himself ... to the Eternal Father as He did upon the cross" (Mediator Dei —

Part II Eucharistic Worship Encyclical of Pius XII 1947) and is also an act of petition, reparation, adoration and thanksgiving.

The reforms advocated by Vatican II were not intended either to do away with Latin or to center congregational participation on the congregants rather than on the Triune God Who is the object of our worship.

Conservatives are NOT pining for error. They are truly working to "conserve" to keep a precious element of our Christian and Catholic heritage.

Margaret Vincent
North Street, Caledonia