

Live in the present, placing trust in Christ



Nancy Wiechec/CNS

quite appropriate that the McBrien column and the Horan letter should appear on the same page and adjacent to one another.

George A. Goodwin Jr.
Laredo Drive
Rochester

Christ will guide church

To the editor:

In the October 23 issue of the *Catholic Courier* you ran a column by Father Richard McBrien calling for the resignation of John Paul II.

I am appalled that a Catholic paper would print an article such as this, especially when two other newspapers — one secular — has rejected similar articles by this same priest. He even admits this.

He claims, "If John Paul II were to resign while fully capable of making a rational and conscientious decision, he could assume a place among the truly great Popes of history."

To millions of Catholics and Christians, John Paul II is a living saint and he will assume a place among the greatest Popes of history. Does this man forget that the Pope is the visible head of the church on earth and that the true head of the Church — Christ — is in heaven? He is not about to let His Church become a "rudderless ship" because some people think the Holy Father should "throw in the towel" and take it easy for the rest of his life.

The article ends by saying

that it would be the Pope's final act of love and concern for the Church to resign. I disagree. His final act of love and concern will be to endure his suffering and humiliation and carry on as best he can all the way to Calvary.

It seems that in this age and time, it is very difficult for some people, even priests, to set aside their "humanness" and theological expertise and learn to trust completely in the promise of Jesus to be with His Church forever.

I will pray for Father McBrien and all the others who agree with him.

Rosemary Donato
Barber Street
Auburn

Pope walks as he talks

To the editor:

Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, is a beacon of hope to all the people that suffer from diseases.

He is showing the world that even in our most vulnerable times, if we let Him, God can still shine through us!

We speak about the dignity of life, from conception to natural death. We believe it needs to be protected. He is not only "talking the talk," but "walking the walk." He is a living example, day after painful day. God can still use us. We need to say with our Pope, Thy will be done!

Janette Malavet
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Painted Post

Jesus said: "Do not be worried about the food and drink you need to stay alive. After all, isn't life worth more than food and the body worth more than clothes?"

Obviously a mother worries about what she's going to serve for dinner. There are countless legitimate concerns that ordinary people have to deal with every day. The Lord is not asking us to be brain-dead in carrying out our normal duties; he is telling us not to be anxious.

Webster defines anxiety as an intense state of emotional disturbance characterized by varying degrees of psychic tension. God wants us to control our fears. Unless we manage to do this, we never will know the meaning of true joy.

I have been a worrier since I was a little child. Now, as a priest in my 70s, I have come a long way in controlling my fears. In doing so I have liberated the Spirit of Joy within me. I know that Jesus wants me to worry less and trust him more.

"Do not be afraid. ... I tell you this that your joy may be full." He wants you and me to be free of all anxiety.

"Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take care of itself. Come to me you who are burdened, and I will give you rest." He wants us to cancel the inner noise that



Father John Catoir

Spirituality for Today

awakens fear by immediately coming to him for help. Trust casts out fear.

The secret of sanctity and happiness, according to the great spiritual writers, rests in fidelity to the duty of the present moment. This is key. Most of us live too much in the future. We must learn to reject all the dark thoughts and fears that our imagination conjures up. When the stress mounts, come back to Jesus who abides in you. He will help you to smell the roses, to live in the present.

We owe the Lord our trust. Begin looking at your worries as unwelcome intruders, and do not identify with them. Stand apart from them as an observer. In more severe cases, like those involving temptations to commit suicide, realize that these thoughts come from a dark place outside of you.

Self-identification with your thoughts can cause great suffering. Your fears

are not you. Your feelings are not facts. Jesus says, "Be not anxious." Come to him again and again. Simply say: "Jesus, hold me. Jesus, comfort me." This will put you in the present moment immediately. Return to that inner stillness where the Spirit of Joy abides.

Let me repeat this point: You can chase anxious thoughts away by repeating the name of Jesus. Come back to your spiritual center. That is where he abides.

You are the guardian at the gate, the observer who sees certain thoughts as enemies. This very act of observing your thoughts separates you from them.

Fear usually means that you are living too much in the future and not trusting enough in divine providence. Guilt usually means you have forgotten to trust the past to God's mercy. Trust is the only thing we have to give to the Lord.

Live joyfully in the present moment by calling on the name of Jesus in times of distress. Dorothy Day called this the duty of delight.

The knowledge of God's love combined with the practice of observing your thoughts eventually will heal you and introduce you to the joy of being.

Father John Catoir is a columnist for Catholic News Service.

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