

Essays offer perspective

To the editor:

I do so enjoy Father Richard McBrien's commentary. For those of us still hoping to keep alive the spirit and promise of Vatican II, his voicing of concerns shared by many Catholics is water in the desert. He provides historical perspective, judicious analysis, and advocacy of changes that can only strengthen the Church.

Most people, sadly, know little of the history of the papacy or, for that matter, the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Without some understanding of both it is all too easy to be a blind believer in whatever seems to have the authority, most recently, of the Vatican. The Pope is not an oriental potentate, but the head of a living, vibrant and diverse church of nearly one billion people.

Father McBrien reminds us of that, and of what a rich heritage we share as Catholics. May God bless him and his commentaries!

James S. Taylor
Aurora

Allow all to enjoy liturgy

To the editor:

Father McBrien worries (Nov. 13) that Sunday liturgy will not have enough dance, clapping, moving around, and perhaps drumming. Some people may indeed find that a method to better understand the majesty and mystery of God. It may bring them closer to an inner spirituality.

Other Catholics see liturgical expression in a more contemplative light. They view the new liturgists as propounding an embarrassment of kitsch. But since these liturgists represent the dominant culture of the church, it is deemed uncharitable to criticize them.

It is imperative, however, and the liturgists are morally obligated to make room for alternative styles and points of view.

The Rev. McBrien should not see charismatic services

as the only path to the Godhead. The 50 percent empty seats in Rochester Sunday services are not only a reaction to abuse scandals, but as much to liturgies and preaching that does not take into account the beauty and tradition that once was the Catholic Church.

Gerard E. Muhl
Rogers Parkway
Rochester

Calls column 'refreshing'

To the editor:

Father Richard McBrien's articles in the *Courier* seem to raise an unusual amount of anger among the paper's readers considering the frequent negative responses in the letters to the editor. Here is one for a positive comment on the good Father. I know him to be a fair and caring human being. As I see it the readers do not accept the fact that he is not politically correct but rather tells it like it is. In that respect I see his articles as a refreshing trait in this day and age.

He has made it clear in his articles covering the Pope that he is concerned that special interest groups surrounding the Pope in the Vatican will dictate the direction of our Church should the Pope be unable to do so.

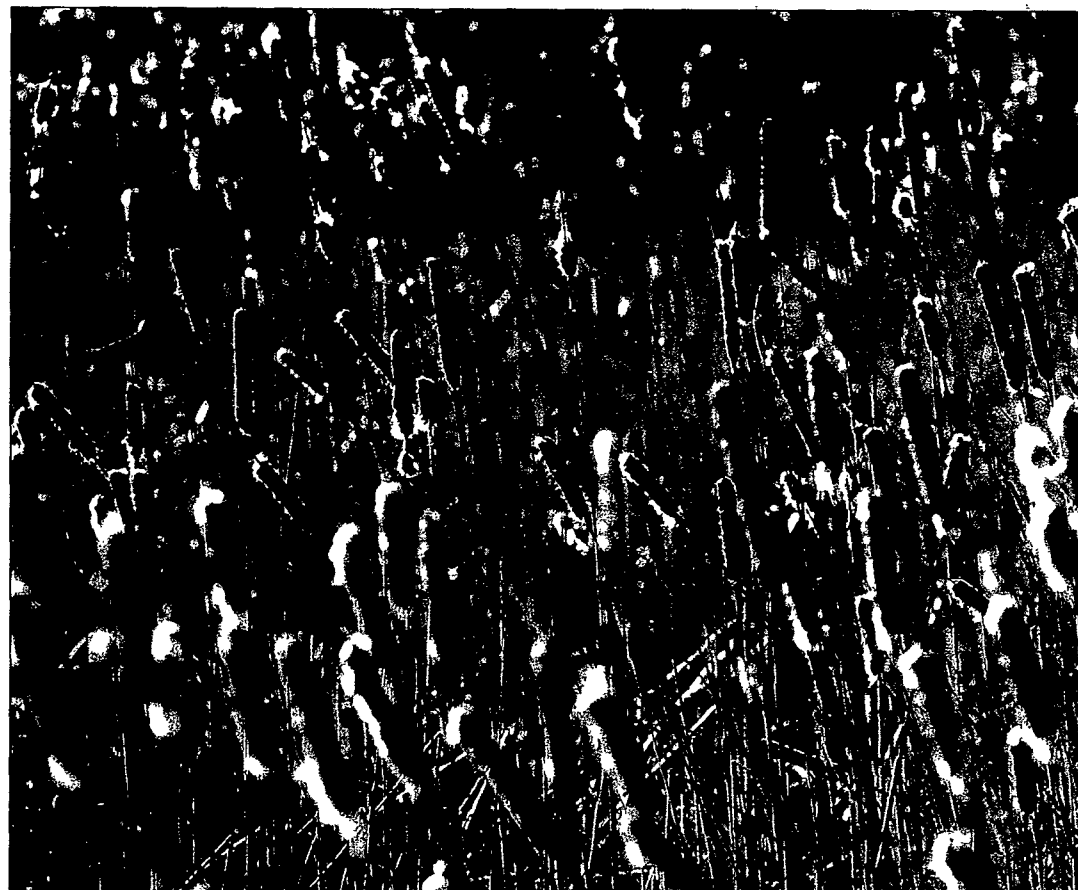
I for one do not always agree with his viewpoints, but Father McBrien's voice like it or not is one that should be heard.

John Compton
Sheldon Road
Honeoye Falls

Sees no irony in 'proposals'

To the editor:

Hooray! Father McBrien finally wrote some opinions that a great many of us can agree with (Nov. 13, "Regressive liturgical changes rumored"). The changes he suggested are excellent and many Catholics would love to see them go into effect; though, I did not understand the term "regressive." It seems that going back to pre-1960 Catholicism would be progressive. Ah, well, the



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

liberals always did know how to turn a phrase — especially the well educated Jesuits. Also, I don't remember large numbers of people walking out after the tabernacle door was closed. A simple request from the priest usually stopped any from leaving. Maybe the only teeny weeny suggestion I could add would be that seminaries be directed to stop accepting practicing homosexuals, and to stop turning qualified "homophobic" applicants away. We should also resent being called "so-called" Catholics. What a guy. He sure knows how to be inclusive in his ministry. Apparently, what he believes the hierarchy should promote is more important to him than acting as the servant of the *universal*

church. It seems as though the Vatican may have discovered that there are more of us "so-called" traditional Catholics than there are of the "regressive liberal" Catholics. Woe be unto us. What the liberal mind has wrought in our American church hierarchy and our American government is staggering. Maybe we should make some of our churches skating rinks, as Stalin did in Russia.

Dr. Anthony D'Amico
Canal Street, Lyons

Says column stirs thought

To the editor:

I always open the *Courier* and read Father McBrien's "Essays in Theology" first.

Sometimes it is the only one I have time to read.

The other day someone said to me, "I just hate Father McBrien's column. Did you read what he had to say about the Pope?" To which I replied, "Yes. I love the articles he writes. He always gives me new insights into Church issues."

Father McBrien uses his knowledge of Church history to inform us about a different approach to a problem. An approach that I do not often hear. I like to grapple with these ideas as they are a source of stimulation to my thinking.

I find his information to have much merit. Thank you, Father McBrien.

Barbara Bush
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Letters Policy

The *Catholic Courier* provides space for readers 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 to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions expressed.

Letters must not exceed 300 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.

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