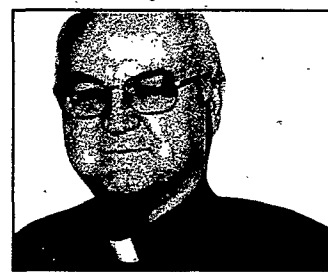


# An ecumenical pioneer honored



Father Richard McBrien

## Essays in Theology

proval. His censurers there were marked by "incredible narrowness," Congar later wrote.

Sometimes the measures were relaxed. His *Lay People in the Church* (1953) was never condemned or withdrawn, though his words about the role of the laity in the church fell on deaf eyes — until Vatican II.

He was informed by the Master General in 1954 that his writing, teaching and lecturing would have to be curtailed even further. It was "suggested" that Father Congar should go to Jerusalem, where he would write *The Mystery of the Temple*, which would require seven censurers and more than three years before it could be published.

When he returned in September 1954, he was told that he was to go to Rome. Five months later he was assigned to Cambridge and later admitted that the 10 or 11 months in England were unusually difficult. He was, in effect, under a kind of ecclesiastical house arrest — no contacts with Anglicans and no ecumenical activities.

Through it all, Congar developed a spirituality of suffering. He acknowledged later that his thinking grew out of a text from St. Paul, "Patience breeds hope" (Romans 5:4).

"One would have thought," Congar wrote, "that it was just the reverse, that a man could wait patiently because he had hope in his heart. ... Those who do not know how to suffer, do not know how to hope either. Only when a man has suffered for his convictions does he attain in them a certain force, a certain quality of the undeniable and, at the same time, the right to be heard and to be respected. *O crux benedicta* ('O blessed cross')" (*Dialogue Between Christians*, p. 45).

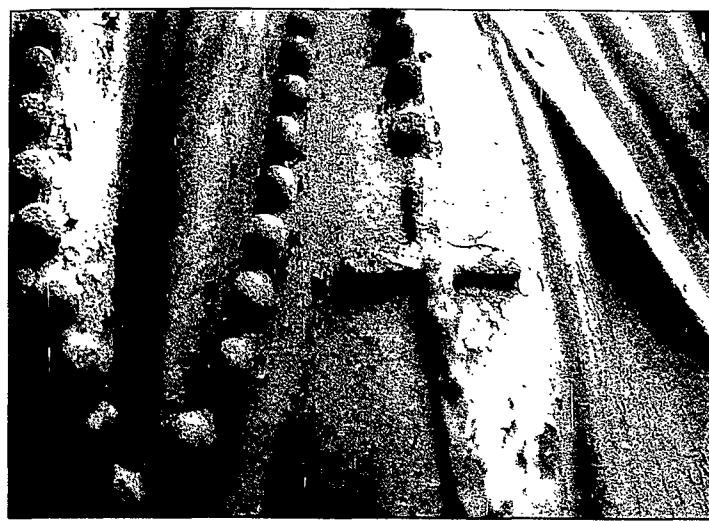
So he continued working, in spite of the constant opposition and harassment from church officials. But then came the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958 and the election of John XXIII.

There was to be a council. Congar received word that he would be a consultor on its Theological Commission and then an expert at the council itself.

His ecclesiology, for which he had suffered so much, would become the ecclesiology of Vatican II. In 1994, he was named a cardinal.

Resurrection followed the "blessed cross."

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



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

## MORE LETTERS

### All must vote as individuals

To the editor:

I am writing in response to a column by Douglas Kmiec in the Feb. 19 *Courier*, "Voting in good conscience." In this column, Kmiec makes questionable comments on voting. May I offer the opinion of another editor? He advocates:

"Preach and teach principles of Catholic morality.

Acknowledge in a democracy when dealing with legislators, there are not easy answers and that elected officials lead and reflect the virtues and vices of those they represent.

Refrain from the temptation to move to disciplinary solutions. They are ineffective and are bound to fail, especially when they are viewed as inconsistent."

It is essential for all registered persons to vote. In my opinion, commentators should refrain from making choices for individuals. We are protected and encouraged to cast our votes for our candidates as we see them.

**M. Romson**  
 Rugby Avenue  
 Rochester

### Decide for yourselves

To the editor:

In response to Richard McBrien's query about the "moral integrity" of "The Passion of Jesus Christ" (*Catholic Courier*, Feb. 12), the comments of Archbishop

op Charles J. Chaput OFM Cap. are relevant. Bishop Chaput (*Our Sunday Visitor*, Feb. 15) writes: "As we get closer to the opening of this film, the noise surrounding it will probably get louder and so will the bitterness of the critics. Ignore them. Decide for yourselves. See this film. You'll never read the Scriptural accounts of Christ's passion in quite the same way."

The disciples of Jesus invited others to "Come and see..." for themselves. Mel Gibson is doing just that.

**Ronald J. Buttarazzi**  
 West Church Street  
 Fairport

### Prefers views from experts

To the editor:

I prefer the comments of authorities David Frum and Richard Perle in their book, *An End to Evil*, to the collection of opinions — from such sources as *Cigar Aficionado* — by your staff writer Rob Cullivan regarding "The Patriot Act" in the Feb. 26 *Courier*.

"Two years after the act's passage," they write, "... it is those fears of hysteria that themselves look hysterical. Civil liberties in the United States continue robust ... the right to dissent remains unrestrained — Indeed, to judge by the way some of President Bush's wilder opponents carry on, it flourishes unrestrained even by common politeness or basic accuracy."

**James Magill**  
 Catherine Street  
 Lyons

**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.

Mail letters to: *Catholic Courier*, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624 or e-mail to [letters@catholiccourier.com](mailto:letters@catholiccourier.com). Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for verification.