

Beacon of Hope

Light of Christ

Living the Spirit of Vatican II

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For Catholics in the Fox Valley

January 2007

Inside this issue:

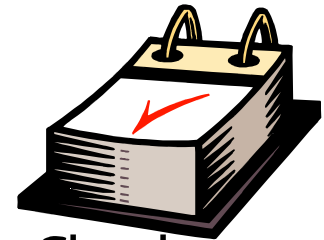
- My Words P. 2
- You Are Invited P. 3
- Listening Session P. 3
- Father Donald Cozzens P. 4
- From the President P. 5
- Call to Action P. 5
- The Declaration of Peace P. 6
- Q & A—Rev. McBrien P. 7

The Church in Our Day

In no essential sense can the Church be constricted within a contemporary Church, a futuristic Church, a traditionalist Church, or a Church of the past. A Church monopolized by any group or reserved to any period or comfortable in any single culture would

run counter to the pluralities recognized and demanded by Vatican II and would, in effect, become that monolithic, uncatholic institution which the partisans of each special group or tendency profess to reject. [p 30]

[Excerpts from the document The Church in our Day, published by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, January 21, 1968, appear on a regular basis.]



Check Your Calendar

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

Father Donald Cozzens will be coming to the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center Sunday afternoon April 22, 2007 at 2:30 pm. Please mark your calendars for an afternoon of discussion, conversation and enlightenment.

MY WORDS

A recent editorial column in the *Commonweal* entitled "Tomorrow's Priests" (11/02/2006) caught my attention. The comments brought more into focus the picture I and many other Catholics have had regarding the declining quality (let alone the quantity!) of priests graduating from seminary today.

We are right – there is a problem. We Catholics are an "increasingly sophisticated" laity that not only participates in liturgy but also staffs our churches and makes up important committees and councils. We believe we strengthen and improve our Catholic community by collaborating with our pastor. We know that in the official structure of the Church, our pastor is ultimately in charge, but we can actively assist him as our "servant leader".

Unfortunately, many newly-ordained priests today are older, less educated, and less likely to have a good background in theology. They will have little or no training for running a parish. They can be divided into two

groups – the larger one which is more "orthodox" or conservative, looking to Rome for all guidance, and more distant from the laity, and the other, smaller group that is less interested in taking orders from Rome and more interested in collaborating with their parishioners on governance of the parish. The "orthodox" priest likely will also stress that he is

"We believe we strengthen and improve our Catholic community by collaborating with our pastor. "

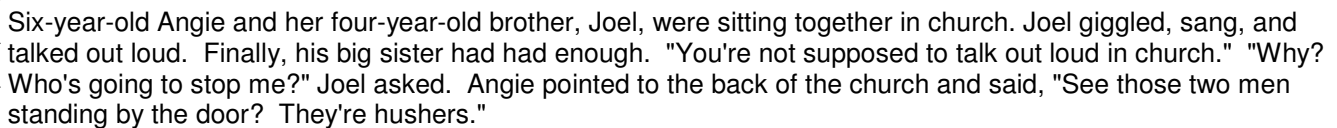
different than the laity, being the provider of the sacraments, teacher of the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and the prime example of "faith and devotion". ..Maybe he should be kept on display somewhere!

As the philosophical divide widens between the new priests and their parishioners due to the focus on "orthodoxy", there is a widening physical divide, too, as

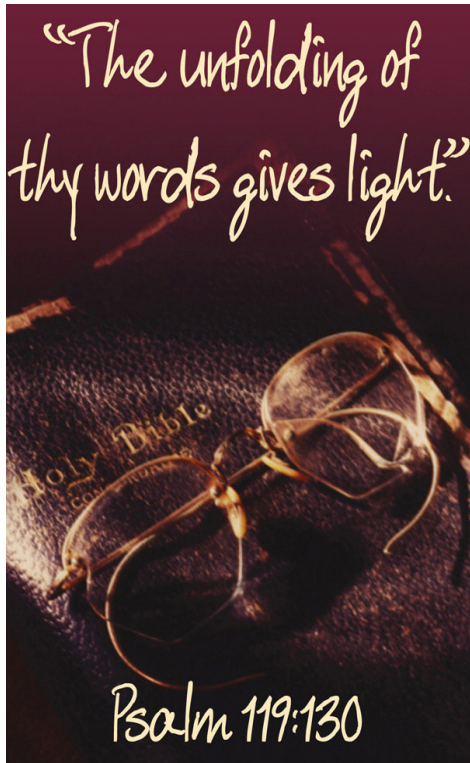
more priests will be responsible for more parishes, and opportunities for spending time with fellow priests will be few and far between.

Although the editorial suggests that the seminaries and chanceries should address the challenges of improving the quality of those entering the seminary and providing all the training necessary for running a parish, I believe it is our responsibility to take note of these trends. We must encourage qualified people to enter the seminary. We must demand a voice in the operation of our parishes. We must continue to promote the ideals of Vatican II. We need to close the divide between our priests and us, the baptized.

- Tom Whittenberger



Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother, Joel, were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally, his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church." "Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel asked. Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers."



YOU ARE INVITED TO READ A GOOD BOOK!

Bible study opportunities occur at the Goodwill Complex – Appleton Road and 441 – in the Heart of the Valley Room each Saturday at 8:30 AM during the winter and into the spring. The group will be starting with the Gospel of Saint John.

The process includes reading 10 to 15 verses, reacting to it, pondering different perspectives on what God is speaking to us through his Word, asking questions about confusing points, and pulling out personal applications to bolster us in our walk with Christ. The group is open to men and women. Come when the Spirit of God moves you to participate.

For more information, please contact

- Jim Kampa [757-9551] bereans@netzero.com;
- Tom Wiltzius [757-0906] wiltzfamily@hotmail.com;
- Greg Stock [993-0855] gstock@azco-inc.com.

LISTENING SESSION [FOX CITIES ... and beyond]

BOH is sponsoring a Listening Session on Sunday March 11, 2007 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at Appleton North High School [5000 N Ballard]. Use entrance on east side to Commons area. The Session is for listening only and will focus on these two questions:

- What are the positives that keep you connected to the Catholic Church?
- Most of us know someone who is Catholic but is no longer active in the Church. What are the issues that led to that decision and what can be done to address those issues?

The Session will have a professional moderator. The listing of answers to the two

questions will be forwarded to the Fox Cities Pastors and delivered to Bishop David Zubik.

If you are unable to be present, you may list your answers to the questions and mail to:
Beacon of Hope
Box 2524 Appleton,
WI 54912.

These listening sessions were provided for the Wausau area Catholic churches earlier this year with many positive results.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I sat down to try and figure out what to write for this newsletter, the snow is beginning to fall for really the first time this winter (yes, we had a little around Christmas, but we all knew that was going away quickly). It reminded me of how God is truly in control of everything. Many people were lamenting the fact that they couldn't ice fish, or go skiing or snowmobiling because of the mild winter we've had so far. Many others worry that with a "late start" to winter, snow and cold temperatures could stick around longer than normal this year.

What could have happened if we had cold temperatures and snow earlier in the season? Who knows, but there is a reason for it that we can't understand. Why are parts of the country having difficulty with ice and sleet and wind? Again, only God can answer that. It's a great mystery, and one that I find very intriguing. Humans have tried for many, many years to predict what the weather will do, and just when they think they know, God throws a curve ball and they swing and miss. This happens not just with the weather, but many things in all of our lives.

All we need to do is trust that God knows what he's doing, and as always this is part of his plan for us.

-Greg Stock

CALL TO ACTION—2006

The Call To Action National Conference was held November 3-5 in Milwaukee. The theme was: I AM – Rise Up People of God. This was the 30th anniversary since the first CTA Conference in 1976 was convened by the U.S. Catholic Bishops in Detroit. CTA celebrated that past event when 1,351 lay, religious and clergy delegates appointed by local bishops voted for an inclusive church, open to women and married priests, with shared decision making and greater social justice. Cardinal Dearden hailed this collaboration as "a new way of doing the work of the church in America."

This year's conference (as usual) had scheduled presenters that were thought

provoking, invigorating, knowledgeable, challenging, and Spirit-filled. They included Joan Chittister, Diana Hayes, Miriam Therese Winter, David Gibson, Robert Blair Kaiser, John Dear, Cindy Sheehan and many others. Here are several one liners from presenters that I had the opportunity to hear:

- The work of renewal is ours.
- There are enough deciders – we need discerners.
- Care enough about the community to risk for it.
- The Sabbath is a principal – every day is sacred.
- At times it's good to be on automatic pilot – this gives God something to do.

- We are people of the story.
- If all you have is a hammer, every object looks like a nail.
- Think outside the box in the spirit of the Gospels.

How can leaders lead when they have been selected for their ability to follow?

Our challenges are great! I find that one of the best ways to try to meet those challenges is by educating myself. CTA conference is one of those opportunities.

- Sister Mary Barbieur

The Declaration of Peace: Taking Action for a New Course on Iraq

Now is the time for a new course on Iraq, including the prompt withdrawal of all US military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work. In fact, it will make the situation worse. It is time for U.S. troops to come home and for the US to support an Iraqi-led peace process.

To this end, The Declaration of Peace calls for the following comprehensive plan to end the US occupation in Iraq, including:

- Rapid withdrawal of US troops and all coalition forces, with no future redeployments
- No permanent US military bases or installations
- Support for an Iraqi-led peace process, including a peace conference to shape a post-occupation transition
- Return of Iraqi control over the political and economic life of the nation, including its oil resources
- Reparations and reconstruction to address the destruction caused by the US invasion, occupation, and 13 years of sanctions
- Establish a US peace dividend for job creation, health care, education, housing, and other vital social needs
- Increased support for US veterans of the Iraq war, and No "preventive" war against Iran or any other nation

The Declaration Peace Pledge:

Yes! I pledge to declare peace by supporting a comprehensive plan to end the US occupation and to support an Iraqi-led peace process. I pledge to (check one or more):

Call on the Bush administration and Congress to establish this plan

Engage in peaceful witness and action to establish this plan

Participate, as conscience leads me, in nonviolent civil disobedience to establish this plan.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Affiliation _____

Mail to: *Declaration of Peace*

2501 Harrison St., Oakland, CA 94612

E-mail: info@declarationofpeace.org

For More Information: <http://www.DeclarationofPeace.org>

Q and A – Rev. Richard McBrien

Paulist Press and Rev. McBrien have graciously allowed Beacon of Hope – Light of Christ to publish a Question and Answer in each of our 2007 newsletters from the book 101 Questions & Answers on the Church.

Q.#40. You said earlier that the First Vatican Council was important for their teaching on faith and on the papacy. What was the Second Vatican Council’s most important teaching?

The Second Vatican Council’s primary focus was on the Church itself, and its teachings covered a fairly wide theological and pastoral territory. The council taught, *first*, that the Church is a mystery, or sacrament, and not primarily an organization or institution. *Second*, that the Church is the whole People of God, and not just the hierarchy. *Third*, that the Church’s mission is for the sake of the Reign of God and that the Church itself is always subordinate to the Reign of God. *Fourth*, that the Church’s mission includes the social apostolate (action of behalf of justice, ministry to those in need) and is not limited to preaching, teaching, and the celebration of the sacraments. *Fifth*, that the Church is a communion, or college, of local churches, which are not simply portions of the universal Church. They are the Body of Christ in their own particular place. *Sixth*, that the Church is a pilgrim community, which means that it is still on the way toward the final Reign of God and is always in need of penance and renewal. *Seventh*, that the laity participate directly in the mission of the Church

and are not simply sharers in the mission of the hierarchy. *Eighth*, that all authority in the Church is to be exercised as a service and in a collegial and collaborative manner. *Ninth*, that the Body of Christ includes all Christian churches and is not limited exclusively to the



Catholic Church, and certainly not to the Roman Catholic Church. *Tenth*, that God uses not only other Christian churches but also non-Christian religions in offering salvation to all humankind, and that the Catholic Church, therefore, is not the only means to salvation.

These teachings on the Church are to be found in one form or

another, in the sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council. Each of them is concerned, in varying degrees, with the mystery and mission of the Church. The council’s principal teachings on the Church are presented in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*). The former emphasizes the inner life of the Church and the latter, the Church’s relationship to the world. The Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), the Declaration on the Relationship between the Church and Non-Christian Religions (*Nostrae Aetate*), and the Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*) are concerned with the Catholic Church’s relationship with non-Catholic Christian and non-Christian religious communities as well as the body politic.

(Continued on page 8)

“Forbidden fruit creates many jams”

Q and A – Rev. Richard McBrien (continued)

The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*) stresses teachings already present in *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. The Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) reminds Roman Catholics that there is a Catholic communion of churches that includes more than the Roman Church.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*), The Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*), and the Decree on

the Instruments of Social Communication (*Inter Mirifica*) touch upon the abiding missionary tasks of the Church: worship, preaching, teaching, and, in general, communicating the Gospel to the world.

The Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*), the Decree on Priestly Formation (*Optatum Totius*), the Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office (*Christus Dominus*), the Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*), and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*) are concerned with the various

groups within the Church – laity, religious, clergy, and hierarchy – who are ministerially responsible for its life and mission.

Excerpts from *101 Questions & Answers on the Church* by Rev. Richard Mc Brien, copyright 1996, Paulist Press, Inc., New York/Mahwah, N.J. Used with permission of Paulist Press. www.paulistpress.com or call toll free: 1-800-218-1903 [ISBN: 0-8091-4250-3]. The book may be purchased at Saint Patrick Book Store in Appleton or Saint Catherine Book Shop in Green Bay.

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P.O. Box 2524
Appleton, WI 54912

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

