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THE CHURCH IN OUR DAY

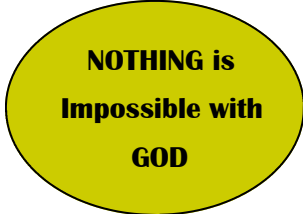
The work of Christ and His Church is a work for unity, unity among mankind [sic], unity between mankind and God. It was the Church that first told us that because of our baptism in Christ “there is no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female” [Gal 3:28]. This is the Church’s true mission. If she falters on this, she must recover again her pilgrim path in repentance and renewal. Continually the Church is reminded by the baptism she celebrates, by the Gospel she proclaims, by the Bread she breaks, that her mission is unity, her purpose is harmony, her service is

reconciliation.

She forever gives thanks to God because she knows that there was a day when we “had no Christ,” when we “were immersed in this world, without hope and without God” [Eph 2:12].

Now all this has changed! For “in His own person He killed hostility,” so that now we “are no longer aliens but citizens like all the saints and part of God’s household” [Eph 2:16-19]. [p. 17]

[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.]



HOLY LAND TOUR

By special arrangement, a tour of Israel’s Holy Sites for Catholics and Christian friends.

This 14-day tour with optional extensions leaves on March 20th by direct flight from Chicago to Tel Aviv. We visit many Holy Sites and have several Masses. Led by Dr. DeWayne Coxon, noted authority and founder of Blossoming Rose, this tour has an inclusive fee of only \$1850.

For more information call Tom Wiltzius, 920-757-0906 or Peter Bekkers at 920-757-9027.

Sponsored by *Beacon of Hope...Light of Christ*

The Eucharist and Vatican II: A Perspective

Many Catholics ponder, “What would it have been like to be there?” It is a simple and beautiful reflection on the mystery and wonderment of Christ’s gift to us of Himself in what has become known as the Eucharist.

From their time as children, cradle Catholics have grown up with the Eucharist as central to their faith and to the celebration of the Mass itself. Individuals who have come to Catholicism as adults, a blessed, unique, and different journey, have also come to the Eucharist as a beloved and challenging mystery, central to faith, to love, and to the hope it engenders.

Why is Eucharist so significant, so powerful, and so meaningful to us?

Eucharist is undoubtedly a gift from Christ, coming shortly before His death and resurrection. It is His confirmation to be with us always. And it is His call to remember, refresh and renew His commission and commandment to us...a call to love one another and to take the Word to all.

What then, would it be like for us to be there, to be at the Last Supper, where Christ, the Lord Himself, transformed bread and wine into His Body and Blood... for His disciples and for all mankind?

Scriptures would have called

us to a room, prepared for a small gathering, just before the onset of Passover. While artists a thousand or more years later have typically rendered views of a long table with the 12 men, half on either side of Jesus, and all on the same side of the table...easier for the artist to convey...we might have seen a different scene.



“Why is the Eucharist so significant so powerful, and so meaningful to us?”

We might have seen a small group, men and women gathered around table, with multiple conversations, until Jesus called their attention to His blessing. He may have been somber at this point, knowing what He was about to undertake and what He was about to go through.

He knew He was going to provide a lasting gift...“This is My Body...This is My Blood... Do this in memory of Me.”

And He knew He was about to be betrayed, suffer, and die for all sins for all time. But did the disciples recognize at that moment the significance and meaning of Jesus’ words and

gestures? Would we have?

Jesus “broke the bread and gave it to all” as an indication of shared significance. He was there for all his followers, sinners and saints, beloved like John, stubborn like Peter or Thomas, and treacherous like Judas. He made no distinctions. Jesus, in a similar manner, blessed and distributed the wine to all, again without distinction or discrimination.

The un-leavened bread from Jesus’ era would have looked like a large pancake to us. The wine would likely have come from a cup cut from stone, taken by dipping the cup into a large urn of wine. There were no large, white wafers, and it is unlikely Jesus would have had a chalice made of gold and silver.

If we had been at the table, we may have been given a piece of bread: His Body, torn or cut from the large flat loaf of bread. And we may have received a portion of wine: His Blood, poured from Jesus’ cup into our own. And only knowing and believing then, what we know and believe now, would we have been in awe.

Today we can still be in awe, humble and honored to be a Catholic, accepting the Gift of Jesus...from Him to us. Yet for some, the Catholic Church itself is in the way of that experience.

Continued on page 3

A Call To Renew

The holidays are a time of joyful celebration for each and every one of us. They are also a time for new beginnings. With the beginning of the New Year, the Beacon of Hope is offering the opportunity for members to join small Renew groups.

For those not familiar with Renew groups, they provide the chance to share spiritually with others in a small group setting. The group reflects upon scripture, sharing how the scripture has had an impact on their daily lives. Individuals can share their insights into the scriptures. Renew groups are about experiencing just how powerful the word of God is.

We will be using Renew materials from Renew International. The materials can

be found at www.parishlife.com. Click on Faith Sharing, and you will be able to download the materials that will be used by the small groups. Please take the time to browse the materials.

If you decide that participating

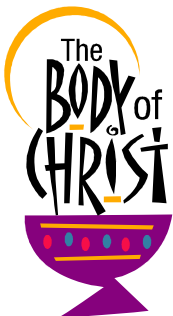


in the Renew groups is something that you want to do, please send an e-mail, with RENEW GROUPS in the subject line, to

bschilling@sbcglobal.net. Include your name and phone number. We will then be assembling small groups of about eight people to gather and share in the Renew experience. It will be up to each group to determine a schedule and meeting place(s).

Those of you who were a part of the Renew 2000 experience will remember just how powerful the experience is. Please take the time to consider joining the Renew movement in the Beacon of Hope.

- Brad Schilling



The Eucharist *(Continued from page 2)*

The Church certainly recognizes and appropriately teaches the significance of the Eucharist. Yet unfortunately, it would also deny Eucharist to those it chooses to separate and isolate. Where Christ acted without prejudice and distinction, the Church walks a different path.

Where Christ called all including sinners to table and gave them His Body and Blood, the Catholic Church today only allows approved individuals at table, and refuses to many the joy and fulfillment of Eucharist.

The spirit of Vatican II is inclusive rather than exclusive, a calling of all people of faith to

His table. It is the Holy Spirit reminding us of Christ's lasting Gift, Himself, to all of mankind. Part of the joy of being at His table to receive His Body and Blood, comes in recognizing His purpose, to call all of us as His own to love and to teach. It is, indeed, a wondrous moment.

- Tom Wiltzius

THE GREAT EQUALIZER

Bay St Louis, Mississippi sits 28 feet above sea level, approximately 55 miles east of New Orleans. Saturday August 27, 2005 appeared to be “normal” in the midst of the annual hurricane season. One of the resident parents asked his daughter, a junior in high school, to take some video footage of the town. “I don’t know why I asked her to do this ... it was going to be just another hurricane like so many before,” he told us. And then Sunday came ... “It will be bad, maybe like Camille ... but we never expected ...”

“To say the parishioners were grateful is an understatement.”

Our Lady of the Gulf church sits on the Bay; Camille’s waves lapped at its top step. This time the roof came off, many stained glass windows were broken and the pews swirled around like tooth picks, scattered across lawns and parking lots, with pieces found in parishioner’s back yards. When it was over, “we stood in line,” whispered the father of the high school junior, “waiting for the food provided by the Red Cross. Behind us stood the president of the local bank – a millionaire –

all of us in the same line. Katrina was the great equalizer!”

Very early [2:00 AM] on the morning of December 2, 2005, four of us began the 18 hour trip south from Wisconsin. We hauled some supplies, tools and a ton of 36” solid core doors. Two of us, Bill and Jerry, had been there before. Tom and I were novices. Jerry had taken his camper trailer down on a previous trip – there is no housing for volunteers. We were going to Bay St Louis to work on what remained of Our Lady of the Gulf Church.

We helped restore the parish center. I cut insulation pieces and dry wall. Our own crew, as well as people from Baltimore and Vicksburg, constructed the rough framing for door openings, and repaired the water supply lines. It is interesting to note to us “Northerners” that those pipes are only a foot or so below ground level.

To say the parishioners were grateful is an understatement. Consider that most of them had either lost their homes completely or found their buildings severely damaged – personal items, household furniture, pictures and mementos completely destroyed and vanished. Add to that misery the fact that their jobs were gone; their livelihood pretty much destroyed.

The sign of hope, which I witnessed, is rooted in the genuine hospitality showered upon us. Their sense of caring for one another is taking them through the challenges they face each day. Consider that those who have been lucky enough to obtain a FEMA trailer (some were still living in tents) now called a space approximately 10’ by 30’ their new home. Friendships and sharing, faith and love sustain these survivors. I will not soon forget these enduring values and the gratitude these new friends expressed to us. For example, we were present during the week they counted their 100th day since Katrina – that’s when electricity was restored to their parish center. When the lights did come on, a deep sense of appreciation filled the air.

We saw the video of pre-Katrina days and then toured the area – the destruction was indescribable. Many parts looked like a war zone – pictures and words cannot convey what happened to these people. Consider going to their WEB site for your own ‘tour.’

<http://hightide.st.usm.edu/katrina>

I will return to them again in the near future. In the meantime let us pray for them and for each other.

Peace, fr John Zickert

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

**MARK
YOUR
CALENDAR**

The Officers and Board of Directors are very excited about sponsoring Father Richard McBrien's visit to Appleton to speak (see related ad/article elsewhere in the newsletter for more details). He spoke in November at the Call to Action convention, and those from Beacon of Hope who attended came away very impressed. You may also have read his columns in the Compass (and read the various letters for and against Father McBrien's comments). We hope to have a full house at the Fox Cities PAC for his presentation, and encourage you to attend and hear the views of one of our country's leading religious scholars.

I also am excited about the trip to Israel coming up in March that is also being sponsored by Beacon of Hope.

The recent events in Israel may have made some of you who were thinking of going take pause, but remember that many things happen every day throughout the world, and nothing worth seeing and experiencing isn't without a few shortcomings. What will be seen there, based on the tour itinerary, will make it a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all who attend.

The Board of Directors is also putting the details together for our first annual meeting, to be held May 21, 2006, at a location to be determined. Please put this exciting event on your calendar. More details will follow in the next newsletter.

May God Bless all of you in this New Year!

- Greg Stock

Presenting Life ...

Father Richard McBrien

Acclaimed Catholic Theologian and Author

"Critical Issues Facing the Church"

May 11, 2006 7:30 PM

Fox Cities Performing Arts Center

Tickets for Reserved Seating \$7.50

Call 920-730-3760 or e-mail order at www.foxcitiespac.com

Sponsored by *Beacon of Hope ...Light of Christ*

WHOM DO WE SERVE?

*"You may be an ambassador to England or France,
You may like to gamble, you may like to dance,
You may be the heavyweight champion of the world,
You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.*

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed,
You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody".*

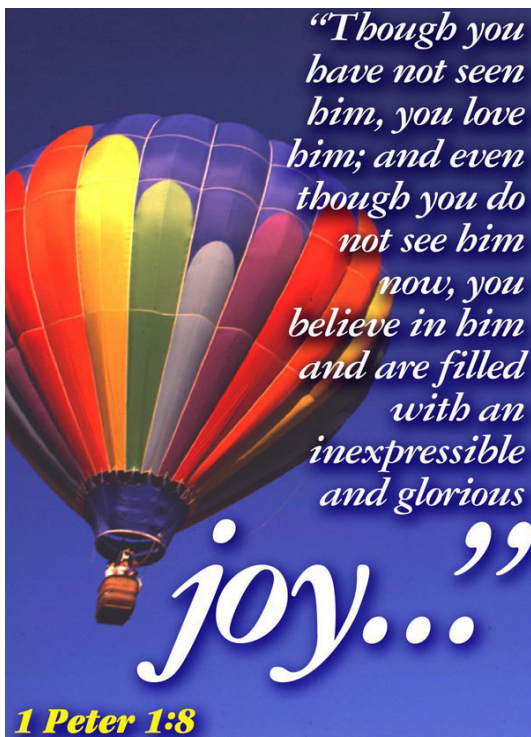
So begins the song "Gotta Serve Somebody" written by Bob Dylan. I had not heard that song for many years until I received another Bob Dylan CD for Christmas. I've had a little more free time on my hands lately, so I've been reflecting on where I am in my spiritual journey, and where we all have been, where we are, and where we are headed as a community. In doing so, this song really hit home as I have reflected on where I am in my relationship with God, the Church as the living body of Christ, and the Church as an administrative entity. So whom do we really serve?

Contemplating the events of the past two years, I have struggled with my faith and that very question of whom do we serve. I have come to the simple conclusion that God did not create us to serve some man made dogma or doctrine for ritual's sake, but rather we have been created in God's image and filled with the Holy Spirit to serve each other as the living Church.

In Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul tells us: *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; You are in the Spirit, Since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, The Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.* [Romans 8:8-11]

So let us throw off the shackles of dogma and doctrine and let the Spirit come alive so that we may utilize the unique gifts each of us have been blessed with to serve the living Body of Christ.

-Dave Arent



*God has not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God has not promised sun without sorrow,
peace without pain.*

*But God has promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.*

Kristone

FATHER'S HOUSE

These are divisive times for Christians including Catholics, as we have seen in times past. Rather than turning towards one another, some of us are turning against one another, and, sadly, sometimes quite viciously.

In the mix of praise and worship, where there are many signs of joy and unity, there also runs a current of false righteousness. This current is often seen and felt in words that suggest only one form of worship style, or that only one prescribed path for one's personal journey to God, is correct.

If we take a moment at a time like this, to turn back to the words of Christ, we may see a different picture...a picture of tolerance and diversity that we are to celebrate as a sign of God's love.

We may recall that Christ has called us to love one another and teach His word. These words are often presented to us as the great Commandment and Commission of Christ. He has called us to go beyond tolerance to actually love one another, including our enemies, and to teach those who are yet to know the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Is Christ's Commission and Commandment meant to make

us all the same, to get us to the Father the same way, and to worship in the same manner? Hardly.

Through Christ's words we can understand that the Father not only expects and allows for our differences, He celebrates them!

Christ tells us that in His Father's house "there are many rooms." These many rooms are not meant to suggest that God is simply calling numbers of people to Him...small numbers as some intolerant Christians might suggest.

We only need to look again to Christ to understand why so many rooms.

On one occasion, Jesus met with His followers and told them that people are all given different gifts. And, He tells us that the Father, for developing and applying our different gifts, blesses us. This parable of diversity and our heavenly Father's expectations and blessings is the "Parable of the Talents".

Again, Christ tells His followers that we are called to celebrate our uniqueness in ways that God blesses. This time Jesus names many of the specific paths to honoring and

worshipping the Father. Our efforts reflect our path of praise and worship.

Blessed by God are the meek, who quietly praise God daily and pray for others with humility. Blessed by God are the peacemakers who demonstrate their compassion through care-giving and wise words of counsel. Blessed are those who hunger for justice by actively showing dissent through public word and action. And blessed by God are many others who worship through their calling and gifts.

The Father's House has many rooms with many paths to those rooms. Each room is a reward for a form of praise and worship, for being who God called us to be, here at this time and in this life.

We are called to love one another, to celebrate our uniqueness and diversity, to sing praise that God has put each of us on our own journey to Him through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Father blesses us for using His gifts, and His ultimate gift to each of us is a room to share in His house.

- Tom Wiltzius

Acclaimed Catholic Theologian and Author...Fr. Richard McBrien

“Critical Issues Facing the Church”

Father Richard McBrien will be at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center on May 11, 2006 at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$7.50 and can be obtained in person at the Box Office (400 West College Avenue) or by calling 920-730-3760, or by going to the PAC website (www.foxcitiespac.com).

There will be a question and answer session. If you have a question you would like considered, please email beaconofhope@bohlightofchrist.org OR send by mail to Beacon of Hope-Light of Christ, Box 2524 Appleton, Wisconsin 54912.

If you have any questions/concerns, no longer wish to receive the newsletter or wish to receive additional information not included in this newsletter, please contact us at Beacon Of Hope, P.O. Box 2524 Appleton, WI 54912 or send an email to

BeaconOfHope@bohlightofchrist.org

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

January

