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THE CHURCH IN OUR DAY

In seeking to describe the Church, we discover that images often convey more than definitions or precise words. There is more mystery here than categories can manage or scientific phrases exhaust. Ever since the Council adjourned, Pope Paul ... has been using a variety of figures and symbols with which to clarify the mystery of the Church. He has reminded us that the Church is the House of God [1 Tim 3:15] ...an inner place where a family gathers, ... It is the temple of the Spirit; it is a city, a community united and governed by a distinct law; it is the Bride of Christ and the Mother of the

spiritually reborn. The Church is a pledge of great love, the light of the nations, a beacon bringing hope and charity and courage. The Church is a pilgrim pointing out the sure way to order and salvation, a school where Christ is taught, faith fostered, prayer encouraged. [pp 20-21]

[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.]



RENEW IS UPON US

By Brad Schilling

Earlier this month, groups for Renew were formed based on a list of individuals interested in participating in Renew. In all, twenty-five people were organized into four Renew groups. These groups will be setting their own calendar of meeting times and places.

The Renew groups will be utilizing materials from Renew International. All material is available online at www.renewintl.org. After accessing the Renew International website, individuals will be able to follow the Faith Sharing link to access the materials. Materials for the coming two weeks can

be downloaded and printed for use during the meetings.

There is still room for more people interested in Renew to join. Please call Brad or Lynn Schilling at 830-7414 or email bschilling@sbcglobal.net and you will be matched with a group. Come join us and experience Renew first hand.

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors.

Beacon of Hope... Light of Christ Staff: Tom Wiltzius, Joe Uchtyl

Stewardship and governance: A match made in heaven

by Tom Wiltzius

I was recently visited by a gentleman who was concerned about a meeting he had attended at his Catholic Church. It seems that his parish is one of two in Northeastern Wisconsin that has been selected to participate in a “pilot” diocesan fundraising initiative.

He indicated that great care was taken by the presenters to explain the methods for the not-so-voluntary campaign. The presenters went through each organizing stage and subsequent step with great deliberation. Finally, the presenters also indicated that there would be a certain threshold to the quantity of money raised, whereby below the threshold the money would be split evenly between the diocese and the parish, and above the threshold a greater percentage of the money would go to the parish with less to the diocese.

The gentleman indicated that the presentation was well done. However, he and others had a lingering concern.

When he had asked what the funds going to the diocese would be used for, and why they needed to raise money for the parish that wasn't earmarked in their budget, the presenters stumbled and fumbled. He indicated it was apparent that they either did not know or did not intend to be forthcoming.

In scripture, we are given many indications that we need to support God's work through application of responsible stewardship...donations of our time, talent, or treasure. We are also cautioned that we are not to waste or squander what God has so generously granted to us. The giving part is stewardship; the ensuring of no waste is the responsible part.

Good stewardship requires commitment and trust to be sure. And it requires as much knowledge as possible about the organizations to which we make our gifts. Is the money being used wisely? Is there a budget, and is the process of budgeting and expensing open to all? Who is in control and who is accountable to whom?

The gentleman I spoke with has participated as a primary leader in many community and church fundraising efforts. He is a well-known business leader. In every case, he makes sure that the fundraising effort is credible by ensuring that every donor, large and small, knows what the money is earmarked for and who is accountable. It is good business, and it is good stewardship.

Because of the many financial issues, past and present, in the Catholic Church, let's hope that this diocese takes steps to ensure an open, participative, and accountable process in its financial affairs, and is forthcoming in their “pilot” effort. Taking such a lead would be a great demonstration of good faith and good stewardship.

MCBRIEN TO THE FOX CITIES?

For those who reside in northeast Wisconsin, the Fox Cities is recognized as being the nerve center for commerce, finance, education and social justice. For many years, it was also a spark of hope and a beacon of faith for the American Church. One of the most famous and wide-spread emblems of success was the Green Bay Plan for Education. Today the Appleton Catholic Education System is a model for consolidation across the nation. Paul's Pantry in Green Bay signals a progressive approach to feeding the hungry. The Place 2B in Oshkosh consistently offers shelter and medical care to people, no matter their state in life or experience of its challenges. Is there a better place for Fr. Richard McBrien to offer his insights on critical issues facing the Church?

Come share Fr. McBrien's lecture at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center on May 11, 2006 beginning at 7:30 pm. This presentation will be on the nature and mission of the Church in the light of its New Testament origins and its current and future pastoral challenges. The presentation rests on the assumption that it is only in looking back to the Church's beginnings that we can discover the freedom that we have to move

forward. To what extent is the present Church a faithful reflection of the intentions of Jesus himself? How can we distinguish between what is central to the Church's mission and what is accidental and, therefore, changeable?



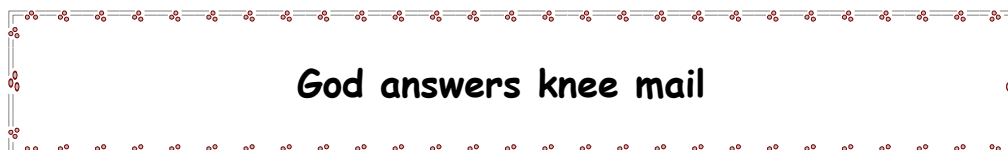
Come share Fr. McBrien's lecture at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center on May 11, 2006 beginning at 7:30 pm.

Some may wonder why Fr. McBrien is qualified to present his reflections. Consider that he has a Doctorate in Theology from Pontifical Gregorian University [Rome]. He studied there during the Second Vatican Council. He has since been professor of Theology at Pope John XXIII National Seminary and Boston College. Since 1980, he has taught theology at Notre Dame University and currently holds its prestigious Crowley-O'Brien Professor of Theology chair. His expertise has been consistently recognized in awards for excellence for his teaching and writing. His weekly column has appeared in Catholic newspapers

for 40 years. He is author of a multitude of books across a wide spectrum of subject matter. He is perhaps most famous for his Catholicism, a two volume synthesis of Catholic theology translated into German, French, Danish, Chinese. Two of his most recent books are Lives of the Popes [1997] translated into Dutch and Portuguese and Lives of the Saints [2001] in its 5th printing; both have recently been released in paperback. Some of his writings will be available for purchase after the lecture. There will also be a book signing following his presentation.

Reserved tickets [\$7.50] are available at many locations: PAC box office [400 W College Appleton 920-730-3760]; www.foxcitiespac.com; St Catherine Book Shop [342 S Jefferson Green Bay 920-432-0078]; St Patrick Book Store [972 W Northland - Northland Mall Appleton 920-731-7635].

There will be a Question and Answer session following the lecture. Send questions for consideration to the postal or email address listed on the last page of the newsletter.



God answers knee mail



**Do You See Yourself In
This Wanted Poster?**

YOU ARE WANTED!!!

St. Joseph's Food Pantry needs YOU...

Graduates of 8th grade and all high school students are invited to join us again this year as we volunteer at St. Joe's Food Pantry during the summer on Thursday mornings.

This counts toward school volunteer time and is accepted both at Xavier and Hortonville High School.

Look for a team to work with and call me if you are interested.

Ann Thielen: 779-0691. More to come regarding this in future newsletters.

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

March/April

