



# The Journey and the Pilgrimage

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**NOTHING is Impossible with GOD**

It seems so far away and remote... so dangerous. Why would anyone consider the journey? And that was just the flight to Newark (New Jersey) ...our first leg of the trip to Israel!

The "old joke" strategy line, the juxtaposition of an element of the story (Newark) for the whole of it (Israel), can lead us to laugh while we also gain insight.

Under the sponsorship of Beacon of Hope- Light of Christ, 12 travelers journeyed to Chicago on a Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. That evening, we stayed in motels convenient to O'Hare's International Airport. The next morning we rose early, ate and then went to clear Israeli Security at O'Hare and depart on *El Al* Airlines, flying first to Newark to pick up more passengers then on to Tel Aviv.

We arrived at David Ben Gurrion International Airport the next morning. It was Tuesday in Israel. The flight had gone smoothly. We were tired, and anything but hungry.

We journeyed on, we saw, we experienced, and we returned home... none of us the same. Somewhere in between our arrival and our departure, the journey became a pilgrimage...for all of us.

As the six of us who stayed for one week flew home together, we took time to share what the journey-become-pilgrimage meant to each of us.

Each of us spoke in turn. "The Church of the Holy Sepulcher and St. Anne's in old city, the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, the Mount of Beatitudes, Biblical Tamar, the Temple Mount, The Western Wall (Wailing Wall)...and on."

We all mentioned different places that we each felt connected to God and more alive with Him than we could have imagined. And we all expressed one place that we also felt connected to Him and to one another...Holy Mass on the Sea of Galilee. It was an experience both providential and binding.

We all made a declaration on that flight home and have since expanded that shared commitment with our fellow pilgrims who returned a week later. There will be another trip to Israel in 2007...it also will be a journey and a pilgrimage.

- Tom Wiltzius

## BEN'S ESSAY

The cliché goes something like this – words leapt off the page at me – they were so informative and interesting. But what happens when words yearn to leap onto the page; when the urge to write is so great you just can't get the thoughts down fast enough ... and hope they make sense when it is all done.

Such is the predicament in which I find myself – should I enter the fray or keep it all inside. Spirit says write! So here goes ... I just returned from Denver and my friend, who is going to be a junior at St John's in Collegeville, and I talked ... and we talked ... and talked. He shared like rain drops falling from a broken sky.

Let me say first my friend, Ben, is a young man very much in love with Jesus as his Lord and God; one who treasures the great mysteries and realities of his Catholic faith; one who breaks into song at the drop of a hat – I believe he has memorized every contemporary Christian song. It is his prayer and meditation, his voice to God and God's voice to him. Yet for all his faith and trust, he hurts – hurts because his community of supportive church has been taken away from him. He treasures the Liturgy of Community and Word, the Liturgy of Bread Broken and Cup Shared - as nourishment for his journey to social justice. He hurts for himself and for all

who have lost a meaningful portion of their weekly experience of the community who knows and worships God.

Some may say he is too young to 'really know' the committed life but when is it too young to be isolated and afraid, to be touched by meaningful Liturgy and have it snapped away. And he asks why is my church so insensitive to me as a young adult and to us who believe in a Jesus who rallied against the hypocrisy of his day for placing so much emphasis upon the law and observance that they forgot to love and serve. "Why," he asks in the name of his friends, "is the church moving away from very much of what we hold dear and had come to treasure?" "Why do we no longer experience a sense of welcome and inclusiveness?" "Why, in particular, do those people we have come to respect receive no dignity from our Church?" [and here he specifically mentioned those who live a different lifestyle].

Ben is not an isolated individual. His parents pointed me to LifeBridge – a Christian Church – 3,200 participants over five services on a weekend - also called the largest church with baptized Catholics in the area north of Denver – composed of many who have been hurt by the institutional church. It seems to me there is in any of our cities in whatever

diocese a new non-denominational church with a relative-majority of baptized Catholics. Isn't there a message to be heard and a response to be formulated which reaches out in love; which examines attitudes and proclamations which often drive the folks to take such extreme measures.

Is my friend alone? No, his friends – young women and young men – feel the same; they talk, you know! In fact, for some that is all they want – to speak with one another as they gather for worship; to break open the Word in a shared dialogue – recognizing the unique experience of God's 'word.' "What would be so wrong," my friend said to me, "if someone in the congregation actually spoke up during a homily and engaged the preacher in loving dialogue?" Young people – in age and spirit – love to talk and do actually listen.

We spoke for a long time. I shared with him some of the recent history of our church – recent for me and ancient for him – about Pius XII opening Scripture study to the insights of Protestant Scripture scholars; about John XXIII and the Spirit of God who got the 80 year old man to call a Council, "to let in a little fresh air;" about Paul VI who struggled to balance the new and the old.

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I recommended to him that there has been a time in our church when leaders were chosen for their ability as leaders and their insights as pastoral persons. Ben has known only one kind of leadership.

Whatever prompts my friend in Denver or his contemporaries in the Fox Cities to question and believe, to search and clarify, to challenge the leaders and live the vision of Jesus, they will not

simply abandon the church. They will move us forward. Will we lose more of them along the way? That is the fear. Will they disappear – not a chance – they have the Spirit – are open to the Spirit and care too much. How long will it take us to recognize and treasure the Spirit speaking through them is the critical question. In many ways we do hold their future in our hands.

- Fr. John Zickert

**Editor's Note:**

*Beacon of Hope* newsletter is willing to print the observations of the young at heart who likewise believe the Spirit of God will prevail in this time of doubt and questioning. Just send your observations to one of the addresses listed on page 6 of this newsletter.

## DEATH PENALTY REFERENDUM

One of our responsibilities as U.S. citizens is to vote. Not only is this a privilege but an opportunity to make our voices heard. November 7, 2006 is Election Day. One of the issues on the ballot will be an advisory referendum where by we, the voters, will be asked whether Wisconsin should lift its 1853 ban on the death penalty, the longest state ban in the nation. Fortunately we have ample time to educate ourselves on this issue. Here are a number of thoughts to consider as one discerns, prays and reflects before going to the polls November 7:

- Capital punishment diminishes the sacredness of life.
- Studies show that the poor and minorities are unfairly targeted.
- Revenge is poor rationale for creating a law.
- Statistics show that the death penalty hasn't served as a deterrent in states that have it.
- Eleven other states plus the District of Columbia do not have the death penalty. New Jersey and Illinois have a moratorium on executions and several states have court cases challenging the death penalty.
- Persons who are executed are deprived the opportunity for a conversion of heart.
- The death penalty is an irreversible act.
- The long, but necessary appeals are cost prohibitive.

Sister Mary Barbieur

## FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

Well, our first year as a formally recognized non-profit organization is behind us, and it was a great year! We received our determination letter from the IRS in June to allow donations to be tax-deductible. We held a picnic, organized prayer meetings, and assisted youth with volunteer opportunities at St. Joseph's Food Pantry and the Community Clothes Closet over the summer. We provided various kinds of support to a number of people in the Diocese who have been injured in some way. We started a new round of Renew

groups for spiritual enhancement. And, of course, we sponsored the Father Richard McBrien lecture in mid-May (please see the related article elsewhere in this newsletter). Wow, we've accomplished a lot in our first year!

Our board of directors has been hard at work to lead Beacon of Hope – Light of Christ to a good start as an organization, and I think they've done a terrific job. I applaud their effort and dedication through this first year. I look forward to continuing to work with them

as we begin our next year of activities, spiritual growth, and support for those in need.

By the way, we are still looking for a few volunteers to join our board, as we are not yet at the full slate described in our by-laws. If you are interested, please attend one of our meetings (see the website for dates and times, or call me) and see what happens. And if you're still interested, we have a place waiting for you. Hope to see you soon!

- Gregory Stock

The presentation by Fr Richard McBrien, by every account, was a huge success. He was pleased both in terms of number in attendance and of the quality of the interactive dialogue prior to and following his lecture. Now the search is on for next year's speaker. If you would like to suggest a name for consideration, please use one of the addresses posted on the last page of the newsletter.

## THE CHURCH IN OUR DAY

Catholic spirituality, therefore, is always an ecclesial spirituality. It is a spirituality which lives the life of the Church, her worship, her tradition, her sacraments, her liturgical year. The Church seen as the Body of Jesus should inspire all our prayer and lead us to the full celebration of the Church's sacramental Liturgy. A Catholic spirituality brings us especially to the Eucharist which is, in another and real way, the Body of Christ and, therefore, the cause of our unity and its final expression. [p. 22]

*[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.]*

## Father Richard McBrien reviews Christ's charter for the Church

### **"...always for service; never for domination or control."**

An early May rain fell hard outside the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, but it did not hold back the throngs of ticket holders who came to see Father Richard McBrien, Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, provide a thought-provoking and stimulating view of the challenges the Catholic Church faces today.

In an inspiring presentation, broken by both applause and laughter, Father McBrien reviewed the history of Christ's simple founding of His church, its evolution, and the origins of the challenges the Church faces today.

In what proved to be his most revealing and impactful comments, Father McBrien indicated that Christ really charged all Christians and His Church with 12 "moral teachings and practices":

1. The call to love one another.
2. The call to love even our enemies.
3. The call to forgive one another.
4. The call always to seek reconciliation with one another.
5. The call to renounce revenge.
6. The call to avoid judging and condemning one another.
7. The call to avoid self-righteousness, presumption, and resentment towards others.
8. The call to befriend those whom society looks down upon.
9. The call to serve one another, humbly and unselfishly.
10. The call to serve the poor.

11. The corresponding call to be wary of riches and attachment to possessions.

12. The call always to be just in our dealings with others.

By asserting that we must stand ready to re-discover the purpose of the Church, Father McBrien indicated that he views the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an opportunity to move the Church closer to Christ's vision. Through understanding how little we are constrained by "divine law", we can understand how much we are constrained by the architecture of the Church.

In giving guidance to progressive Catholics, Father McBrien offered the three following tenets:

- first, that we "live in the present as if it were already the future", by not letting others "impose *their* false consciousness" on us;
- second, that we "never be ruled by fear", as if to let others dictate to us or let ourselves passively accept, out of fear, what others prescribe; and,
- third, we must find knowledge and wisdom though courage.

Father McBrien also indicated that he is very hopeful that the Catholic Church's new Pope, Benedict XVI, will prove to be a "unifier" of the faithful, indicating that many of the ultra-conservative members of the faithful are already concerned and disappointed in the Pope's gentleness and compassion towards more progressive elements of the faithful.

- Tom Wiltzius

*To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others.*

**Pope John Paul II**



## Interested in a Brewers Trip?

Some interest has been expressed in organizing a trip to the Brewers. If you would like to participate, please indicate by a note to one of the addresses below.



## Love the Packers? Want to help Beacon of Hope?

The Beacon of Hope has a great opportunity to raise money and have fun with the PACKERS. We are in need of people to work concessions at the PACKER games ( family night, pre-season and regular season). Anyone 18 or older is welcome. For more information, contact Lynn Schilling at 830-7414 or email [bschilling@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bschilling@sbcglobal.net). **This is sure to be a great time!**

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](mailto:BeaconOfHope@bohlightofchrist.org)

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