

**At the request of friends requesting recollections on the first anniversary of Dick McBrien's passing, Frank Cloherty sent in his thoughts which he wanted to share with the class.**

"Richard "Dick" McBrien and I along with 43 others were members of the 1962 ordination class of St. John Seminary, Brighton, MA. After a short period as a parish priest in the Archdiocese of Hartford, CT. Dick went on to further studies and academia.

Sometime in the late 1960s I participated in a two or three day seminar that Dick was offering at Boston College. The topic was the "Relationship between the Church and the Reign of the Kingdom of God." That seminar was the start of my building a theological grounding for parish ministry. The grounding has carried me through 53+ years, especially during the past few decades.

Somehow I always knew that part of my role as a parish priest was to model and then work to engage the parish community in what Jews call "Tikun Olam", repair of the world.

This meant that every parish, if it were to be faithful to the Gospel, had to be engaged in the works of charity. But I also believed that we and our parish were also called to works of justice. This would include working with other people of good will, to change laws and policies of our local, state and national societies that hindered people from living in the dignity that befits those who are God's image. Faith had to lead to action on behalf of the powerless and those living on the margins of society.

Ideas, principles and dogmas were essential. But, after all the Incarnation did happen. We were to put flesh on those ideas, principles and dogmas.

Dick began a process in me that has clarified and affirmed my earliest instincts:

- The Church is the servant of something larger than itself – The Reign of God
- We pray – "Thy Kingdom come, they will be done" but then we work with God to make it happen.
- The word "Church" appears two times in the Gospels whereas the Reign of God or some equivalent phrase occurs 39 times
- Jesus preached the Reign of God not the Church
- God sent Jesus because God so loved the World
- The priority for a disciple of Christ is the Reign of God. Concern and action on behalf of the Church follows that.

In recent years the anxious and insistent emphasis on correct teaching i.e. orthodoxy, in the thinking of many overshadowed the mandate for orthopraxis i.e. correct action on behalf of a hurting and divided world. This lack of balance has oppressed me at times.

Despite the climate of the Church Dick's clear and brilliant seminar enabled me to come to believe that I was acting as a faithful Catholic Christian when I was involved in action to help remove institutional and societal blocks to the coming of the Reign of God.

For this I have been and will always be in Dick McBrien's debt. "

From Archbishop Helder Camara: "When I feed the hungry I am called a saint. But when I ask why the people are hungry I am called a Communist."