

NOTRE DAME THEOLOGIAN
TO BE USI NEWMAN LECTURER



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
February 2, 1989

Dr. Richard P. McBrien, who is described as a generation away from the life of an Irish cop on the beat and who talks a lot like one -- blunt, irreverent, a little excitable, has been selected as the first annual John Henry Newman Lecturer at the University of Southern Indiana.

Dr. McBrien has been Crowley-O'Brien-Walter Professor of Theology at Notre Dame University for eight years and chairman of its Department of Theology. He will lecture on "The Politics of Abortion" at 1 p.m. and "Religion and Politics in America" at 7:30 p.m., both in UC350. The public is invited.

The program is sponsored by Campus Ministry, initiating an annual lecture program to honor the 19th century Anglican priest who converted to Catholicism and worked with college students to help them grow spiritually as well as intellectually.

Dr. McBrien was ordained in the Hartford, Connecticut, archdiocese and obtained his Doctorate in Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. He has experience as a parish assistant and college chaplain, and also has taught at universities in Illinois, Massachusetts, Texas, and Ohio. He was the first Visiting Fellow in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (1975-76) and serves as the on-air commentator on Catholic events for CBS, most recently for the Pope's second visit to the United States.

Dr. McBrien grew up in a Hartford Catholic family -- his father was the Irish cop, his mother a registered nurse -- that maintained "a certain critical distance" from the church and set the stage for the son's sojourn to a centrist position that finds him criticized by both the right and left philosophies in the church.

He has written more than 100 scholarly articles and 13 books, including Catholicism, a two-volume magnum opus that is an ambitious attempt at "a comprehensive theological statement about Catholic faith and

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practice." The National Catholic Register has called it "a travesty of the faith it purports to be expounding," while the Rev. Thomas Hesburgh, Notre Dame president who recruited Dr. McBrien to his present post, lauded it as "a thoroughly balanced and orthodox synthesis of the Catholic tradition . . . a landmark in the life of the contemporary church."

Dr. McBrien believes the Catholic community stands "at the threshold of decisive change," ready to move into the "third great moment" of its history. He sees the "first great moment" as the Christian community's confinement in Jewish culture, and the "second great moment" as the 1,900 years since the Council of Jerusalem in 50 AD that marked the end of the first moment.

Dr. McBrien has published articles and reviews in several professional and popular journals and writes a syndicated weekly theology column for the Catholic press, which has several times won awards from the Catholic Press Association as the best column in its field. He has served in several projects of the Canon Law Society of America and has been a member of the board of directors and vice president as well as president of the Catholic Theological Society of America. He also is an editor of the 16-volume Encyclopedia of Religion, published in 1987 by Macmillan, and wrote the major article on "Roman Catholicism."

His ecumenical activities have included the chairmanship of the Joint Graduate Program of Boston College and Andover Newton Theological School, two terms as a trustee of the Boston Theological Institute (the largest ecumenical consortium in the United States), and the chairmanship of the Catholic Theological Society of America's special committee to evaluate the bilateral consultations.