

## The full articulation of the Gospel

Tom Roberts | May. 19, 2009 NCR Today

In scores of conversations with lay Catholics, priests, nuns and two bishops during the past three weeks, I've heard a wide range of opinions and analyzes about the state of the church and the reasons dioceses are going through wrenching reorganizations, sometimes closing dozens of parishes and schools because of shrinking resources and a dwindling supply of priests.

But by far the oddest interpretation I came across was posted on the [Cleveland Plain Dealer web site by Martin Dybicz](#) [1], who was listed as a theology teacher at St. Ignatius High School, a Jesuit institution. He predicted another consolidation would have to take place in 25 years and that it would be more severe than the current one in which Cleveland lost about 50 parishes. The reason? Because Catholic leaders "are not proclaiming, nearly enough, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is only fully articulated in the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church.'"

His letter was generally disparaging of Catholic institutions, Catholic leaders, the Catholic experience during the past 40 years and, of course, "Cafeteria Catholics." He also advanced a category that I had not heard before ? "Catechism Catholics," who, he wrote, "know that the war has been won ? the Kingdom of God is coming. What remains to be seen is how many battles the faithful (to the entire Catechism) must fight, and even lose, for their Lord along the way."

I have heard various claims for the catechism, a compendium of the faith seems a reasonable descriptive, but never that it alone contained the full articulation of the Gospel. One suspects the authors of the catechism might blush at that claim. But Dybicz's letter certainly articulates the anger and the deep division that exists in some corners of the Catholic community and that seem to be stoked by changes, even if the changes are not theologically or doctrinally driven.

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[1]

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