



## Rev. Richard P. McBrien

August 19, 1936 - January 25, 2015

The Rev. Richard P. McBrien, retired University of Notre Dame professor, author of many books on Catholicism and *Essays in Theology* columnist has died following a long illness. He was born on August 19, 1936 to Thomas H. And Catherine (Botticelli) McBrien. Fr. McBrien was a priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut where he was ordained February 2, 1962. He authored 25 books, among which the most widely circulated are *Catholicism*, *Lives of the Saints*, *Lives of the Popes*, and *The Church*. He also served as general editor of *The Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. He wrote a weekly column, *Essays in Theology*, for almost 50 years. This column appeared in many Catholic newspapers and is still available online at [RichardMcBrien.com](http://RichardMcBrien.com). In 1980, Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, CSC, brought McBrien to the University of Notre Dame, where he served as Chair of the Department of Theology until 1991, president of the Faculty Senate in 1994-1997 and remained as the Crowley-O'Brien Professor of Theology until his retirement in 2013. Prior to Notre Dame, he taught at Pope John XXIII Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts and at Boston College where he was Director of its Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (1975-1980). He was the first Visiting Fellow in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University during the 1975-1976 academic year. He was also a past President of the Catholic Theological Society of America (1973-1974) and was the recipient of the John Courtney Murray Award for distinguished achievement in theology in 1976. Fr. McBrien served as a

television commentator for Catholic events for ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS and several cable TV Stations. He also lectured extensively throughout the country, consistently teaching that action on behalf of justice was a constitutive dimension of the Gospel. This commitment to justice often got him labeled as liberal and/or an outspoken critic of the institutional Church. To the contrary, his love for and work in the Church was rooted in the vision of the Second Vatican Council and remained a focus in his life to the end. Always eager to be of assistance to others, Fr. McBrien served on the Board of Overseers of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts and was the theological consultant for the movie, The DaVinci Code. Besides his parents, Fr. McBrien was predeceased by a sister, Catherine Berard of Maryland and brother Thomas McBrien of Scituate, Massachusetts. He is survived by his sister Mrs. Dorothy (Frank Heffernan) of Farmington, Connecticut and brother Harry (Barbara) of West Hartford, Connecticut along with many nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his long-time friend, and most recently, his primary care-giver, Beverly Brazauskas. He also leaves behind many colleagues, friends and students who were recipients of his generosity. Fr. McBrien's voice of truth and compassion will be missed in the Church which he loved. He will be remembered by those who knew and loved him for his beautiful and angelic smile. The family wishes to thank his doctors, especially Stephen Angus, MD, and the many care-givers who helped him along his journey. Among these are Rev. Gene Kilbride and Luke Lauretano who brought nostalgic joy to him during a weekly Communion Service and visit; McLean Home Care, especially Urszula Niemczycki and Ruth Lasota, RN; and Companions and Homemakers - Sharona Kravits, Fernanda Louro, David Riscassi and Milagros Metfess. Calling hours will be Thursday from 2-4 pm and 6-8 pm at the Church of St. Helena, 30 Echo Lane in West Hartford, CT. There will be a Mass of Christian Burial at 11 am Friday in the Church of St. Helena. The Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair Archbishop of Hartford, will be the principal celebrant. Arrangements are being handled by Molloy Funeral Home of West Hartford.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in approximately one month. Directions and online expressions of sympathy may be made at [www.molloyfuneralhome.com](http://www.molloyfuneralhome.com). In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) 8808 Cameron St. Silver Spring, MD 20910.

# Cemetery Details

## Mount Saint Benedict

1 Cottage Grove Road  
Bloomfield, CT

# Previous Events

## Calling Hours

JAN 29. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Church of St. Helena  
30 Echo Lane  
West Hartford, CT

## Calling Hours

JAN 29. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Church of St. Helena  
30 Echo Lane  
West Hartford, CT

## Mass of Christian Burial

JAN 30. 11:00 AM (ET)

Church of St. Helena  
30 Echo Lane  
West Hartford, CT



# Tribute Wall

EF

“ I never met Father McBrien personally, but feel I knew who he was ever since I began reading his essays when they first appeared in the Catholic Transcript many years ago (I am now eighty-three years old.) He was a breath of fresh air. I was in awe and in agreement with his interpretations of Catholic teachings. His essays were inspirational. Among many others, I remember the ones on labor and the gracious tribute he wrote when Bishop Whelan died. The powers that be decided to cancel his essay--a manifestation of pettiness and fear--which prompted me to cancel my subscription. His passing leaves a big void. It is my hope that, because of his influential legacy, there will be many who will continue his efforts and make progress in achieving his ideals and goals.

*Elizabeth P. Formica*

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**Elizabeth Formica** - January 29, 2015 at 05:35 PM

BS

“ My sincere sympathy to the family of Fr. Mc Brien. I read his column whenever and wherever it was available in the Hartford area and purchased several of his books. (I am especially pleased to have his autograph on my copy of "Catholicism"). The clarity of his writing and his willingness to say things that need to be said are even more urgently needed in the church today.

*Bill Siddons*

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**Bill Siddons** - January 29, 2015 at 11:16 AM

BJ

“ My heartfelt sympathy and prayers go out to the McBrien family as you grieve the loss of Richard.  
I was blessed to have Richard as a professor at the Boston College Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. What a remarkable educator! I was so enriched by his brilliance, clarity of thought, and vision for the church. He leaves a legacy for the church and the world that is teeming with hope and light.  
I was equally blessed to encounter Richard at McBrien family Christmas gatherings. My husband Dennis and I admired his keen wit, conversation and his love for his family.  
What a remarkable man of God! Rest in Peace, Richard.  
Barbara Gallagher arry

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**barbara jarry** - January 28, 2015 at 08:26 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Rev. Richard P. McBrien.



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January 27, 2015 at 03:54 PM

MS

“ My warmest wishes to the family and friends. He might have been touched that we learned of his death from a sign put up in his favorite South Bend breakfast place: "from his Pancake House family."

*Love from John and Margaret Scanlan*

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**Margaret Scanlan** - January 27, 2015 at 01:40 PM

PB

“ *My sincere condolences to Dick's family. I treasure the memories from our years together in the Seminary.*

*Pasquale Barletta, class '62*

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**Pasquale Barletta** - January 27, 2015 at 12:48 PM

DM

“ *The St. John Seminary Class of 1962 wishes to express its deepest sympathy to Dick McBrien's family. May he rest in peace. Donald Morency, Class Secretary.*

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**Donald Morency** - January 27, 2015 at 11:11 AM

RC

“ *My condolences and deepest sympathy to the family of Fr. McBrien, Although a brother priest of the Archdiocese of Hartford, I never met him. However through the years he has been, through his writing, an inspiration and a hope for me.*

*Fr. Ralph M. Colicchio*

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**Rev. Ralph M. Colicchio** - January 27, 2015 at 09:25 AM