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Catholic radio: Ministry of church

Jack Kennelly

Behind Catholic programming and the signal that brings Real Presence Radio across the various areas of our state is a spiritual dimension that is not readily apparent. During the last couple of years that I've been on the board of Real Presence Radio, I've seen it grow from two locations in North Dakota to five.

With the addition of Bismarck (91.3 FM), Minot (91.1 FM) and Williston (89.1 FM), we have increased our listening area by 30 percent and our possible listening audience by about 200,000. These changes represent significant growth and significant commitments of money and other resources.

What has impressed me as we have undertaken our various commitments is the faith with which the organization goes forward. Prayer and expectant faith are part of our approach to new opportunities and we are seldom, if ever, disappointed. We sometimes have had to take leaps of faith in order to go into new territory. Like any business, we have to make certain assumptions and projections as we consider the entry into a new broadcast area.

As a nonprofit organization we have to rely on the generosity of our listeners and, in new territory, such generosity is an untested variable. However, God always seems to provide. We've also experienced what appear to be efforts of a less than-divine spiritual nature that seek to silence our voice; some new equipment failures and technical anomalies have taken unplanned resources and time.

Our listeners receive programming that reflects and respects the magisterial authority of the Catholic Church. In a culture and time when Catholicism is under attack from many sources, as well as from within itself, it is important for people to have a source they can go to for the truth as declared by the church. The Catholic Church I see portrayed in the secular news is almost unrecognizable from the one in which I believe and that is presented in our programming.

Real Presence Radio stretches across an expanding geographic area with confidence in God's generosity and the power of his word. It's encouraging when we receive letters and emails from listeners who are excited about the availability of our programming. We often hear stories from people whose conversion to Catholicism or whose return to their Catholic faith was precipitated by listening to Catholic radio, as well as from those whose faith has been enriched by our broadcasts.

Ours is a ministry of the church even though the assets are not owned by the diocese. Our mission is as old as the church itself. The apostles were commissioned by Christ to go out and preach to all the nations. In turn, the church is compelled to carry on this original evangelical mission. It is aided in this mission by lay organizations, such as Catholic radio stations or Catholic healthcare organizations that evangelize in the marketplace by their work in the name of the church.

As individuals, we are mindful of our having been baptized into the priestly, prophetic and kingly ministry of Christ, which means we have a responsibility to spread the word of God.

Those in the operations and the administration of Catholic radio, along with those who support it, are participating in the mission of the church to evangelize for the salvation of souls. We take seriously our responsibility to provide programming that teaches our faith authentically and faithfully.

Jack Kennelly serves on the board of directors of Real Presence Radio.