

# ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

## TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE MOST REVEREND BISHOP, CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE:

Significant to all must be the rapidly expanding school population of the Diocese. Beginning in 1941 there has been a continuous steady increase. Since our last annual report to you the number of children in schools of the Diocese advanced from 30,855 to 32,403, revealing an increase of 1,548 over the previous year. Last year the number of children in the Catholic Schools of the City of Rochester was 19,070; this year it is 19,009, indicating an increase of 839. That this increase which began in 1941 will become accentuated even to the point of acuity in the immediate future years is apparent from the projection of both national and state statistics.

The official journal of the Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, predicts that "by 1959-60 there will be 10,500,000 more children enrolled in elementary and high schools throughout the United States than in 1946-47." The following figures for New York State are cited by the New York State Education Department. "In the peak year of 1947, nearly 160,000 more children were born than in the depression year of 1935. Those 1947 babies will be in kindergarten in 1952. The bulletin indicates that by 1955 there will be 500,000 more children in elementary schools in New York State than in 1947 and in 1963 the high schools of the State will have a population of approximately 866,580, which is over 275,000 more than in 1947."

### CATHOLIC BAPTISMS INCREASING

Reflection of the future national and state expansion of school attendance is clearly indicated in our own parish baptism registers. What will be expected of Catholic schools in the way of future enrollments is evidenced by citing the birth rate in the city of Rochester and comparison with baptism registers. In the year 1949 the number of births recorded in the city of Rochester was 7,312. In the same year the number of baptisms recorded in the Catholic parish registers in the city of Rochester was 5,315.

Facing us in this problem of giving Catholic education to these increasing numbers of children is first, the matter of school buildings, secondly, that of teachers to staff them. About the former we have little to worry. We have merely to look at the record of the last five years in this Diocese. Here we see the extent to which our Catholic people are willing to make financial sacrifice to keep their children close to Jesus Christ through the medium of the religious school.

To date, since 1947, the people of this Diocese have spent \$1,962,828 in the building of new elementary schools and the expansion of existing ones. This is exclusive of the cost of St. Andrew Seminary and St. John Fisher College for men. Of this amount \$1,927,000 has been spent in Rochester and Monroe County. This, of course, is over and above the annual current expense of maintaining and staffing 81 elementary schools, 14 secondary schools, a women's college, a major and minor seminary and three schools of nursing.

Manifestation of this continued generosity in erecting new buildings has been evidenced this last year. Of the four buildings announced as under construction in our last annual report there have been completed, St. John School, Greece, Immaculate Conception School, Ithaca, and the Aquinas Memorial Stadium.

### SCHOOLS NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Buildings now under construction for elementary education are schools for St. Cecilia Parish, Rochester and St. James Parish, Rochester. A complete new school is now under construction at St. Alphonsus Parish, Auburn, to replace the present building. New buildings to take care of expansion are being erected at St. Helen Parish, Gates, Sacred Heart Parish, Rochester, St. Thomas Parish, Irondequoit, and St. Patrick Parish, Owego.

For secondary education a new addition to DeSales High School in Geneva is likewise under construction and is expected to be ready for occupancy in September, 1950. The total cost of these buildings submitted to general contract and now under actual construction is \$1,281,480.00.

Property has been purchased for school purposes in St. Louis Parish, Pittsford, and also for the new parish recently erected, St. Rita in West Webster. We are pleased to report at this time that plans are being submitted for a new school in St. Francis Assisi Parish, Auburn, and in St. Michael Parish, Newark. Contracts will soon be let for the new St. John Fisher College, Rochester, which will be opened in September, 1951 to Freshmen and Sophomores. The new St. Andrew Seminary begun in 1948 will be ready for occupancy in September of 1950.

### THE PROBLEM — LACK OF TEACHERS

But deserving of most serious consideration is the second problem, that of teachers to staff our schools. While it is true that God has blessed our diocesan communities with vocations to the sisterhood, the taking on of new schools, adding new teachers to schools whose registration has increased, and the addition of kindergartens has taxed to the utmost the teaching communities of the Diocese.

Every effort is being made to use all human means to foster vocations to the religious communities. Annually during the month of March at the invitation of the Most Reverend Bishop religious priests and sisters of the various orders and congregations are brought to the schools to discuss with the children the great vocation of the religious life. Repeatedly the religious vocation is made the subject of teacher conferences and institutes. There is ever the constant need of all priests, sisters and parents to regard themselves as instruments in the hands of God for leading others into His vineyard to help in bringing the little children unto Him.

### NEED OF LAY TEACHERS

But despite all efforts that are being made or will be made toward fostering religious vocations to the teaching communities, the fact must be faced that if we are to give Catholic education to the increasing numbers of Catholic children we must add competent lay teachers to our schools.

There is need for a wholesale revision of thinking in regard to the lay teacher in Catholic schools. A traditional attitude prevailing among Catholics toward the lay teacher is to regard her as a substitute until a sister can be made available. This attitude is silly.

The Holy Father in his encyclical on the Christian education of youth in stating what makes a good school declares: "Perfect schools are the result of . . . good teachers thoroughly prepared in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required by their important office, who cherish a pure and holy love for the youths confided to them, and who have sincerely at heart the true good of family and country."

In no way is it demanded here that all teachers be religious. In fact the whole history of Catholic education from Origin and Tertullian through the great universities of the middle ages down to today testifies to the great role of laymen as teachers. Today in England, Canada, Scotland and other British provinces and in the Netherlands fifty per cent of the teachers of Catholic schools are recruited from the laity.

### ADEQUATE PREPARATION NECESSARY

We must therefore reject the idea that the lay teacher is a mere temporary appendage. It is not uncommon to hear parents and even Catholic educational authorities say that a lay woman is necessarily less competent than a nun as a teacher. This is just as nonsensical as it is to say that a nun is less competent than a lay teacher. It is quite understandable why children and parents better appreciate having a nun in the classroom than a lay teacher, because not infrequently the type of lay teacher selected is an unqualified and underpaid person. The good teacher needs certain traits of character, a well developed and cultured personality, and an adequate preparation in the technique of the profession as well as a thorough knowledge of the subject matter she has to teach. Her state in life, that of single blessedness, the married state or that of a religious, is pertinent to her teaching only insofar as she lives up to the particular ideals of the state to which God has called her.

A lay teacher of good moral and religious character who has studied Theology and its allied branches can teach religion better than a poorly trained nun. There is no attempt here to

## New Schools Forecast .

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detract from the nun. We are proud of the reputation as competent teachers both with and without Catholic circles. Our point here rather to counteract the traditional and unfounded low esteem in which the lay teacher is usually held by Catholics.

The children would profit from seeing men and women teaching and practicing religion in the school. There may be some justification for the criticism that our children are apt to imitate a religious living with the example of. There is no question that the example of young lives, but the example of fine, virtuous teachers could create an equally strong model for good behavior. The majority of our students adopt a lay life as adults, and they need adult lay models to emulate.

Lay teachers themselves have much to offer from participation in the teaching office of the Church. In just this function are laymen to share in, and assist the work of the clergy. It is the most fruitful kind of Catholic education and the traditions of the Church approve. Yet we have deprived our laity of this source of grace. The vocation to the religious life, the vocation to teach are not synonymous. One may feel a true call from God to teach, have the necessary qualifications, and have no intention of religious vows. The converse is also true. One who takes religious vows, only because she wants to teach, has an unworthy motive.

### A SPECIAL VOCATION

The vocation to the religious life is a special vocation and is in no way essential related to the need for teachers. One does not enter religious life because one wishes to teach. The special grace which God gives to those who are called to the religious life is not meted out on the basis of how many teachers a diocese or a country needs. Nor is it given to a woman because she has special abilities or training in teaching. Even though the number of vocations might increase in the next few years, it is highly improbable that it will increase in proportion to our need for an adequate teacher supply in the light of our growing enrollment. This leads to one conclusion only—that it becomes necessary to employ more lay teachers unless we propose to turn children of Catholic parents away from our schools.

The second obstacle that usually stands in the way of the employment of good lay teachers is the failure or inability of parishes to pay adequate salaries. How real this inability is to be determined only by the pastors of our diocese. With the shortage of elementary teachers for the public schools today it is difficult to why competent lay teachers should enter parochial school classrooms when they can receive in the public schools the minimum salary of \$2200 with increments as required by New York State Law.

It would seem only fair that to ease the burden on our religious communities in supplying sisters for our schools that those parishes in the cities where the financial burden is especially heavy would hire competent lay teachers at an adequate salary. That these competent Catholic teachers are available is quite evident.

Most Catholic colleges for women today have approved departments of education for the preparation of teachers. In particular our Nazareth College has achieved an enviable reputation in this field with its students in constant demand by public school authorities. We well ask here the question, "To what use can parish funds be devoted than to bring into our schools competent Catholic teachers?"