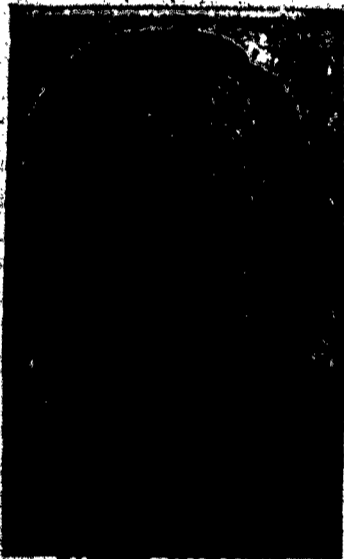


DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

TO: THE MOST REVEREND BISHOP, CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE DIOCESE

The passing of the mid-century moves us to depart from the usual report on the status of education in the Diocese and to comment on education in the Nation. Since the Catholic schools are an integral part of American education and American society the social status of the Nation for good or evil must affect the Catholic school. Elsewhere in this supplement in special articles and statistical reports there is related the progress of education in the Diocese this last year.

The Nation has charged its schools, and rightly so, with the obligation to guide the development of children and youth in those ideals, skills, attitudes, and habits essential to the continuation of a robust and healthy democracy. In discharging this office in education, the Nation has set a high standard; has demanded high standards in pupils and teachers. Not infrequently government officials, politicians, writers and speakers openly and severely criticize the schools for failure to produce good and well-informed citizens. Schools and teachers have got to listen while editors, candidates for office and business class speakers seek publicity by saying the status of American education is the job assigned it.



FATHER MAHONEY

Let us look first at the challenge of the teaching profession.

The teacher or the educator may accuse the American public on two counts. First of all there is a fundamental contradiction in public opinion about the teaching profession. It is declared to be all important, even sacred. It is declared to be most essential to the future of America. It requires years of study. It requires sacrifice of leisure for in-service training and growth. It is considered a part of public service. All this, and yet the teaching profession is the nation's poorest paid profession in the country. Not only is the teacher in America poorly paid but he enjoys little social honor or prestige of office, comparable with that enjoyed by teachers in other lands. Often he is an object of jokes and ridicule by those who make big money manufacturing mouse-traps. America, in one breath, laughs at its teachers and underpays them, while loudly proclaiming the schools as the bulwark of democracy. While lawyers, doctors, engineers, actors, industrialists, fan-dancers and television comedians speak of annual income in terms of tens of thousands of dollars, the best paid teachers, who, so it is said, shape the future America, struggle for an income of three thousand and even less.

Teachers Not Buildings
There is offered here the recommendation that will be received as heresy by some education administrators, that the American people have made the egregious error of putting their money not in TEACHER SALARIES but into bigger and more expensive school buildings. It is not buildings but the teacher who makes the school, who must approach his work with an eagerness of mind that comes from a reasonable amount of security. There is cited here the words of Pope XII:

Perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well grounded in the matter they have to teach, who possess the moral and intellectual qualifications required by their important office, who cherish a pure and holy love for the children entrusted in

them and who have at heart the true good of family and country.

Public Morality

But there is even yet a graver accusation the teacher may cast at the child's adult world. It stems from the public's eagerness to lay on the teachers' shoulders real and apparent failures to produce good citizens. At every example of intellectual or moral weakness in our land, someone may be expected to blame the schools. Actually it is the lack of intelligence and the loose morality of adult life which makes the task of the teacher sometimes almost hopeless. Here it should be recalled that the school is only one of many educational agencies. The radio, the press, motion pictures, advertising and the most recent addition, television, these together with the home exact an equal, if not greater influence on the minds of the youth. The school's influence extends to only twenty-five hours a week for about nine months. During this time herculean efforts to instill high democratic idealism will avail nothing against examples of greed, dishonesty, untruthfulness and disregard for the common good, which the child sees all around him in adult American life.

The clash between the ideal, democratic life described in school, and the realities of American social, economic and political life is a bitter pill to the student and a source of discouragement to the teacher. In school the student learns that laws should be passed only for the common good, but he is constantly aware of the attempt on the part of groups to pass legislation for their own selfish interests and he knows many instances where these attempts are successful. In school the American ideal is presented to him as one where all work together, sharing their skills and talents to enrich our common life. But in the newspapers he frequently reads of the apparent inability of labor, management, agriculture and government to ever work as a team in the interests of America. The school impresses upon him how important it is to give and take in the matter of arbitrating differences. But he often reads of the difficulties of settling labor disputes around the table through arbitration or negotiation. This land is held up to him as a place where private enterprise and initiative are rewarded. He is encouraged to develop his particular skills and is assured of reward in proportion as he contributes those skills to the service of his fellow men. Actually in real life he soon learns there is little opportunity for private enterprise and initiative, and his skill frequently finds no use except on an assembly line. Let him attempt to engage in a business of his own and he will soon find himself enmeshed in patent laws and restrictions and monopolies which stifle his zeal for creation.

Bad Example

The schools go out of their way in the field of intercultural education to impress upon students that America is a land where all men are equal, have equal opportunity, and are deserving of equal respect. In the home and on the street, in offices and shops, in stores and in industry the students witness over and over again examples of the cruelest kind of race and religious prejudices. In Civics and Social Studies classes he is told of the power of the ballot, how

'Face The Issue'

'Do the American people want religious education? . . . Are they willing to recognize its tremendous value as a supporting bulwark to our society?' . . . Read the answer to this critical question in this annual report by the superintendent of Schools in the Rochester Diocese.

By

Rev. Charles J. Mahoney, Ph. D.

his vote should be cast freely and without prejudice, and how he should elect to office only men willing to sacrifice their personal interest for the welfare of the people. Out of school he learns about the "pork barrel," log-rolling graft, stealing elections, bribing legislators and public officials, making employees, and the questionable methods of the political machine to control the vote of the electorate.

Politics and Democracy
The sacredness of the ballot and the serious obligation of voting is instilled in the child in school from the time that he is able to make a rational judgment about such matters. Yet both teachers and students are faced with the example of less than 40% of the American populace using the ballot even in a national election. The high school student is given a thorough knowledge of legislative practice and the democratic process of making laws by the elected representatives of the people, but he can not be edified when class discussion brings out the fact that the State legislators are controlled by the party whip or by the party boss.

Efforts to instill high ideals are often vitiated by what the student sees in adult life. Let us not for a moment think that our high school seniors are not thinking persons. We teach the basic principle that liberty lies in the freedom of the press but what must the student think of the hypocrisy of the newspaper that attacks gambling on its editorial pages and in the very same edition prints the racing results on the back page to increase its advertising and circulation. What must the student think of the hypocrisy of the newspaper that extols the freedom of the press but suppresses news, colors its headlines and even news items to suit its own particular interest. What must the child think who is educated to purity of thought when the movies and television glorify the unclothed? What must the child think who is taught to respect the virtues of family living and the sanctity of the home when press and radio assume that divorce is an accepted fact and headlines the front pages the latest Manville marriage and divorce of the latest Hollywood actress.

His education emphasizes the importance of the virtues of justice and of protecting the rights of minorities. But from adult life he learns that the best policy is to get what you can for yourself and let the "devil take the hindmost." What examples of justice and

fair play are presented to him in his own family and community, where the rank and file are quite willing to deal on the black market, to chisel as during the last war on rationing and thereby fatten the pocketbooks of the racketeers. The chief commandment preached by such an adult environment seems to be, "Don't get caught."

The Entertainment World
The entertainment world too seems to appeal, at least in its advertising to the basest and most animal-like emotions of man, while the school is expected to develop a discipline in pupils which controls the animal and extols the rational. Even the virtue of truth is contradicted in the life the student sees outside his school. Advertising campaigns in the public press, on the radio, and on television make extravagant claims which frequently stretch the truth, if they do not actually deny it. So bad has this condition become that schools now attempt special classes and courses to teach students how to read the papers and listen to the radio judiciously, discounting the shell of falsehoods surrounding the kernel of truth. It thus becomes a special objective of education to develop in students a brand new skill, the skill of finding the truth through the press, radio and television.

Pupils are not too naive not to sense that public campaigns against juvenile delinquency, innocent literature or alcohol are frequently nothing more or less than attempts to win votes or increase circulation. It is difficult to impress them with the value of intellectual growth when the radio bombards them with so much rapid foolishness in its drama, comedy and commercials. However we may hold up for imitation, men like Washington and Lincoln, however we try to tell them of the value in the lives of great modern Americans, other agencies of education, more able to use more striking techniques than the teacher and less subject to public criticism, glamorize the lives, and fatten the purses of comedians, crooners, dancers and pin-up girls. It is little wonder the ideals of youth are not always high, and it is no fault of the schools. It is little wonder teachers are discouraged and public education is at a loss to find positive, and certain objectives.

The German Army in the last war was said to be the finest military machine, with soldiers perfectly trained to machine precision in the art of