

We Take Him At His Word

Give School Aid That Benefits All

By FATHER HENRY ATWELL

The state of the Union is that the Union is 'quite divided' — that is the nub of the reaction to President Kennedy's Monday message.

Republican Congressmen greeted him with thundering silence and twiddled thumbs during his talk. Next day even Democrats (southern style) lined up in protest against the President's clear desire to liberalize the House Rules Committee. The administration squeaked through to victory by a 217 to 212 vote.

Most Americans, however, regardless of their party affiliation, did listen to the new President's first message to Congress with careful attention.

He said these our present times are "an hour of national peril and national opportunity."

We will leave to more qualified commentators the task of analyzing his statements on our nation's economic situation, the national defense program and our relationships with Communist nations and the newly independent and neutral nations.

One statement in the President's message, however, does concern us — and thousands of parents who have their children enrolled as pupils in Catholic schools.

President Kennedy said, "Federal grants for both higher and public school education can no longer be delayed."

Catholics see in this a possible endorsement of the earlier proposal of his task force on education to give massive aid to the nation's public schools — a virtual death knell for continued expansion of the Catholic school system.

The President has repeatedly stated he is opposed to any funds for parochial schools because it would be, he says, "unconstitutional."

On some distant day, we are convinced, this question of school aid will be settled not as a "constitutional" issue but on the simple basis of cold cash.

The "separation of Church and State" argument sooner or later will be seen for what it's worth — completely irrelevant in this situation. Helping a child in a Catholic school get a needed education is no more "unconstitutional" than giving social security to a resident of St. Ann's Home or a pay check to a President who contributes to the collection at Sunday Mass.

When young Lieutenant Kennedy back in 1943 swam the shark infested Pacific at midnight in quest of victims of his splintered PT boat, he did not ask whether they had attended public or parochial schools. He courageously aided them because of their need, not because of their school.

We do not believe divisive questions should be asked in these present times either but that aid should be given to those in need of it — to all pupils regardless of the school they attend.

New York's Governor Rockefeller this week suggested a direct \$200 annual state grant to college students, and let them decide which college they want to attend.

A Rochester Democrat and Chronicle editorial endorsed the Governor's proposal. "Considering the immense value to the nation of adding thousands to the ranks of the college-educated, we cannot become concerned over the sectarian issue. . . . The students and the state will benefit in the end."

What is advantageous in New York State at the college level should be, logically, advantageous throughout the nation at all academic levels.

If America votes down even fractional aid for pupils in parochial schools, then school taxes will soar as vast construction programs for new public schools are launched to provide for those who want to attend Catholic schools but can find no room in them.

Taxpayers have the choice now of committing themselves to this fractional aid or total subsidy.

If such fractional aid — for bus rides, medical services, textbooks — is given pupils in private schools (no funds are asked or expected to build or operate these schools) then public schools will not have to be built to accommodate them. This will mean government funds can be used to build better and more adequate public schools for pupils who wish to attend them.

In other words, we believe public and parochial schools need to make progress together. This time of "peril" demands we make use of every "opportunity" and that includes development of all existing schools.

President Kennedy himself sees the logic of this when he speaks of our international alliances — "our close ties with those whose hopes and interests we share are among this nation's most powerful assets."

Our country's public and parochial schools have a long record of mutual service to our nation and we do not believe this is the time to shackle the progress of either.

The President also said, "Let it be clear that this administration recognizes the value of dissent and daring, that we greet healthy controversy as the hallmark of healthy change."

We take him, therefore, at his word.

We do not choose either to be silent or to twiddle thumbs.

We ask him and our Congressional representatives to view the needs of pupils in all this country's schools and to give us a program of aid in accord with American traditions — of equality for all without prejudice because of race or religion.

This Will Be Our Sunday

• See 'Alert Catholics' article, page 4

Your parish priest will preach about the Catholic Press at Mass this Sunday.

He will put special emphasis on reading the Courier Journal, official newspaper of the twelve county Rochester Diocese.

A letter from Bishop Kearney will also be read which says, "This paper is a means of diocesan unity by keeping before your eyes the activities of all organizations in the Diocese."

That is our goal — to be a bond of unity, but not only for our own twelve county area. Courier news and features link the 350,000 Catholics of this Diocese with 32,000,000 Catholics of our nation and the 475,000,000 members of the faith throughout the world.

We also think we can be a bond of unity with our neighbors — in our community and around the world — who are of other faiths too, because the better we are informed in our own faith so much the more will we be inspired to keep our Saviour's command, "Love thy neighbor as thyself."



Benjamin Richardson, Dr. Edna O'Hern, assistant district attorney Joseph DeMaria and Dr. Nathaniel Hurst of the Catholic Interracial Council of Rochester gave their views on hopes and ambitions of colored people in Courier Journal interview.

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Debate Deepens

'Segregation' In School Aid

Massive federal aid to education — with pupils in parochial schools excluded — was labeled this week as a new form of segregation.

Chief critic of current federal aid proposals was Cincinnati's Archbishop Karl J. Alter who heads the National Catholic Welfare Conference, coordinating agency of America's bishops.

The prelate said the federal proposals "segregate" pupils in parochial schools from tax benefits.

He predicted the day will come "when the current interpretation of the Supreme Court will be replaced by a more logical, more historically consistent and more equitable one, just as in the school desegregation cases."

He said exclusion of Catholic schools from federal aid proposals will result in "injustice, discrimination and increased hardships."

He indicated that increased costs may force curtailment of the lower grades in Catholic schools and might mean elimination of the first grade in all new parochial schools in his archdiocese of 472,000 Catholics.

The Archbishop asked for long-term federal loans at low interest for all schools, public and private.

Declaring that he does not want direct subsidy from the government for religion or religious instruction, the Archbishop said: "But we do ask for auxiliary services, including bus transportation, medical services, textbooks at our option."

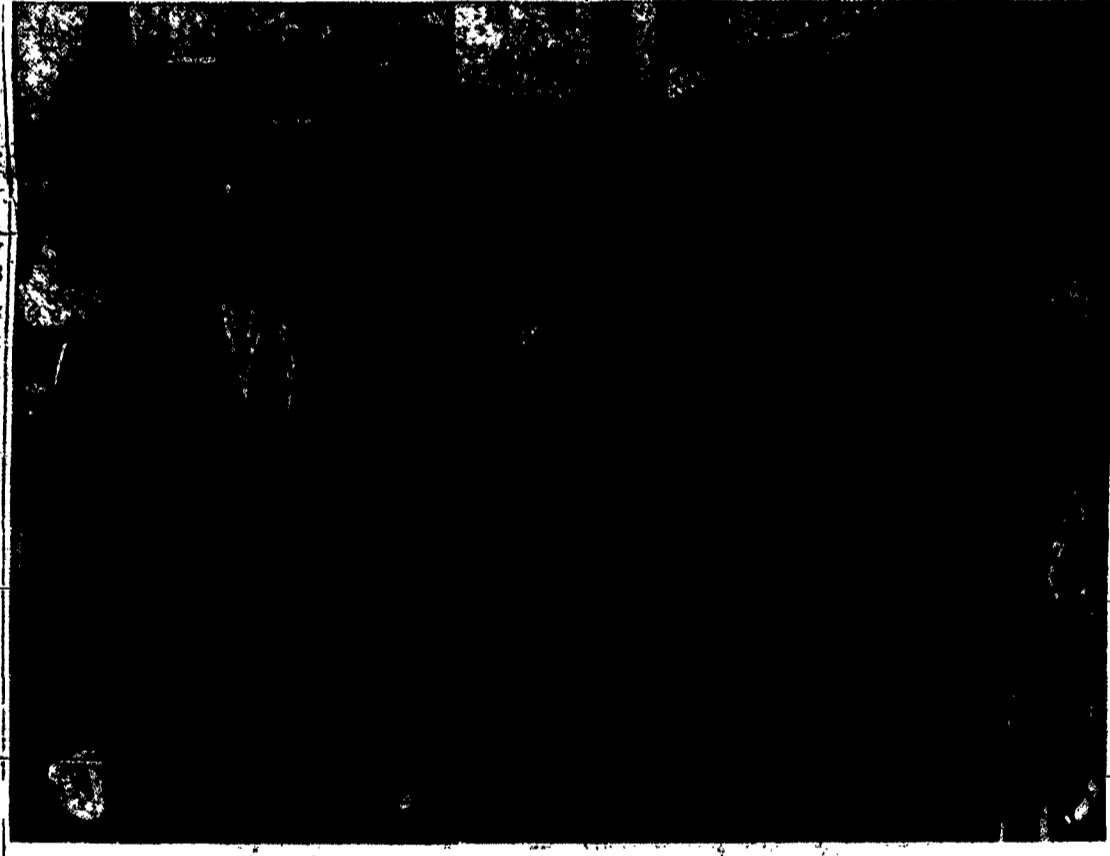
Easing a presidential proposal to give massive aid to public schools only was a suggestion of Governor Rockefeller that New York State give annual \$200 grants to college students even if they are enrolled in a church-affiliated school.

Also speaking out against federal aid plans was New York Herald Tribune columnist David Lawrence.

Lawrence asked who is going to furnish the money, nearly \$10,000,000,000, to carry out the educational task force's recommendations to President Kennedy?

"The answer is: Taxpayers of every religious faith and of every race and color," he wrote.

"If that's the case," contends Lawrence, "and the federal government is to furnish money without interference with what is actually taught in the educational institutions of the country, then why should any private schools be discriminated against and deprived of public funds?"



Washington — (RNS) — President John F. Kennedy mounts steps of St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington to attend the annual Mass of the Holy Spirit (Red Mass) during which prayers were offered for God's help in administering justice. At left is Charles A. Hufnagle, president of the John Carroll Society in Washington.

President At Red Mass

Washington — (RNS) — many prominent Non-Catholics attend the service, to which Speaker Sam Rayburn, Chief Justice Earl Warren, and other prominent national leaders attended the annual Mass of the Holy Spirit (Red Mass) at St. Matthew's Cathedral here at which prayers were offered for Divine intercession in the administration of justice.

Archbishop Patrick A. O'Boyle of Washington offered the Mass, attired in the red vestments which give the service its name. He was assisted by Auxiliary Bishop Philip M. Hannan. Msgr. John K. Cartwright, rector of the Cathedral, preached the sermon.

Diplomats from more than 30 nations, headed by the dean of the Washington diplomatic corps, Dr. Savila-Sacasa of Nicaragua, attended the rites as did nearly 100 members of Congress and numerous federal judges.

The President was accompanied by Ted Reardon, his administrative assistant, and was welcomed by Dr. Joseph Hufnagle, Washington surgeon, who is president of the John Carroll Society, the Catholic professional men's group which sponsors the annual service.

President Eisenhower attended the Red Mass in 1954 and

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heard Msgr. Cartwright declare that the rule of human society by law is "as inexorable as the law of gravity."

Seated in the front pew with Mr. Kennedy were Dr. Hufnagle, Mr. Reardon, House Majority Leader and Mrs. John W. McCormack (D-Mass.), Speaker Rayburn and his sister, Mrs. A. W. Thomas. Chief Justice Warren and members of the federal judiciary occupied the front pew of the epistle (right) side opposite the President's pew.

MORE THAN 1,200 worshippers who jammed the cathedral

Wherever groups of men gather, there must be rules for order, he said, pointing out that even in the midst of turbulence and conflict today "there is by and large a regimen of law over all the earth."

"Anarchy exists only sporadically and momentarily," he declared.

The world, however, is divided into two systems of law, he suggested, the law of reverence and the law of fear.

It is no coincidence that in a habit of atheism there is also rule by law of fear, Msgr. Cartwright told the congregation.

He called upon all lawmakers and judges to realize that respect for law is rooted in the religious conscience of the free citizen.

The same ban which the Secret Service enforced against photographs inside a church in which President Dwight D. Eisenhower worshipped will be continued in the new administration.

In addition, President Kennedy will not ordinarily pose at the church door with members of the clergy, although his predecessors often did.

'New Orleans In New York'

The heart of New Orleans is all over New York State.

Negro people here face the same deep-rooted prejudices which rankle in southern states.

There have been no violent eruptions against Negroes within the twelve county area of the Rochester Diocese but there is a strong, powerful undercurrent that knifes to shreds their hopes and ambitions.

Racial bias here betrays itself in massive opposition to let Negroes find decent housing for their families.

The whip lash of bigotry, however, backfires on those who wield this un-American and certainly un-Christian weapon.

Qualified, educated, hard working colored people — with highly skilled and technical jobs offered them by top local industries — balked, in their efforts to find a home in a good neighborhood, simply decide not to come here. The overall community fails to gain the talents and abilities such people are ready to contribute.

And others — untrained, little educated and quite content with a lower standard of living — move in instead, frequently to become problems to themselves and for their neighbors.

These views were expressed by four leaders of the newly formed Catholic Interracial Council of Rochester in an interview for the Courier Journal.

The Council's first major activity — to focus attention on the tragedy of silent segregation in northern states — will be observance of Interracial Sunday, February 12.

Bishop Kearney will offer Mass and preach at a special Interracial Service, Sunday, Feb. 12, at 10:30 a.m.

At a breakfast following the Mass, Jesuit Father Daniel Serrigan of Le Moyne College will speak on the Catholic attitude on this thorny topic. This will be at the Manger Hotel.

The four interviewed by the Courier Journal reporters are Dr. Nathaniel J. Hurst, Dr. Edna O'Hern, assistant district attorney Joseph G. DeMaria and West High School teacher Benjamin Richardson.

They estimated the city of Rochester has 18,000 Negroes and of these 10 per cent are Catholic — and half of these are recent converts.

There would be a far greater influx into the Church if Catholic white people — clergy and laity — created a "better climate of friendliness," the four Council leaders agreed.

They blamed a "lack of communication" as the cause for widespread lack of understanding of the problems of Negroes on the part of white people. They thought one of the Council's chief tasks is to break down "this barrier of misunderstanding."

Negroes do not necessarily want to "move into white neighborhoods," Dr. Hurst stated. "All we want is a good home, good schools for our children and a normal neighborhood of fresh air and open spaces where those children can play."

He said in his professional contacts, "I forget I am Negro. Rochester area doctors have shown no discrimination against me." But he admits he had to make a long search before finding a satisfactory home. He lives at 990 Plymouth Ave. South.

The Catholic Church is "a tapestry of minority groups whose parents or grandparents came as immigrants to this country," he said. They climbed out of their ghettos by dint of hard work — but Negroes are forever stamped by their color to rank as second-class citizens when they seek to improve their living conditions.

Dr. Hurst said the Catholic Interracial Council will achieve its purpose if it brings every Catholic in this area to answer in his own conscience, "Do I believe in the American ideal of freedom, regardless of race, religion or color, or don't I?"

New Orleans

End To Schools' Boycott Asked

Chicago — (NC) — The National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice has called upon New Orleans Catholics to break the boycott at two public schools there.

The conference's 26-member board also described itself as "saddened and shocked" that "some so-called Catholic laymen" should go so far as to publicly defy and revile their appointed Church authorities.

The board took its action in a statement adopted unanimously at the conclusion of a two day meeting. The statement did not list any incidents of defiance.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to our brothers in Louisiana," the statement said.

"We pray that they return their children to Franz and McDonough schools, and choose to move forward into the future."

The board called attention to the November, 1960, statement of the U.S. Catholic bishops which discussed the importance of individual responsibility in interracial justice efforts.

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Radio Mass This Sunday

High Mass will be broadcast from St. Andrew's Church, Rochester, over station WHAM this Sunday, 11 a.m. to noon.

Celebrant of this monthly Mass for Shut-ins will be Rev. Paul Wohlrab and sermon will be given by Rev. Michael Volpe.

The parish choir directed by Zenonas Nomelka will sing. Today, First Friday of February, is a day of double devotion — in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the feast of St. Blaise, when throats are blessed.

Parish bulletins should be consulted for exact time of services.

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