

Catholic Schools Play Key Inner-City Role

By MARCI LUX

"Whatever you do, Sister, don't take the Catholic schools out of the inner-city." This comment echoes the plea of thousands of inner-city residents who have children in Catholic grammar schools. They want Catholic education.

So states Sr. M. Cyril, S.S.J., educational coordinator for inner-city schools at the Diocesan School Office.

"Parents want their youngsters to come to our schools," says Sister Cyril, "because they want the children to acquire self-discipline."

Each year Catholic inner-city schools add more to their curriculum, trying out new methods and ideas, adopting new programs in order to broaden the educational scope of each school, and to meet the needs of their students.

The result of this insistence has been new forms of "opportunity classes," a non-grading system, and a greater flexibility in the curriculum.

The "opportunity classes" are not remedial, but present the inner-city child with the opportunity to overcome any special difficulties he may have in learning, such as immobility in a certain area of study or a language problem.

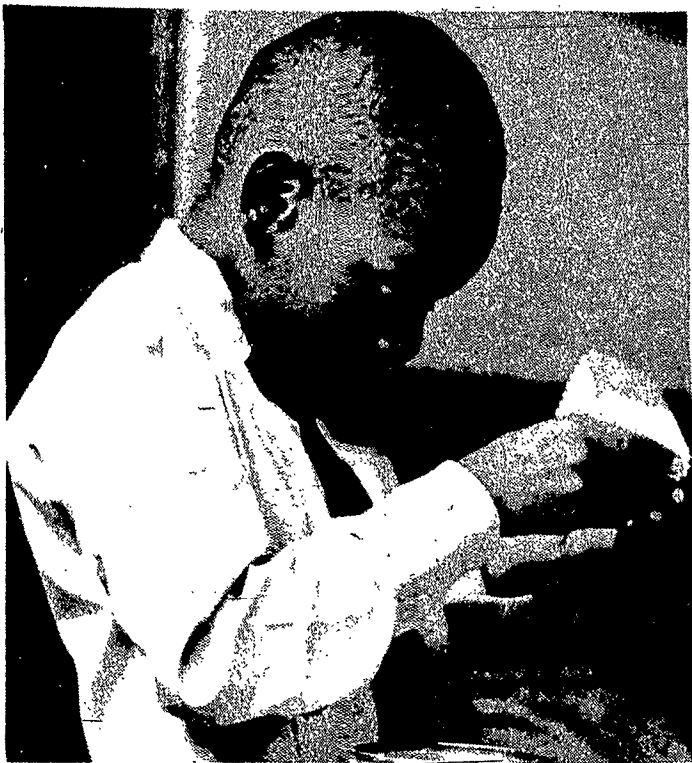
There are 16 "opportunity classes" in the 11 Catholic inner-city schools. Each class averages 15 children. A regular class will have 22 to 35 children.

The non-grading system is employed in first and second grade, allowing each child to work at his own pace.

These are relatively new concepts, and new academic ideas keep popping up all the time, according to Sister Cyril. The schools are not afraid of innovation.

"Nine times out of ten it will work," Sister said.

With new programs, and success resulting from these



Making something . . . something you think will be good . . . it's got to be good . . . takes infinite care, concentration, patience, this little boy is learning in an inner-city crafts class.

programs, comes an increased enthusiasm among parents for Catholic education, as evidenced by the growing enrollment of Protestant Negro children in the schools.

The fact that these children are not Catholic is unimportant. "The parents realize we're there to educate Christians," Sister stressed.

The key word in the effectiveness of Catholic education is flexibility; the curriculum is shaped to the child's need.

The major problems for ghetto children are reading and English. Heavy concentration is placed on these two subjects. Once the fundamentals have been mastered, they are able to go on to science and math.

Texts also differ in inner-city schools. Children use the Main Street Reader, in which the stories are set on the

city streets, placing children like themselves in situations that are every day occurrences to them.

"The child relates to the fictional inner-city. He sees himself in the pictures. Some readers have farms and cows, and white-collar workers coming home to ranch houses but an inner-city child has never seen a farm or a cow," explained Sister Cyril.

The new Title I Program, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, may give city school children the chance to get out into the country. The program, with funds from the federal government channeled through the city school system, provides such services as an inner-city, audio-visual bus for trips in and around the country, nursing services, a family nursery school, an art action center, art mobile, mo-

bile library, speech and hearing therapy, field trips, remedial reading and psychological and social services.

Under Title I, new teachers are given pre-service training for two weeks before school starts. They observe inner-city school children in summer classes, and study a case history.

The teacher examines the background of each child in his or her class. He explores the neighborhood and gets to know the people.

"A teacher in this line of work becomes tremendously involved with everyone," says Sister. "You have to love it. I think the most important thing a teacher can have is one great big sense of humor — and lots of imagination, too."

To instill confidence in the child, the teacher must first "erase the low self-image," she explained. Once this is accomplished, he can take a place in society successfully, knowing he is capable of doing well in school or in a job.

To do this, the child must have discipline, order in his life at school, and understanding.

"Above all, he has to know you love him," she emphasized.

Assisting the teachers during the school year are a number of teacher's aides. They may review a lesson with a group, take part of the class out to the playground, tutor one or two children, or take charge of the class while the teacher has a small break.

These men and women need not have any teaching background. The schools are in need of many more, according to Sister Cyril, because they are a tremendous asset to the teachers and the children "are starved for adult attention."

"Being an inner-city teacher is a 24-hour job," she stated flatly.

One of the primary reasons Catholic education has succeeded in the inner-city has been the fact that the nuns live among the people, instead of commuting from outside the city limits. The residents feel that the nuns share their problems and are totally devoted to their children.

One Negro man, when asked why he wanted his child enrolled in a Catholic school, referred to the nuns as "a minority group who made it," said Sister Cyril, laughing.

They want their children to make it, too, and they feel the children have a better chance this way.

Few grammar school graduates go on to Catholic high schools, however. They may have the scholastic ability, but lack the finances for tuition and fees.

The students who are fortunate enough to attend a private parochial high school do so for the most part on scholarships.

A survey of the high schools provided these figures on the number of Negro students registered for this September:

- Aquinas: 14 freshmen not included
- Bishop Kearney: 2 students
- Cardinal Mooney: no way to check
- McQuaid: 14 students
- Mercy: 18 students
- Nazareth Academy: 23 students
- St. Agnes: 3 students

Success in high school depends on the individual, Sister Cyril feels. If a sense of value in one's self is instilled early, however, the inner-city students should do as well as any of their suburban classmates.

Msgr. William M. Roche, diocesan school superintendent, considers the programs of the inner-city schools "excellent."

"It would be absolutely tragic if anything happens to result in the elimination or curtailment of enrollment in any of the inner-city schools, because of the great need for every educational facility possible within the inner-city," he stated.

This year the balance between religious and lay teachers will be slightly over 50 per cent in favor of the lay faculty, according to the superintendent.

The important point, he said, is that the people know the teachers are there by

Mt. Carmel Awaits Record Enrollment

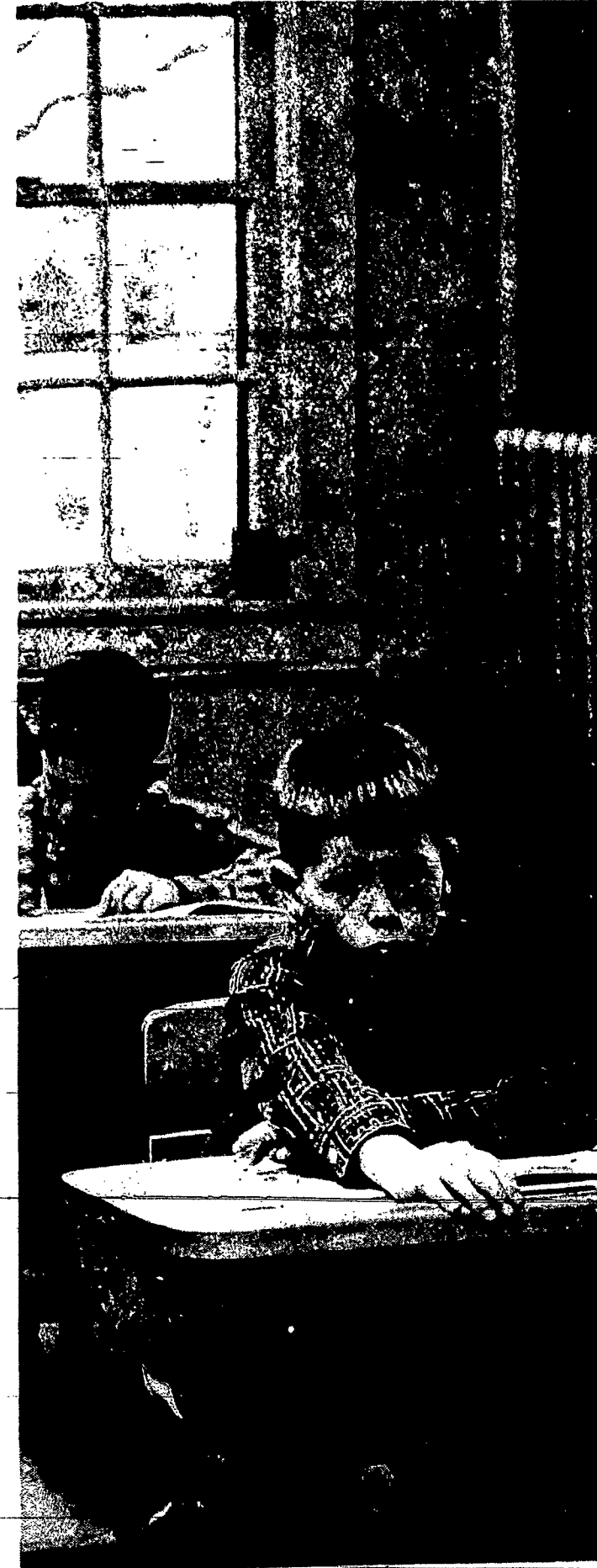
Auburn — Mt. Carmel High School will open its doors Sept. 4 to an all-time high enrollment of 765 students, an increase of 25 over last year.

Faculty for the '68-69 school year numbers 39. Tuition is on a graduated basis, with \$250 for the first child, \$125 for the second, and \$50 for the third. This is an increase of \$50 for the first child and \$25 for the second over last year's tuition.

Very much involved with the question of coordination of parochial education in the area is people act.

Mt. Carmel principal Father Malachy Mahoney, O.C.M., said Malachy had this to say:

"The Cayuga County School Board has been talking about educational needs for over two years now. When the results of the recent questionnaire are tabulated, I hope that we will have the courage and the foresight to move boldly so as to resolve many of our problems. The thoughtful and vigorous leadership of our board can provide our community with an educational system second to none. Concerned people talk; successful people act."



Pupil's expression captures the woe felt by many boys when it's "back to school time" again.

Notre Dame to Have Student Body of 600

Notre Dame High School will open the school year Sept. 3 with a student body of 600, a drop from last year's enrollment of 649.

A tuition hike of \$100, which brings total costs to \$500, is probably responsible for the

drop in registration, according to Sister Patricia Donovan, R.S.M., principal of the Elmira school.

Notre Dame will move into the school year '68-69 with a faculty of 26 Sisters of Mercy, 5 priests, and 13 lay people.

Nine Catholic Schools Cut Down

Detroit (NC) — Nine parochial schools in the Detroit Archdiocese have been reduced in size or closed entirely, and 1,230 pupils will have to attend classes elsewhere this fall, Father John B. Zwiers, superintendent, announced this week.

"The basic trouble is financial," he said, and the move was made as a "last resort."

About half the pupils are expected to enter public schools, at an added cost to taxpayers of one third of a million dollars.

ROBERT J. GRAF Says:

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Social Activism Seen As Working Brothers' Role

San Antonio — (RNS)—Non-teaching Brothers in religious orders should be involved in the social apostolate and possibly should join labor unions, according to a high-ranking member of the Marianist Society.

Brother Gerald Schnepf, treasurer-general of the 3,200-member Society of Mary, offered his suggestion at a Marianist workshop here.

Working Brothers, who comprise 10 per cent of the order, care for the "temporalities" of the Marianist teaching community. Many of them have degrees in engineering and other fields.

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CHANGE . . . In nuns' garb, indeed.

This small sampling of religious habits adapted to the times by sisters of different communities symbolizes how Catholic educators are adjusting to meet new challenges. Facing the present and anticipating the future, Catholic schools are making curricular innovations, using multi-media experimenting with upgraded and modular teaching employing modern instructional techniques adding up to date equipment and staffing schools with qualified faculty — religious and lay. Quality distinguishes Catholic education today. Catholic teachers are striving for ever greater excellence mindful of their commitment to lead their students through knowledge and love to God.

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Discussion of what is happening in Catholic education is dramatically presented in a new film, "Toward Tomorrow," produced by the National Catholic Educational Association and available for showing without cost from Association Films, (Dept. C), 600 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Continuing change to meet modern needs as they strive to form their students into responsible Christians — that is the spirit of today's Catholic teachers.