

Catholic Educator Cites Needs to Regents

Monsignor Thomas J. Costello, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Syracuse, is chairman of the N.Y. State Council of Catholic School Superintendents. Recently as spokesman for the Bishops of the state and representative of the 40,000 teachers and 800,000 pupils in Catholic elementary and secondary schools of the state, he addressed the State Board of Regents.

A major portion of his statement asking for the Regents Board assistance with the problems facing Catholic children is reprinted that readers may know the nature of the Church's stance before the N.Y. State education authorities:

The Catholic school systems of this state share with the Board of Regents a major concern for the school children who live in our great urban areas. One of every five school children in our State attends a Catholic School.

Of every 100 Catholic school students, 57 attend schools in one of the Big Six Cities, while only 37% of the statewide public school enrollments are educated by the Big Six.

While you may point to selectivity in our admission procedures, particularly at

the secondary level, the inescapable fact is that if the urban child admit of solution, that solution lies in a cooperative effort between public and private schools. Neither can do it alone.

We assure you of our commitment to work with you in providing to every child in New York the opportunity of becoming everything of which he is capable.

The private sector's concern then for the urban child is proportionately at least as great as that of the public sector. If our great urban centers are to survive, schools must be desegregated and subsequently integrated.

We heard you distinctly in January, 1968, when, in your Position Paper entitled "Integration and the Schools," you recommended "a continuing emphasis upon racial comprehensive enrollment policies in non-public schools."

We have long tried to act in accord with this recommendation, opening our doors to all children without regard for racial or religious background, wherever possible. We laud your encouraging "public school authorities to bring the non-public school into the total community effort to eliminate racial

segregation in education." We agree totally with your recommendation of "increased State appropriations to stimulate desegregation and to help school districts finance the additional costs incurred in achieving integration."

But, gentlemen, in all candor, we do not think your recommendation goes far enough. We recognize the problem; we acknowledge our responsibilities; but in the simplest language I can muster, we need your help — financially.

As an example of our dilemma, we are advised that State funds for the correction of racial imbalance are totally restricted to public schools. They may not even be employed for transportation to a non-public school. On the one hand you emphasize our obligation to establish racially comprehensive enrollment policies, yet the funds allocated to this purpose are denied to some children.

Another major concern of urban areas is unemployment and under-employment. Few of the programs designed to meet employment needs are available to the non-public child — I mean projects like STEP and A.B.L.E. Just now there is pending before the Law Division a question rela-

tive to a Catholic school student's participation on a shared-time basis in a BOCES sponsored Vocational Education program. As you are well aware, these are expensive kinds of education; we simply cannot afford them by ourselves.

We have both human and material resources to assist in meeting the educational needs of the prospectively employable student, but these resources are not sufficient. If we are to respond to the special needs of these students, he requires your help. Without assistance we must in fairness to the child refer him to some other educational agency, and incur the charge that we "guidance out" children with problems.

Academic deficiency and underachievement are symptomatic in the urban child. Reversing this process often requires specialized remedial and compensatory services.

Statutory provisions of the N.Y. State Constitution should be extended to mandate for all children with full State funding remedial, psychiatric, psychological, guidance, and social work services, physical training, and where necessary, food services. The same may be said of the instructional materials and of those aids required by the child with special needs.

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act has shown us how publicly funded share services can come to the rescue of the educationally disadvantaged child.

Should not a similar procedure be devised for channeling State funds, like Urban Aid, to the child in need no matter what school he attends?

We share your hope for pre-school training. Yet, it seems to us that there are many questions still to be answered in this area. We are not at all convinced of the value of a universal pre-school program.

Where a real need exists, let us meet it, and let us meet it cooperatively, public and non-public agencies in partnership. And let it be a true partnership in which both responsibilities and the means to fulfill them are proportionately shared.

I am not unaware of the far-reaching legal implications in what I have proposed:

- (a) cooperative efforts in meeting the needs of urban children
- (b) mutual concern for school desegregation and subsequent integration
- (c) sharing by all children in State funds for correcting racial imbalance
- (d) participation through dual enrollment of all children who can benefit from occupational and vocational education
- (e) expansion at State expense of the specific services offered under Section 912 of the Education Law
- (f) provision of ESEA-type shared services from State funds
- (g) meaningful partnerships in pre-school programming.

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The 392 grand knights and 105 district deputies of the Knights of Columbus in New York State attended the annual meeting of the N. Y. Council at Grossingers Hotel in Liberty. Pictured above are the supreme and state officers with a Rochesterian who was a panelist at the seminar. Left to right are Paul G. Rombaut of Rochester, state chairman of Oratorical Committee; Virgil C. Dechant of New Haven supreme secretary of the Knights of Columbus, and James E. Foley of New York City, state deputy, New York State Council.

Conscience Stressed As Factor in Draft

New York — (C) — Auxiliary Bishop James P. Shannon of St. Paul and Minneapolis urged that the U.S. Selective Service Law recognize the right of individual conscience, whether that conscience has been formed in the "just war" tradition of Christian churches or in a humanistic moral code.

Bishop Shannon, speaking at a meeting here sponsored by Pax, a Catholic peace association with headquarters in New York, traced the long tradition of Christian opposition to war from the earliest days of Christianity.

He urged that today's Church be more open to the conscientious objector, especially when he wishes to perform alternate service.

The draft law classifies as conscientious objectors those young men who are opposed to all wars—in particular, those who are members of the so-called peace churches.

Bishop Shannon argued that the present law is inequitable, sumes all Catholics, following the "just war" theory, can never be pacifists. A Catholic who feels a particular war is an "unjust" one, he said, should not be penalized for following his conscience.

In a reference to participation of a number of Catholic priests, including Father Dan-

iel Berrigan, S.J., in the burning of draft files in Milwaukee, Bishop Shannon said he was "grateful" for the courage of the men, yet disagreed with their tactics.

"But if we're anxious to get a change in the law, we must make a change in the lawmakers and the climate of opinion in which they must work."

Ecumenical Progress Reported

London — (RNS) — A special report to the British Council of Churches on progress in ecumenical relations between Roman Catholics and other Christians cited "encouraging and heartening developments."

The recent papal encyclical on birth control and the earlier credo for the Year of Faith in which Pope Paul restated certain traditional themes of Catholic belief, the report noted, "raise fundamental topics for an important exchange between Roman Catholics and other Christians."

Among these topics the report cited "the concept of a hierarchy of truths, the primacy of conscience, and the exercise of collegiality."

A working group of Catholic and Protestant bishops and scholars established in 1967 wrote the report which was submitted to the British Council of Churches, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, and to the Catholic hierarchy of Scotland.

The report said that contacts between Catholics and Protestants had grown on a variety of levels from joint participation in the annual week of prayer for Christian unity to meetings of theologians and church leaders on the international level.

"We believe," the report said, "that the more widely discussion takes place, and takes place conscientiously, the more likely it is that a full and

balanced understanding of the Gospel in all its diverse richness and in its significance for the world of our time will emerge."

"Clearly the ecumenical dialogue involving Roman Catholics and other Christians," the report continued, "will be a lengthy process. The change in spirit and atmosphere does not mean that all differences are likely to be overcome in the near future."

Among these other factors, the report noted that both Protestant and Catholics have memories of persecutions, martyrdom, civil disabilities and government oppression.

It pointed out that the Catholic Church in England is sometimes seen as an alien body of Irish and Italians and that so-

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