

The Values of a Christian Education Remain Constant

(Continued from Page 80A) The prerogative of the State? The rising cost of education is often given as a preemptory reason for closing the discussion.

But as we enter the second century of the history of the diocese, we feel a strong obligation to work as hard to solve our present problems as the founders of our Catholic schools did to establish them in the face of almost insurmountable odds.

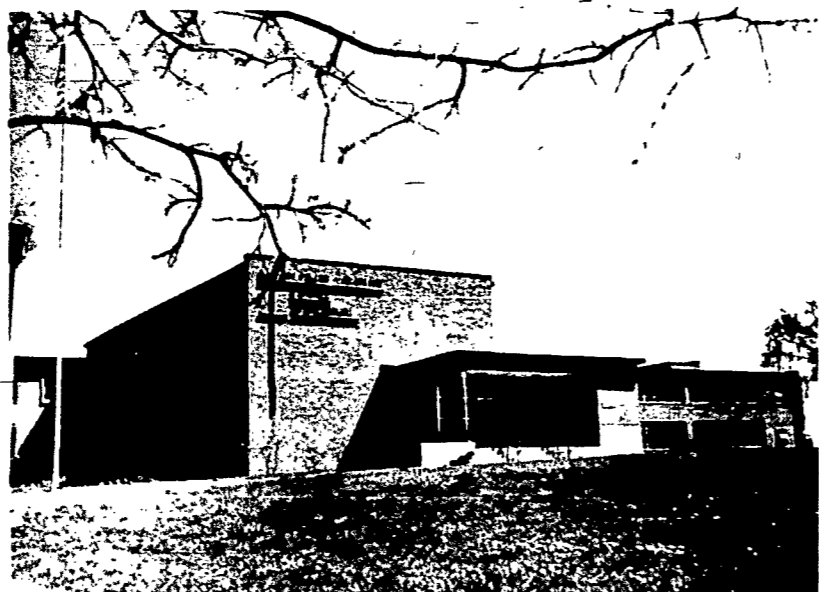
And so we do not subscribe to the assumptions made by many that Catholic education is too expensive a luxury for the children growing up in the second century of the history of this diocese. We do not justify to visionaries like McQuaid, and to the sweat and sacrificing toil of our grandfathers and fathers if we allow the future of Catholic education to be decided by default, or by assumptions that have no proof.

Moreover, we cannot continue to assert that the precise reasons for the establishment of our Catholic school system in the diocese remain the very same reasons for its continuation. On the other hand, it is equally true to state that it is as yet unproven that the need for

a complete Christian education—even in the so-called "secular subjects"—no longer exists. As we move into a second century of opportunity, we might dwell upon three reasons for the continuing need for a Catholic independent school system.

In the first place, we must look at the nature of education itself. It is the fastest-changing profession in America today. Not only does the pace of change accelerate, but the centers of change move with a rapidity which frightens experienced educators, and which confuses parents. And it must be borne in mind continually that when we speak of Catholic education or particularly of Catholic schools, we are not talking about institutions that we experienced as youngsters. We are not even talking about institutions that existed as recently as ten years ago. There is no purpose in educating children for the needs of ten years ago.

As the dawn of a new educational day comes upon us, we find that the teacher's mission is totally different from the mission of the dedicated soul who taught us "readin' ritin' and 'rithmetic". There is no longer



McQuaid Jesuit High School



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need for a teacher to spend endless hours drilling facts, for we are preparing children for a tomorrow in which facts can be so easily stored and retrieved from computers that it becomes a waste of human resource to clutter up the mind with such fact-storage. The emphasis is upon the rational aspects of the learning process: the human mind is meant to reason to conclusions, and the teacher's responsibility is to teach immature minds how to arrive at proper value-judgments in the light of Christian teachings.

We feel strongly that it is a most dangerous thing to contemplate the abdication of all educational responsibility to the State. Some attempt to rationalize that if religion is taught by the Church while the secular subjects are the province of the State, the needs of the child will be satisfied and the responsibilities of the Church and the parents fulfilled. But there are no such things as purely "secular subjects" unless one subscribes to a secular philosophy of life. A latter-day Bishop McQuaid would still see the need for re-

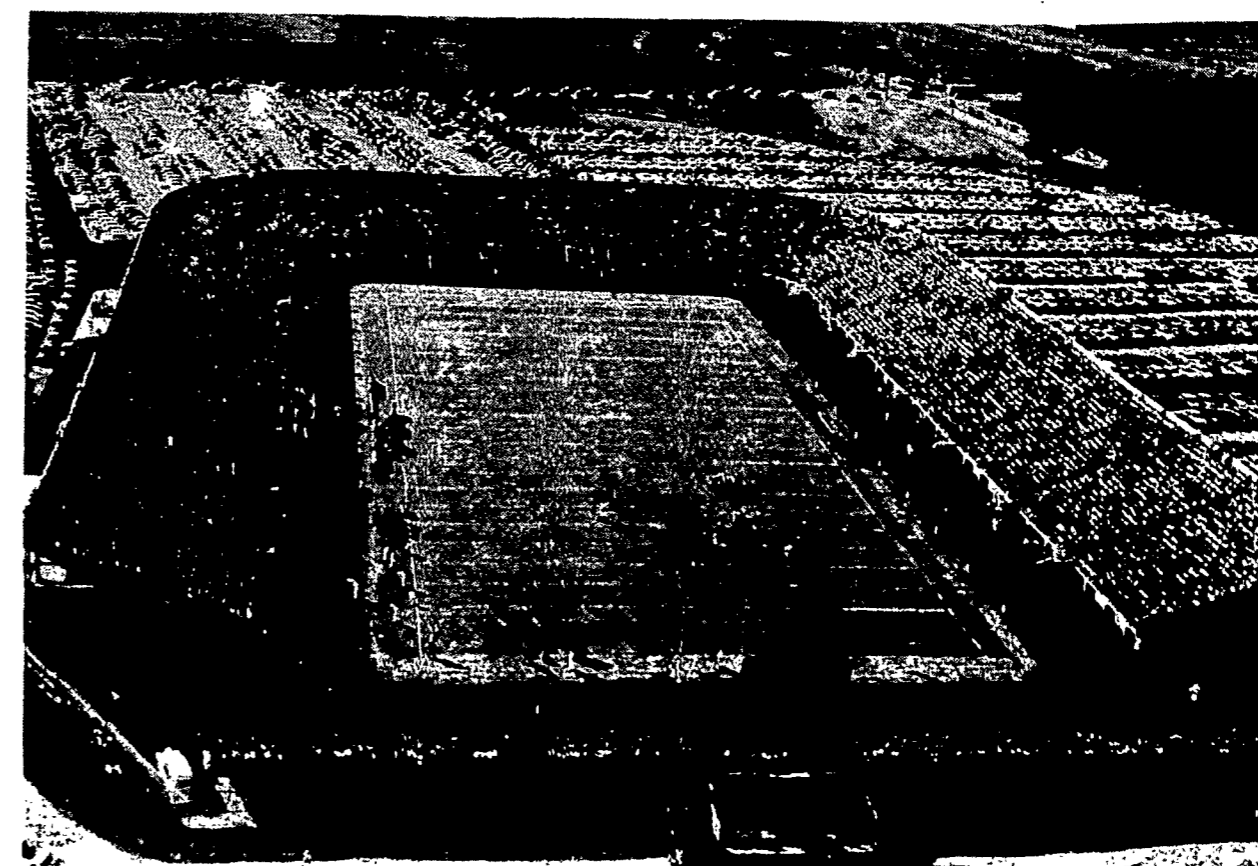
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(Continued from Page 82A) lating all knowledge back to God, its Source and Center.

And so we come to the second basic reason for the continuing need for Catholic schools in America: the completeness of their Christian apostolate. Those who imbue the minds of the young with thoroughly Christian principles are living examples of how to fulfill the command of Christ to "preach the gospel to every creature."

In our sophisticated society there is little time to deliberate, to form conclusions, or to ponder the right move. World-wide communication is instantaneous, and young minds are continually bombarded with the "soft sell" of the materialistic society whose god is comfort and whose religion is sought in the titillating pleasures of escapist entertainment. On the one hand, the genius of man results in his having unbelievable amounts of leisure time; but the laziness of man results in a nationwide pathological devotion to the "boob-tube."

If we Americans are to preserve any semblance of a moral self-respect, we must open an emergency campaign to unify the objectives of home, Church, and school to present the harmony of the Christian message,



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or Christian optimism, which alone can equip us to solve the multi-faceted dilemmas of a sophisticated, technological society.

Thirdly, we must "be where the action is." It is doubtful if any other institution is so well equipped to help solve the greatest problem we face—the problem of the city—than the Catholic school. The parents of children imprisoned in the ghetto

recognize this, and daily knock upon our doors for admittance to our Catholic schools. Most of them are not Catholics, but they see the atmosphere of charity which distinguishes a Catholic school from every other.

Without fear of contradiction we can say that Catholic schools are in a position to develop new teaching techniques, design new curricula for deprived youngsters and break down the anti-

Christian barriers of segregation much more easily than can public schools. Thankfully, we are free of the limiting factors of party politics which public school administrators must deal with daily; our Catholic philosophy of education points out educational goals that are in harmony with the goals of the home and the Church; and education, especially Christian education, is the key to escape from the

ghetto for a growing generation of Americans.

Every youngster imprisoned in the poverty-ridden slums of our cities, or the stagnant backwaters of rural poverty is a national tragedy. The greatest challenge to Catholic education in the second century of the Diocese of Rochester will be the apostolic effort to remove, insofar as is humanly possible, the deprived child from the frustrating imprisonment of ignorance, discrimination, and fear.

In the second century of our diocese, Catholic education must preach an eloquent sermon to every citizen. It must be a living testimony to the continuing dedication of the generations of religious priests, brothers and sisters whose lives of sacrifice throughout the last hundred years have brought us to this crossroads of opportunity.

The continuing existence of Catholic schools must be a testimony to the belief shared by all Americans that we need every educational resource we possess. To allow non-public education to become a relic of the past is to give only lip-service to the traditional American thirst for an education for every citizen.

We make the bald statement that money is not the chief is-

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along with sincere prayers
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the Diocese of Rochester
most abundantly in the years ahead.

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