

The Values of a Christian Education Remain Constant

(Continued from Page 83A) sue in the continuation of Catholic schools. We should like to reinforce and reemphasize the statement. The richest nation upon earth, the nation with the greatest economic resources that the world has ever seen, has the financial capability to do anything it wants to do.

We can afford Catholic schools, if we want them. But first of all, we must be convinced that the product is good. Like any product, it must be sold.

Since 1950, Catholic education has been in such a period of expansion that we did not dare try to sell it—it was already oversold, and many were distressed because their children could not find room in a Catholic school. But now, that condition is leveling off.

We have worked hard to reduce class size to satisfactory limits, we have established diocesan policies which insure, insofar as is humanly possible, that every classroom is staffed with a well-prepared, thoroughly professional teacher. And now we find that there are some empty seats in our classrooms. Some parents have decided, or have

been forced to decide, that their children would not attend a Catholic school.

Consequently, we need, more than anything else, an application of the Christian principles we know so well in theory, that the resources we possess will be more efficiently used. We believe that the rich should help the poor, and now is the time when we must put that belief into practice.

If the Catholic community is ever to expect any measure of public assistance for the public service Catholic schools perform, it would seem that a minimum requirement would be an honest attempt to use wisely the resources we have, coupled with a candid program of accountability to anyone who is interested.

We cannot hope for much sympathy for our financial problems from local, state and federal governments while it is obvious to the casual observer that some parishes (and their Catholic schools) wax richer, while others which cannot support themselves are consigned to extinction.

The task for those of us en-



In the future . . . computerized education.

trusted with the high responsibility for the teaching of Christian values must build upon the noble qualities we see in the young generation.

Youngsters today are filled with zeal and are sometimes painfully honest and direct. They see the hierarchy of values that the older generation possesses, and they do not buy it for a moment. Why is a second car or a color television set more important than proper garbage collection in the city? Why is "keeping up with the Joneses" more important than trying to understand the needs and the aspirations of the poor and the deprived?

The second century of Catholic education in the Diocese of Rochester must prove that the Catholic school is one of the most effective of all of our social institutions for righting unrightable wrongs, for dreaming the impossible dreams.

*All quotations from Bishop McQuaid, and those relating to the early years of the diocese, are taken from "The Diocese of Rochester," by Rev. Robert F. McNamara, Christopher Press, Inc., Rochester, N.Y., 1968.

The Parish School Board . . . a Growing Trend

(Continued from Page 78A) parish school board in terms of what it should not be.

Tersely, the parish school board:

1. Is not a means for a small number of parishioners to dominate or run the parish's school;
2. Is not a ready means for administering Catholic schools;
3. Is not a dumping grounds for the inadequacies of Catholic educators;
4. Is not a scapegoat for the inadequacies of Catholic education;
5. Is not a vehicle for laity control of Catholic education;
6. Is not the fundamental control on parish school programs and operations;
7. Is not a way to raise funds for supporting Catholic schools;
8. Is not vested with powers beyond those invested in it by the parish;

Further, the parish school board is not a panacea for Catholic education or an answer to all of the problems confronting it.

Although the board has real potential for assisting Catholic schools, it is not "good" or "bad" *per se*.

The following guides are suggested for clergy, educators, and parishioners interested in setting up a parish school board for Catholic elementary or secondary schools.

1. Maintain a close relationship between the parish school board and the parish. By title the parish school board implies closeness to parishioners; implied in the generally accepted tenets underlying the parish school board concept is this same notion.
2. Determine the role and function of the parish school board at the parish level. Crucial to the parish school board's fulfillment of its basic representative function is total parish involvement in the establishment of the board. The parish, possibly through a temporary committee, should clearly determine the need for a parish

school board; the purposes it is intended to serve, and the scope of responsibilities it is to discharge. Whether a formal constitution or written set of duties is formulated and acted upon or merely verbal agreements reached, it is important that the board's function or "charge" be clearly formulated and discussed by the parish before constituting a board or electing its members.

3. Establish the fiscal jurisdiction of the parish school board in cooperation with the pastor.

4. Ensure that the responsibilities of the parish school board are appropriate ones. Avoid charging the board with specific tasks and general work around the school. The more boards are saddled with "odd jobs" in the school such as sanding desks or painting furniture, the less they will be able to deal with the kinds of policy matters that are hopefully their basic charge and function.

5. Project a parish school board of such size as to facilitate deliberations but also to ensure representation. The parish school board should be large

enough to represent effectively all aspects of parish life. It should not, however, be unwieldy in size so as to minimize discussion, the exchange of ideas or the reaching of consensus.

6. Seek board representation when nominating or selecting members for the parish school Board.

7. Select board members for their competence, interest and commitment relative to board membership. Membership on the parish board should not be viewed as a reward for long service to the church, for putting a large family through the school, for financial support of the school or church, or for any other similarly noble reason. Rather, board members should exhibit a drive and commitment to serve both their parish and school.

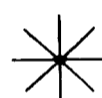
8. Exclude school personnel and the church's clergy and religious staff from board membership. To avoid a decided conflict in interests the Sister-principal and pastor as well as their staffs should not be members of the parish school board. They should sit with the board

and work closely with the board at all times, particularly the pastor and the Sister-principal. However, if the board is to discharge its representative service to the parish and advisory functions to the school, only non-school and non-Church personnel should be voting members of the board.

9. Keep adequate records of all parish school board deliberations and actions. Not only should all board actions and sessions be duly recorded but also the board should see that its constitution or by-laws, policies and regulations are also recorded in written form. Records should be available to all as they have relevance for school or parish activities.

10. Evaluate constantly the role of the parish school board. As the parish board functions remember it will be necessary continually to evaluate and assess its contribution. Both the board itself and the parish at large should assess board effectiveness and impact.

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