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Bishop Sheen's Statement on Future of Parochial Schools

1. Because we live in a pluralistic society which does not demand uniformity but unity, we are, for the sake of our country, continuing our Catholic education. Pluralistic education protects us against a monolithic mentality, where the state alone determines what shall be poured into the minds of its citizens.

2. During this coming year, a survey will be made of every parish in the diocese with a parochial school. After the pastors have consulted with their people, a decision will be made whether, under present financial arrangements, the parochial school of that parish can be continued.

In June, 1970, we will announce to the State and to the country, the number of students for which new buildings and teachers will be required of the community.

3. This will increase the tax burden of everyone in the community, including ourselves. We dislike seeing the cost of education per pupil increase from \$240, where it stands now in our parochial schools, to about \$1,000 per pupil, which it is now in public schools, without a commensurate increase in any educational benefits.

4. We know the gratitude of our fellow citizens in New York State for educating 740,000 boys and girls enrolled in our elementary and secondary schools. But our fellow citizens must re-

member that if we closed our schools only in Rochester, the increased cost would be over \$300 per wage earner.

5. But since we live in a country where the government will buy guns for our boys to fight, we believe that it should also build and maintain schools in which peace is given a moral basis as well as a political one.

6. Though the number of schools we will be forced to close and put on the tax roll will not be known until next June, the Diocese will make every effort to continue our schools for the disadvantaged. These will ever remain the symbols of our Divine Mission to the poor.

7. We used to be anxious to continue our parochial schools for the sake of the Faith. A new dimension has been added to this in the last ten years. Our mission today is not only to preserve the Church, but to save the nation.

Our Declaration of Independence states that the Creator has endowed us with "unalienable rights." If the State gave the rights, the State could take them away. If we wish to keep

our forest, we must keep our trees, and if we wish to keep our rights and liberties, we must also keep our God and the right to speak of Him in our schools.

8. Even though there be a slight decrease in the number attending our schools, there is nevertheless a great increase in the number of non-Catholic parents who want their children in our schools. One of the reasons for this is: we are not only training the mind as everyone else is; we are also training the will. In a word, discipline will always remain the greatest character asset of our education.

9. We feel a deep obligation to America, and we would welcome an ecumenical movement of education to train youth in the three virtues of decency, honesty and patriotism. Lincoln said that he had no fears that America would be destroyed from without, but that it might perish from within. We beg everyone who loves this country to join with us in the preservation of our nation's moral and spiritual traditions.

10. We are very sensitive to

the increasing role of the laity in the Church, and note with intense satisfaction their excellent attitude and aptitude toward the teaching of the Christian image in man, as well as their superlative competence for academic instruction.

11. We recognize the decisions which call for the separation of Church and State, but along with this, is the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of conscience.

Freedom of conscience means positively the right to give religious education, and negatively, that no support be excluded or withheld on the grounds that there is no total community consensus.

Democracy makes decisions through the will of the majority, but the majority is the custodian of minority rights.

It is this right to be free to educate, to deepen responsibility in American citizens, for which we ask the support of the State in order that we may not put forth anything less than our first class product.

The Church in these times is examining its conscience regarding the new vistas of apostolate.

But the entire community must also examine its conscience, whether it wants the Church to help it continue the moral ethos in our nation and in our youth.

State Aid or Else, Bishop Sheen Warns on Schools

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen formally announced this week the possible closing of more parish schools in June, 1970, because of the increasing problem of finances and personnel.

Calling for "the support of the State" in continuing the work of the parochial schools, he asked that "the entire community must examine its conscience, whether it wants the Church to help it continue the moral ethos in our nation and in our youth."

The Bishop stated that following a survey of the financial situation of every parochial school in the diocese during this year, democratic consultation on the problem will be held between parishioners and pastors before closing decisions are made.

By next June, he predicted, "we will announce to the State and to the country the number of students for which new buildings and teachers will be required of the community."

The Bishop's statement and discussion of other matters related to the "schools' crisis" came in an unprecedented press conference held Wednesday at the Pastoral Office.

Bishop Sheen and Msgr. William Roche, diocesan superintendent of schools, spoke with area newspaper and television reporters at the same time that church authorities in the seven other dioceses of the state were briefing newsmen about their respective school problems and the possible future steps which must be taken.

The reporters were given copies of "The State of Our Schools," a report on the current problems of support in Catholic primary and secondary schools of the whole state as prepared by the State Council of Catholic School Superintendents.

It is believed to be the first time that the eight dioceses of the state have spoken together simultaneously and publicly on a mutually pressing problem. The general intention was "to establish the actuality of our financial needs in education and the inadequacy of our own financial resources to meet the need."

Bishop Sheen, emphasizing the value of Catholic schools for the nation's welfare, promised to keep inner-city schools functioning.

"The Diocese," he said, "will make every effort to continue our schools for the disadvantaged. These will remain the symbol of our Divine Mission to the poor."

"Our mission in our schools is not only to preserve the Church, but to save the nation," he said, pointing out that moral and spiritual traditions were essential for community life.

"We would welcome an ecumenical movement of education to train youth in the three virtues of decency, honesty and patriotism."

He said that as parochial enrollment has declined for several reasons, the number of non-Catholic parents who want to enroll their children in the parish schools has grown.

"One of the reasons for this is: We are not only training the mind as everyone else is; we are also training the will. Discipline will always remain the greatest character asset of our education."

Taxes will increase if the passing of parochial schools, where the annual per pupil cost is \$240, forces the public schools to take over the duty of educating these children" at about \$1,000 per pupil, the Bishop said.

But, he continued, freedom of conscience under the Constitution means both the right to give religious education, and negatively, that "no support be excluded or withheld on the grounds that there is no total community consensus."

Insisting that in democracy, it is the duty of the majority to be custodian of minority rights, the Bishop stated: "It is this right to be free to educate, to deepen responsibility in American citizens, for which we ask the support of the State in order that we may not put forth anything less than our first class product."

Catholic School Heads Raise Three Major Issues

The Catholic Schools' Superintendents' report, "The State of Our Schools," presented Wednesday to news media of New York State, covered three major topics: the current status and trends of Catholic schools, recommended courses of action, and alternative plans.

As the new school year opened, the Catholic Superintendents reported that in approximately 1,400 Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the state, the Church was educating nearly 740,000 pupils.

Statistics for three years, however, indicated a 6.5 percent decline in Catholic enrollment with consequent necessity for the public school systems to accept the increasing flood of former church-school pupils.

The trend of declining parochial enrollment means a staggering concomitant increase of costs for public education, the Catholic educators warned.

Facing "a crisis" which shows that Catholic education cannot continue for much longer without "governmental assistance in a significant manner," the representatives of the Bishops of the state have asked for a program of direct financial assistance for non-public schools and the establishment of a permanent Commission for Non-Public Education to supervise the expenditure of public monies.

If such legislation is not forthcoming, the Superintendents say, the dioceses must plan on available alternatives: the selective closing of grades and a pay-as-you-go plan where parochial schools would be closed when the costs outstrip the monies available.

Dialogue with parents and laity will increase through this year, the Superintendents' report promises, and consultation with public educators for a mutual assessment of the financial problems will be held.

But there will have to come, they say, "the determination of a date of commitment to a positive course of action."

Individual Bishops making statements on a long-term basis, as Bishop Sheen did this week about possible closings in June of 1970, will have their hands strengthened when the Bishops of the State meet on September 25.

They will review the report on the State of the Schools and discuss united ways of getting the desired legislative action.

Reasons for the departure of children from the Catholic schools were admitted to be: parental attitudes toward religious schools, diversification of apostolates in religious communities, (meaning fewer Sisters

(Continued on Page 2)

The Weaker Sex?.. Who Says So!



From baseball wars to the more serious, women are in there pitching. At top left, Sister Katherine is one of the nuns who live near Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field and who help direct traffic at behest of city police; woman above may be acting out what she thinks of Pentagon policy as she pickets in protest against chemical warfare; and lass at right is Northern Ireland's own Bernadette Devlin, giving U.N.'s U Thant an earful. (RNS)



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More National Holidays May Get Special Masses

Washington — (NC) — The United States, which now has a Mass for Thanksgiving Day on an experimental basis, may soon have similar votive Masses for other national holidays, such as July 4, Labor Day and Memorial Day (May 30).

This was revealed by Father Joseph M. Champlin, associate director of the U.S. Bishops' Liturgy committee, in an interview explaining the significance of the 1970 liturgical calendar for the United States which has just been published.

"The revised calendar," he said, "simply puts into practice the general directions issued by the Fathers of Vatican Council II. Emphasis is on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord, on Easter Sunday as the great feast of the Church year, on Sunday as a 'little Easter' recalling Jesus' Resurrection, on the mysteries of Christ, and on those saints who are known and honored throughout the entire world."

The renewed Church calendar does not minimize, much less prohibit, the veneration of saints popular on the local level, Father Champlin said. "The optional (and this seems to be a key characteristic of the reformed Roman liturgy) honoring of saints

who enjoy popularity in a particular region is strongly encouraged."

"Five feasts traditionally observed in the United States," he continued, "are now considered as obligatory memorials and will be found in the calendar for 1970. They are: St. Peter Claver (Sept. 9); St. Isaac Jogues and his companions (Sept. 26); St. Isidore the Farmer (Oct. 25); St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (Nov. 13), and Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12).

"The revised calendar probably will have its greatest impact upon Catholics who participate daily in Mass," Father Champlin said. "There will be more open days and many occasions when the celebration of a saint's feast will be left optional."

"Catholics who attend Mass only on Sunday will find the Church year a bit simpler after Jan. 1 and, once the lectionary has been authorized for use in the United States, the readings at Mass more varied. He will also sense a stress on the Christ who has died, is risen and who will come again, the same Risen Lord who inspired saints to follow his footsteps."

Over 200 Bills Aimed at Smut

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — Indignation over obscene mail is growing in the U.S. Congress where more than 200 anti-obscenity bills have been introduced by members of both parties.

Justice Department and Post Office Department officials have also urged anti-smut legislation. More than 234,000 obscene mail complaints were received by the Post Office Department last year.

Not since controversy over the U.S. Supreme Court's ban on school prayer in 1964 has any issue generated such congressional concern, the anti-obscenity forces say.

Fines imposed under the various bills would range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 and jail terms for violations.

An aide to the Post Office Committee said testimony of Justice Department officials indicated Nixon Administration commitment to new restrictions on obscene mail.

The Post Office Committee is a focus for citizen complaints about obscene mail. However, its members have been frustrated in the past by what they regarded as Justice Department favoring of the Judiciary Committee's more cautious approach to the problem.

2 State Aid Breaks

Ohio Assistance

Cincinnati (RNS)—The new \$2.27 billion education bill just signed by Gov. James Rhodes will increase state aid for each Roman Catholic parochial student by \$50 a year, to pay lay teachers who are now the majority of the faculty in Ohio church schools. Existing laws already provided for busing private school students and allocate \$25 per pupil per year for such auxiliary services as counseling and audio-visual aids.

In the Cincinnati archdiocese, laymen are now approximately 55 percent of the teaching staffs of parochial schools. Their salaries are about four times as high as those of priests and religious teachers.

Pa. Money Starts

Harrisburg, Pa. (RNS)—Non-public schools in Pennsylvania will receive an initial quarterly payment of \$1,212,232 in aid under the State Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968.

Secretary of Education David H. Kurtzman said that a total of \$4,848,929 will be given to the non-public schools during the 1969-70 fiscal year. He said that 97 percent of the 1,178 schools who filed for the aid were Roman Catholic.

Three additional similar payments will be made—in December, March, and June.