

COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

Vol. 81 No. 23

Two Sections—34 Pages

Rochester, New York

Price: 15¢

Friday, March 6, 1970

Nixon: Parochial School Collapse Would Be Tragedy

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — President Nixon, after extending an "unprecedented" special invitation, met at the White House with Catholic educators to discuss school problems and issued a strong commitment to do whatever he can to keep parochial schools in operation.

Professing a belief in the "great value" of a dual educational system — public and private — the President was quoted as saying it would be "a tragedy if either one should collapse."

Nixon cited the extensive efforts of Catholic schools in the inner city and added:

"If you retreat from the field, I see only a vacuum. You cannot retreat, you must not retreat. We must find ways to get public opinion behind you."

The delegation which visited the President, made up of board members of the National Catholic Educa-

'You Cannot Retreat, You Must Not Retreat.'



tional Association, was headed by Bishop Raymond J. Gallagher of Lafayette, Ind., NCEA board chairman, and Father C. Albert Koob, NCEA president.

The report on the conversation with the President was issued by the National Catholic Educational Association.

After the one-hour meeting with Nixon, Bishop Gallagher said:

"The President's encouragement

and guarantee of support must be considered a challenge to Catholic education and to the National Catholic Educational Association to follow through in identifying areas of cooperation and in developing programs of cooperation with the public sector."

Bishop Gallagher maintained that Nixon's attitude "relative to the absolute importance of continuing a private educational system would seem to carry a message to those in

the Catholic community — including some priests and nuns — who insist on writing the obituary of Catholic education."

Specifically, President Nixon was said to have told the Catholic educators that he would support a consolidation of two federal statutes to increase the effectiveness of aid going to parochial schools. These are Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 which provides textbook aid and Title III-A of the National Defense Education Act which provides such educational equipment as visual aids.

The NCEA officials had told the President that the 1965 ESEA law was "the first effective program that the federal government launched that substantially aided private schools." They urged an extension of this concept.

President Nixon also told his visitors that he hoped to open up additional forms of direct assistance to

private schools in such areas as programs for "children under five" and in educational activities for Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, many of whom attend Catholic schools.

The President said he would establish committees to study educational finances and asked the NCEA officials for their cooperation in an advisory capacity in this area. He also urged them to lend their assistance to a special task force on private education which will be developed.

On school segregation, Nixon expressed his confidence that the Catholic schools would not become havens for segregationists. He paid tribute to Church leaders for their position on integration.

The NCEA president, Father Koob, expressed appreciation for the President's "remarkable understanding of Catholic education problems."

"Nixon's emphasis on improved reading programs, better library

facilities, modern teaching aids and instructional tools gave heart to all of us who want to see education for all children improved," he pointed out.

During his presidential campaigns, Nixon had indicated his backing of governmental aid to private schools.

In 1960, in the campaign against John F. Kennedy, he affirmed his support of aid to non-public schools in a message to the editor of a Texas Baptist publication.

During the last campaign in 1968, Nixon indicated he favored federal governmental aid to children attending private schools.

"Our own private institutions," he said at that time, "are now experiencing severe financial pressures as costs of public education increase. In my view, it would be a tragedy of the first magnitude if tax-supported state schools were to drive private institutions out of existence."



Give That They May Live

American Catholics have been asked for Lenten Sacrifice contributions to the annual American Catholic Overseas Fund collection to save the lives of literally thousands in more than 70 underdeveloped countries throughout the world. Annual collection, sponsored by U.S. Bishops to serve world's needy without regard to race or religion, is scheduled in Rochester diocesan churches on Mar. 8.

Sunday's the Big Day, Your Chance to Help

Bishop Hogan appealed to the generosity of diocesan Catholics to help the sick and poor of the world in a letter read Sunday from parish pulpits for the American Catholic Overseas Aid Fund.

Quoting Pascal's statement, "Christ will be in agony until the end of time. We must not rest the while," the Bishop stated that the suffering of Christ on Calvary is a reality of 1970 in the flesh of the "poor, the homeless, the dispossessed, the sick and suffering in every land."

The American Catholic Overseas Aid Fund ("Bishops' Relief Collec-

tion"), is an annual national collection to help maintain the world-wide relief and self-help programs sponsored by U.S. Bishops.

According to the national office of the fund, \$113 million in food, medicine and clothing was shipped to 74 countries in 1969.

Last year diocesan Catholics gave \$110,600 to the fund. School children contributed \$14,000 of that amount.

The Bishop cited the relative affluence in the U.S. and noted Americans are "tempted to identify ourselves with the security of our earthly possessions."

The collection, which is scheduled to be taken up in all parish churches in the diocese on March 8, was cited by the Bishop as an opportunity to "grow in consciousness of the awesome responsibility of our stewardship of the gifts of the Lord intended for sharing with those less gifted."

State Bishops Stress Catholic School Crisis

(From Courier-Journal sources)

New York — The eight bishops of New York State have warned Gov. Rockefeller and the state's commissioner of education that the financial crisis facing parochial schools may result in 40,000 Catholic children moving from the church schools to public schools next Fall, causing a serious money situation in public education.

The bishops, headed by Terence Cardinal Cooke, met the governor and Lt. Gov. Malcolm Wilson at the governor's office here on Friday afternoon. In a frank face-to-face discussion which took two hours, each bishop spelled out the money-issues in his own diocese. They asked the governor to use his influence on the Legislature to secure immediate aid for the nonpublic schools.

(Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, representing Bishop Hogan for the Rochester Diocese, reported that the meeting was "frank and friendly" and that the governor concluded: "I realize your critical needs and will ask the Legislature to take immediate action.")

(Bishop Hickey said that the bishops told the governor that the presence of 707,000 students in Catholic schools in the state saves taxpayers some \$750 million a year. But the strong possibility that 40,000 of them may be phased out of the Catholic system this Fall and sent to the public schools would bring "damaging consequences" for the public treasury.)

Terence Cardinal Cooke, writing for all the bishops to Commissioner Ewald Nyquist, said that the "decline in Catholic school enrollment is now about to reach damaging proportions to the citizens of New York State."

The bishops reported that since June 1966 an estimated 86,000 students have left the Catholic schools in the state for public schools, and added that he anticipates an additional decline in parochial school enrollment of 40,000 by September 1970.

"We realize that unless some new assistance is provided by the state," Cardinal Cooke noted, "the public school system must anticipate these school cutbacks and must be prepared to provide increased facilities and funds to meet increased enrollments."

The Archbishop of New York, writing in his capacity as chairman of the New York State Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that any plan of state aid to help parents of parochial school students "would be helpful to all taxpayers in dollar effect, would give parents a feeling of confidence for the years ahead, would help to stabilize the total educational community and would reduce substantially the cost for increased state and local taxes for public education."

"Assistance to parents whose chil-

dren attend church-related schools is a small fraction of what the disappearance of a parochial school will cost the taxpayers and our already over-burdened public school system."

Currently before the Legislature is the Speno-Lerner bill which proposes direct aid to students in non-public schools. It provides for a maximum grant of \$150 for each student in a parochial school, with the amount keyed to the parents' income.

4 Candidates Opposed to Parochial Aid

New York — (RNS)—Four Democratic candidates for New York State's gubernatorial nomination declared their opposition to state financial aid to non-public schools, according to a poll of declared candidates by the Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL).

Gov. Rockefeller's office said he stood behind his previous statement in which he recommended repeal of the controversial Blaine Amendment, which bars aid to church-related schools, and also indicated support for increased aid to public schools.

Those evincing opposition to state aid to parochial schools were William J. van den Heuvel, Howard J. Samuels, Eugene H. Nickerson, and Burton Roberts. The four differed, however, on repeal of the Blaine Amendment, which prohibits such aid under the constitution.

PEARL, a committee of 26 major civic, educational, religious and labor groups, said no reply was received from Joseph Ettlinger and that Queens Dis. Ator. Thomas J. Mackell said the questions of the poll were too restrictive.

The four also agreed that they favored increased aid to public schools, but opposed evasion of the principle of church-state separation in education through the use of such devices as tuition grants to individual children.

On the question of opposition to repeal of the Blaine Amendment, only van den Heuvel responded with an unequivocal "yes," while Samuels said he favored retention of the amendment if it were broadened to include provisions for some sharing of public school facilities with private school students.

Nickerson and Roberts both favored repeal of the amendment, but neither because of its prohibition of state aid to non-public schools.



Keeping Dry

First Sgt. James A. Moore of Tacoma, Wash., and a companion resort to using corrugated metal hats in an effort to stay dry during a wet operation north of Fire Support Base Pershing in Vietnam. The men are members of the 25th Infantry Division (RNS)

Priests' Council Hears Southern Tier Priorities

Elmira — Improved two-way communication with the Pastoral Office, diocesan appropriations for area apostolic projects and general improvement of CCD and adult education programs were among a score of strong priorities placed before the diocesan Priests' Council at a public meeting Tuesday evening in St. Mary's Auditorium, Horseheads.

The 17-man Priests' Council turned its March meeting into an open session which heard 12 representatives of Southern Tier groups reading papers on the problems and hopes of their members.

A similar priorities hearing was held in Auburn on Sept. 30 and will be repeated in Rochester in May.

Bishop Hogan and Auxiliaries Dennis W. Hickey and John T. McCafferty attended the Horseheads meeting. Nearly 300 priests and laity were invited auditors at the 2½-hour session.

Msgr. George Cocuzzi, president of the Council, pastor of Holy Family Church, Rochester, was chairman. Dis-

cussion was limited to the Council members, who frequently questioned the speakers about the material presented.

Outstanding presentations were made by Thomas F. Isaf on lay participation in parish affairs; Judge John Frawley, representing the Board of Governors of Notre Dame High School; Francis B. Weingart, speaking for the Chemung County Catholic School Board; and Raymond Defendorf, representing the Southern Tier Association of Catholics.

The lay participants emphasized the area's gratitude to the Bishop and Council for coming to seek grassroots opinion. Their strongest points were the laity's desire for more voice in policies of the diocesan administration, and for Rochester's awareness that diocesan money and personnel ought to be spent in the Southern Tier.

Defendorf, speaking of the strong lay enthusiasm for improving parish structures, urged the Council to en-

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Now and Forever

This week the Courier-Journal presents a gift to young couples looking forward to their wedding day. A special supplement, "Now and Forever", filled with inspiring reflections and useful information on marriage and family life, is included with this week's edition.

Will They, Won't They... Kiss in Indian Films?

Catholic Press Features

New Delhi, India—If you've had enough news about sexual permissiveness in films, don't subscribe to any newspapers from India — where the big furor these days is over whether or not to allow kissing to be shown in Indian films.

In a country famed for its erotic sex manuals, sensual sculpture and very high birth rate, there is a strong controversy raging over plans to permit kissing scenes — previously outlawed — in films made in India.

A government committee recently recommended that "if in telling the story, it is logical, relevant or necessary to depict a passionate kiss or nude human figure, there should be no question of excluding the scene."

Until now, screen kissing was banned — not to mention nudity — on the grounds that it tended to corrupt

and deprave young people and because it was against India's cultural traditions, since India is a land where dating is almost non-existent and marriages are parentally arranged.

When the kissing-permission ruling was given, one of India's "sex symbols," Asha Parekh, denounced the ruling. "Who would like to see his daughters, sisters, and wives being kissed and undressed on the screen?" she asked, once again putting kissing and undressing in the same thought sequence.

Several Indian newspapers have led the fight against allowing kissing to be shown in Indian-made films.

"Kissing may lead to sexual anarchy," headlined one of them.

"Kissing is the cause of social upheaval," declared another.

"Kissing could shake the founda-

tions of our society," editorialized still another paper.

Oddly, the kissing ban has applied only to Indian-made films. Moviegoers in New Delhi and Calcutta and elsewhere in the country can see kissing and other love scenes in "foreign" films from Europe, England and the U.S. with no interference from the government censors.

This "double standard" is one of the reasons for relaxing the law against showing kissing in Indian films, even though a recent poll showed that 75 percent of those polled were against dropping the ban.

Another reason given for lifting the taboo was the fact that Indian film-makers have been resorting to symbolism — some of it more erotic than the real thing — to circumvent the anti-kissing law.

"There is a fetishistic embracing

of objects in place of live people," reported one magazine, "double meanings in songs, ambiguous gestures or dance sequences of dubious taste and suggestive silhouettes approaching tantalizing slowness and then veering off at a tangent like billiard balls at the crucial moment.

"Further variations are the suddenly speechless hero and heroine screened behind a tree for the duration of the kiss, a blacked-out screen at the crucial moment or the artificial ruse of a hero and heroine on either side of a divided movie screen."

Nevertheless, the new permissiveness allowing kissing in Indian films is being fought the hardest by a powerful and vocal lobby of Indian actresses.

On-screen kissing, they argue, will spoil their image.