

Threat to Schools Spurs Renewal

The startling news that the diocese expects the possible closing of three-quarters of its 60 parish schools in Monroe County within five years will ring frightening alarms in many places. Some hearers will disregard the warning, some will rally like crusaders defending holy soil, others may panic.

County officials, to whom this week's announcement was primarily directed, will respond, we expect, with worried reasoning and practical action. The teachers and parents of the threatened students will hopefully re-examine how precious they hold the continuation of the parochial schools.

But the heaviest responsibility for leadership will fall on the diocesan officials, pastors and parish councils. They must do much more than simply gesture to Albany for annual subsidy to keep the schools running.

If they hope to put a floor under the rapidly declining pupil enrollment and avert our schools' financial insolvency, they must redefine our educational goals, close the confidence gap with the laity and restructure the school system. Without thorough regeneration, the future of the parochial school system is very bleak.

This week's warning that some 19,000 Catholic pupils may be transferring to the county's public schools within five years was a courtesy. It will push administrators to get ready and will condition taxpayers for an enormous, escalating school-tax rise. But the sensible demand that this county immediately hand over a \$75 subsidy for each parochial pupil in order to keep his school operating, rather than have to pay over \$1,000 per child to educate him when he moves over to the public school, is almost hopeless. Yet it is practical, tax-saving and honest.

The general public has highly subjective views on whether the Catholic schools should be allowed to perish. Until all eight dioceses of New York State act together with similar statistics to make the taxpayer know the objective benefits of pupil-subsidy for parochial schools, the legislature will be very slow to stir the pools of church-state bitterness over educational funds.

Declining pupil enrollment and school costs rising beyond the parish's strength are the critical problems which require immediate solution, the Alsheimer-Clewell Report stated. (Please read the full account, beginning on Page 15A). The analysts claim that both issues relate to the laity: "Many today have serious doubts about the value and relevancy of Catholic education. Increasing numbers of parishioners now choose to send their children to public schools — schools with a direction and a future. And those who still send their children to parish schools are not willing to pay much more than they pay now" to keep the system thriving.

It will not be enough simply to assure a parish: "We hope to keep going." Parents, especially, want to know: "Where are the schools going?" The laity must be given a new understanding of how good most of our schools really are, what special values they offer, how their unique atmosphere and curriculum can be improved. Respect for the product is essential for any increase in registration and improvement of financial support. A massive selling job from pulpit, parish bulletins, school programs and news media must promise both new goals for Catholic education in the context of our times and the structural changes necessary to achieve these goals.

Diocesan programming, which would respect policy-making power at the local level, may have to displace parish autonomy in rebuilding a system now threatened with closure. For example, a unified approach for the allocation of teaching Sisters and the inauguration of an innovative curriculum could demand consolidation of parish schools in certain areas. Centralized managing and bulk-purchasing authority could be imposed to help the schools operate more efficiently rather than letting them die in whimpering groups year after year.

Careful review of the results of the recent diocesan-wide Attitudinal Survey will strengthen the hand of Bishop Hogan and diocesan school officials to assume a stronger role of planning and decision-making for our school's future. There is now clear evidence of what 27,487 respondents think about their schools — financing, curriculum, goals and policies. But to implement that opinion and fight back against the depressing prediction of massive school closures will take courageous imagination.

—Father Richard Tormey

The Slot Man Advertising? It's Necessary

By Carmen Viglucci



With the "new" Courier-Journal now 10 weeks old the reaction has been highly favorably although not without some valid criticism. We are grateful for the praise and take the criticism seriously with an aim to mend our ways where we can.

Among the unfavorable comment there has been at least one criticism we feel is unwarranted—"There is too much advertising."

If you've ever worked on a newspaper you know there is a natural enmity between editorial personnel and their advertising brethren. But to be realistic they must work together for the common good of their product—a kind of marriage of convenience.

So while any editor will tell you that his department makes or breaks a newspaper he knows in the inner recesses of his soul (editors have them, too) that there is a valid case for advertising.

Let me surprise a few people around our office and present the advertising case as it applies specifically to the Courier-Journal.

Before we converted to our tabloid format, our advertising-

editorial policy was on a 50-50 basis. Admittedly this fluctuated on any given week but it was the rule-of-thumb. If you think this is too much ad space check your secular paper for comparison. And remember being a Catholic paper doesn't reduce costs one bit, or two bits.

When we changed to tab we altered that balance—in favor of editorial. That department now receives the equivalent of four full pages, before the 50-50 ration is in effect. As an editor I say that this is as it should be—but as a realist I must admit that in these days of higher production costs, increased price for newsprint, wage spirals, etc., etc., it is a difficult line to hold.

Without advertising it would be an impossible line to hold.

This is true for all newspapers generally but presents an even greater problem for this type of paper which has a teaching function as well as a reporting one. The official diocesan paper, we are thus the voice of the Bishop to his flock. In addition, we are an instrument to keep religious and moral viewpoints alive in an increasingly secular world.

There is an argument that

advertising does not belong at all in a religious paper, that the two are incompatible. Well, without ads the Courier could not be published. So in an age when moral values are less and less a consideration for many, a Catholic voice with a potential of 400,000 readers would be stilled.

So, ironic as it may seem, merchants of everything from gas heaters and mouthwash play a role in spreading the word of God, and if that is too lofty a claim for this paper, at least we are a voice of moral persuasion.

Furthermore, advertising per se is not immoral. In fact our advertisers are all highly reputable; they wouldn't be in the Courier if they weren't. True over the years there have been one or two distasteful ads. They were the result of honest mistakes and were quickly culled.

Of course, that is only one side of the ad coin. Our advertisers know that we reach a healthy market. Catholics are as much a part of the marketplace as any segment of society, playing a necessary role in the world without necessarily being "worldly." The Courier-Journal, in a very precise way, reflects that fact.

The Word for Sunday

As We Sow We Reap

By Father Albert Shamon



Colleges are out. The kids are home.

Last week I was talking with some college kids. I was appalled at their attitude about America, the flag, Vietnam. In 1938 I read *Crucifying Christ in Our Colleges*. I really did not believe the allegations made in the book against college "professors." I was wrong. Now some "professors" are crucifying America in our colleges. For as I tried to ferret out the college kids' reasons for their venom, invariably a "professor" was quoted. "Dr. So-and-so says so. He ought to know. He even went to Vietnam for two months."

"A man scatters seed on the ground," says the Gospel. "It sprouts and grows without his knowing how it happens." The so-called demonstrations and violence on our campuses are the fruit of ideas sown either knowingly or unwittingly in the classroom. "As we sow, we reap."

There is a book I wish every college student and chaplain would read. It is *The Enemy Within* by the famous missionary R. J. DeJaegher. The book is a masterly analysis of how the Communists took over China. But one especially timely chapter is "How Communists Capture the Universities." Just absorb these two quotes:

"The Reds understood the psychology of the freshman. He is at an age when he is experimenting with independence; he is no longer a child but not yet a man, and he is heady with the discovery of his own ego and eager to express his personality. That is why the Communists tried so energetically to win converts among the first-year students" (p. 154).

"... Chiang Kai-shek tried always to get the students to study more and to reduce their political activity. He did not want to discourage their interest in political affairs, but he felt it was detrimental to China to have students interfering in the country's political affairs. They were too immature, too unknowing and inexperienced, he believed, and too early a participation in political life was bad for them and bad for the country. The communists, on the other hand, not only encouraged students to carry on political activity they even forced them to interfere in politics. This served two purposes: it kept things churned up and in tumult and confusion, and it brought into sharp focus those dynamic elements of the population the Communists wanted for themselves. It was among the screaming, demonstrating students, rioting in the big cities, exhorting in the smaller places, that they looked for and found the natural leaders they could capture early and train in their own ways" (p. 156).

Our youth are being manipulated by a small, but hard core of trained traitors. Their demonstrations are not spontaneous, but worse they are not Christian.

Christ did not want any one of us to stand by and watch evil go unchecked. Nor did He want us to be unchristlike. In society, Christ acted as leaven. His method was seminal. He sought revolutionary changes, but not through revolution. He sought societal changes, but not through society. He sought the you's and me's of society — the lost, the prodigal, the sinner: Magdalene, Zaccheus, Matthew, Dismas. The essence of the Gospel message is *metanoia*, conversion, change of heart! Change people, and people will change society.

Only when people begin spending more time on their knees than in demonstrations, only when liturgical demonstrations on Sunday outnumber street demonstrations, only when we sinners cease picking up stones to cast at others (be it a flag, a Vice-president, a war) and cry, "Lord, be merciful to us" — only then will things get better — and only then!

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