

Financial Report A Forward Step

Today's publication of the Diocesan Financial Statement on pages 6B-7B is an historic "first" which Bishop Hogan promised to the diocese when he took office eleven months ago. The report reveals for the first time in 102 years exactly how the material administration of the Rochester Diocese is conducted.

A careful perusal of the figures will show a broader scope of pastoral administration than most of the laity ever imagined. The categories of expense should also clarify for the first time that complex mystery called "diocesan needs".

Bishop Hogan's letter accompanying the report praises the generosity of the countless parishioners who gave their diocese nearly \$700,000 last year and trusted him to use it wisely. He also justly cites the unselfish dedication of scores who work for the diocesan departments at minimal salaries.

No printed listing of revenues can tally the values of labor and spirit which were poured into the diocesan programs in the past year and the past century. But today's report opens up for the first time to public inspection the stewardship of the Pastoral Office.

The average layman knows that four times a year he is asked to help his parish meet its established quota for diocesan expenses. But the pulpit appeal for "our quarterly diocesan assessment" has been too vague. The diocese simply has not been adequately informed about the multiple non-parish projects the diocese must finance.

As a result of the laity's ignorance of need and indifference to sharing many parishes are unable to fulfill their assessments. Then they must dip into the parish treasury to meet the quota the Pastoral Office demands. Today's publication of what the diocesan functions cost and the printed explanation of the scope of each department may be the beginning of better understanding and a stimulant to more generous giving.

Two irritations may come from the publishing of this financial report: some of the laity and clergy may judge that certain apostolates they are interested in seem to be distressingly underfinanced for the work they should be doing; on the other hand some will surely question why they are asked to support departments which, in their observation, do nothing to serve the parish or area they live in.

It is a problem of communications. For want of clear facts and persuasion from the Pastoral Office and the pulpit the parishes do not give as they might; then the diocese does not have the funds to function as it would like to; and important services needed by thousands may be critically hampered. Diocesan needs must be more pointedly catalogued, explained and sold to the parishes.

Man gives his service or his money when he knows what his offering is for and believes in its potential goal.

—Fr. Richard Torney

Aid For Schools?

The most crucial question hanging over the future of the diocesan school system is: "Will enough state-aid arrive in time to help the parishes keep their schools alive?" Because the possibilities of what the next N.Y. State Legislature may do for non-public schools are so vital for answering that question, the Courier-Journal's survey of the candidates' opinions should be read in the front pages of this paper.

There are only three hopeful possibilities for getting public aid: the Mandated Services funds which have been promised to reach elementary and secondary schools of the diocese next Spring; the repeal of the Blaine Amendment which might occur in November, 1971, and might bring money to the schools late in '72; the revival of the Speno-Lerner Bill which might provide tuition-aid for parents of non-public school children. All three will surely face court-fights and general public opposition before a penny moves from Albany to the private schools. Critics charge that all three are unconstitutional.

The N.Y. State Bishops have pointedly informed the Governor and the Board of Regents and the Legislature that the money crisis is their problem as well as the Church's. The spiraling increase of public costs, if the major share of the 700,000 children now in parochial schools regrettably switch to the public schools, has been spelled out. But tradition, the Constitution and legislative apathy make the immediate future gloomy. No matter how the candidates speak this month about aid-for-Catholic schools it will be a long road before any money gets here. And how many schools will die in the meantime?

Courier-Journal

Letters to the Editor

Father McBrien Off Base

Editor:

Reading the Question and Answer column by Father Richard P. McBrien in the Courier-Journal (Sept. 30), in which he speaks very tolerantly of the "Zero Population Growth" movement, prompts me to point out a few facts garnered at the Zero Population Growth meeting at Eastridge High School in Irondequoit on Sept. 25, 1970, and at the same time perhaps give further information for your admirable Election '70 Survey.

Alarm about population growth quickly came around to means to curb this growth. State Sen. James Powers (Dem., 51st Dist.) spoke on abortion as a means and expressed dismay that so many senators had voted against the present abortion law. His reasoning was that as long as no one was forced to have an abortion or assist in one, there was no basis for being against it.

Congressman Frank Horton

(Rep., 36th Congressional Dist.) spoke about birth control as a means and glowingly described the bill presently before the House of Representatives to allocate \$1 billion to provide American women with birth control pills and contraceptives.

General laughter greeted a question about the morality of proposed means and the teaching of the Catholic Church. The answer seemed to be that the "official" (laughter) teaching of the Church was to be ignored for the sake of an individually-determined "lesser of two evils."

Father McBrien states that Catholics may choose to have two children at most or no children at all. He does not mention what means are acceptable in making this choice a reality. I do not consider it a "viable Christian response" for him to ignore the question of means or to ignore the fact that there is something morally wrong with the means generally promoted by the Zero Population Growth advocates.

Marie Jesmer
225 Wyndall Road
Rochester

Story on Aging Disputed

Editor:

After reading the article "Survey of Aging Omits Spiritual, Priest Declares" on the front page of the Courier-Journal (Sept. 23), a Washington, D.C. news release, and attending the New York State Forum for the Aging Sept. 23 at Alfred, N.Y., I believe there has been some misunderstanding.

At the discussion group I attended, spiritual needs was voted as second in importance along with health, although it was not on the questionnaire, as you state.

It is true that the neediest of the aged were not present; nevertheless, our group took this into consideration when voting.

Mrs. John M. Phillips
Horseheads

Priorities Questioned

Editor:

Father Cuddy's tale of divine intercession in returning some lost valuables to him (Courier-Journal, 9/16/70) is an example of what is meant by the statement "Your God is too small."

These people turn me off and, I suspect, many others, too, who now look for and demand more in a higher conception of religion than this as afforded by the old-time Catholic style.

We are prone to ask what kind of God do they serve who, in their selfish pride, imagine He has more concern for lost pocketbooks than, say, the plight of thousands of starving children whose need is but a crust of bread. Does He turn a deaf ear to their plea?

—Edith Hahn, Victor

Abortion to Be Vote Factor

Editor:

The deliberate taking of innocent human life is properly termed "murder." So massive a program as the New York State abortion "reform" law—which may destroy upward of half a million lives in its first year alone—surely deserves the label of "genocide," or better, "sui-genocide." At any rate, it is good to see that one major political party stands alone in making opposition to abortion a central plank in its campaign this year, that is, the Conservative Adams-Buckley ticket. To those who, like myself, consider the issue of basic human rights more important than any of the usual party rhetoric, the courage of the Conservative party in opposing mass murder of the unborn represents a refreshing and compelling alternative.

—Dr. Dennis Bonnette
Professor of Philosophy
Youngstown, N.Y.

The Word for Sunday

No Harm, But What Good?

By Father Albert Shamon



Up to the First Sunday of Advent, the Second Readings of the Mass are from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Some call this Epistle "the riddle of the New Testament." In a way it is, because when we ask when it was written, to whom it was written, and by whom, we can only guess and grope. No matter. It was written before the end of the first century and is the inspired word of God. In Sunday's Second Reading, the selection from Hebrews is a magnificent description of God's word.

The word of God is living. Man must face up to it. Who, but for a few, care what Plato said? Not so God's word. Because it is living, it is also an effective word. One just cannot hear the word of God and then do nothing. God's word calls to action. The rich young man in the Gospel heard it. It penetrated to his very heart. "Sell what you have and give to the poor." Cutting like a two-edged sword, it divided his soul and body. "At these words the man's face fell. He went away, for he had many possessions."

That rich young man came running to Jesus, but he went away sad. Why? Christianity is more than keeping the commandments. The commandments Christ enumerated were all negative with the exception of the one that operated in one's own family. The man had kept them all. In effect he was saying, "I never in my life harmed anyone." That was true, and for that Jesus looked at him with love.

However the real question was, "What good have you done for people?" The question was especially pointed because this man had many possessions. He had much to do with. What was he doing with it? Whom had he helped? Whom did he clothe? Whom did he feed? Christianity is more than not doing things. It is doing things. It is even more than doing things. Just to do good works for the sake of man is the secular humanism of a Harvey Cox, Joseph Fletcher, and John T. Robinson. Christianity is doing things for Our Lord's

sake. Christ said, "Give to the poor . . . and follow me."

Situation ethics today has distorted the word of God and so has legalism. One says the only law is love; love and do anything you want; the other says, love only the law; don't do anything against the law. Situation ethics doesn't care what you do, provided you love; legalism doesn't care how you love, provided you keep the law. And why such extremism? No doubt one of the basic reasons is the lack of the humility that gets on its knees to pray.

In the First Reading we meet another young man. He was rich, too. His name was Solomon. He too came to God. "I prayed," he tells us. And what happened? "Prudence was given me. I pleaded and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me."

Like the rich young man, like Solomon, God's words keep speaking to us—keep commanding us to make choices for or against Christ, for or against God. How shall we know? Solomon went to God, the rich young man to Christ. Yet the ends of both are in doubt. It is not enough to know, to hear God's word, to understand it. No, we need God's help. That is why prayer is an indispensable continuous need. Sunday we pray: "Care for us, Lord. Protect us from all adversity. Make us zealous—not just in doing good—but in doing good for the honor of your name."

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Page 22-A