

As I See It

# School Job Outstanding

By Pat Costa



"Catholic Schools at the Crossroads" was the title of the documentary and for a half hour last week Rochester area television viewers were treated to an earful.

WHEC's Mike Power was the reporter and producer on this expertly done piece detailing the present plight of Catholic schools and what's ahead in the future.

He, the station and its public affairs department are to be commended for a professional job.

Power began by interviewing people in the street.

If Catholic schools do not get state aid and are forced to close, how will it affect you, he asked passersby.

Many of them answered "Not at all."

And that, pointed out Power in the next segment, is where they are wrong.

Should Catholic schools be forced to close:

• Taxes in Monroe County would rise by \$15 per thousand. It would affect everybody.

• Public schools already jammed would be forced to accept 32,406 children now enrolled in elementary parochial schools and 9,327 students presently enrolled in Catholic high schools.

Power next interviewed Bishop Joseph Hogan as to the validity of the crisis.

Bishop Hogan assured him that he was not simply "crying wolf." Unless help comes in the form of state aid, parochial schools simply cannot function.

Power interviewed several other people. Most prominent was Sister Patricia Donovan, author of the Donovan report which catalogued the problems of the schools in the diocese and recommended certain steps that should be taken to save the schools. Probably most important is her advice that running of the schools should be administered under a regional plan. Consolidation and rising tuition costs are included in her plan.

Power also spoke to Maj. Robert H. Alsheimer, who co-authored the Alsheimer-Clewell report on Catholic schools here and predicted that without state aid, probably in the form called for in the Speno-Lerner bill (state monies would go to parents of student), the parochial system would be completely dead by 1975.

Interviews with spokesmen for the Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen who wanted some questions answered before giving total support to the parochial system and with parents of Catholic students also were arranged for the documentary.

Parents are not only behind continuing Catholic schools. They want them upgraded. Power pointed out that more than 30 per cent of lay teachers now being used in Catholic schools do not even have bachelor degrees.

To close, the camera went back to the street to ask the people how they felt about state aid. Perhaps in what might be considered a hopeful sign only one person seemed adamantly against.

To many onlookers the handwriting is not only on the wall. It is written in indelible ink. Help must come.

# Schools Office Views Vary On Television Documentary

Supervisory personnel in the Diocesan Office of Education varied in their opinions about WHEC's April 5 Documentary on the Catholic schools in Rochester.

The half-hour program, narrated by Mike Power, began on the premise that "the Catholic schools are in trouble."

Father Daniel Brent, superintendent of diocesan schools, said that he was "generally pleased" by the documentary—both in its presentation of Catholic schools, and its exploration of the relationship between the parochial system and the larger community.

"It was good to hear an outside observer assess both the reality of our financial problems, and the necessity of the public to become involved for motives of self-interest," Father Brent said. "The documentary pointed out that it would be too bad for the community to lose the Catholic school alternative."

Commenting on documentary footage of classes in the Catholic schools, Father Brent observed that the program presented a "reflection of the kind of education Catholic schools are offering today. I suspect that it may have been a revelation to some people who assume that Catholic schools are still closed, authoritarian teaching machines."

Father Leon Hart, associate superintendent of schools, commented:

"I was delighted with the extremely fair presentation of the problems the Catholic schools face in attempting to finance their school system. The program aptly illustrated our absolute need for state assistance in solving our problems," Father Hart said.

Father Hart also felt that the program's look at the inner-city Catholic schools demonstrated "the contribution Catholic schools are making towards the education of minority children."

Not so favorable were the reactions of Sister Beatrice Neukirchen, SSND, assistant superintendent for instruction. "The documentary failed to emphasize that work of the diocesan Department of Education to upgrade teacher qualifications, maintain quality education and promote integration," Sister Beatrice said.

Sister also criticized the program's discussion of Catholic schools in the inner-city.

"The documentary implied that diocesan support of the inner-city Catholic schools saves Catholic consciences. It did not mention that for two years, we've been busing inner-city youngsters to Catholic suburban schools."

Mrs. Grace Conway, assistant superintendent for personnel, admitted the merits of the program, but was disturbed by Power's comment that 35 per cent of the teachers in Catholic

schools lack college degrees. "I strongly object to this statement because it implies that Catholic school teachers are not qualified," Mrs. Conway said.

"The vast majority of those teachers who presently lack degrees are either working for them, in cadet training programs, or have Normal School Certificates."

Those teachers who attended Normal School have extensive teaching experience, and would merit state certification.

"Very pleased" was the reaction of Father Gerald Connor, assistant to the diocesan vicar for education, Father Albert Shamon. "The documentary presented the picture very well," he said.

"Little by little people are becoming aware that there is a problem in the Catholic schools."



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## Keeping Tabs

The Rosary Guild of Christ the King parish will meet at 8 p.m. Monday, April 19, to choose officers and hear Mrs. Ronald Gledhill on "Teaching Old Truths New Ways."

The Mercy High School German Club will hold a rummage sale in the gym from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Saturday, April 24. Proceeds will go into a fund for foreign study.

The St. Christopher Social Club and a club called The Singletons will have a cocktail party and dance at the Downtown Saturday night, April 17, from 9 until 1. Further information may be obtained from John Shannon, 473-5021.

Members of Seton Branch 7 will be the guests of their chairman, Miss Winifred A. Kelly of Blossom Road, on Tuesday evening, April 20.

The Holy Name of Mary Society of St. Stanislaus Church will serve spaghetti dinner Saturday, April 17, from 2:30 until 7:30 p.m., in the school hall.

The Rosary societies of Mother of Sorrows and St. Mark's will join for a pot-luck supper at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, at Mother of Sorrows. For reservations: Terry LaPaglia, 865-3490, or Mary Kay Hasenauer, 621-2957.

The Holy Ghost Men's Club will hold its annual Spring dance April 24 in the school hall on Coldwater Road. Tickets may be obtained from chairman Al Friday, 889-2185, or co-chairman Joe Scally, 594-8484.

The Rosary Society of Holy Apostles Church will hold a bake sale Sunday, April 18, after all Masses.

Courier-Journal

St. Charles Women's Club will meet Tuesday, April 20 at 8 p.m. for Benediction in church, to be followed by a "Silent Sale" in the school hall. Each member is asked to donate two items from home that are in good condition. Reservations may be made for the annual banquet, which will be held at the Dutch Mill on May 4.

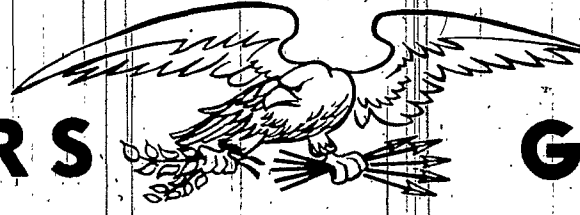
A dinner at 6:30 will precede the regular monthly meeting of St. Rose Guild which will be held on Tuesday evening, April 20, in St. Rose School, Lima. Mrs. Thomas Moon is chairman. Election of officers will take place.

The Daughters of Erin annual Charity card party will be held at 8 p.m. April 20 in St. Patrick's Church Hall, Plymouth Ave. N. at Brown.

Mrs. Jack Sexton and Mrs. Harry Mee are chairmen. Mrs. Florence O'Connell, 467-1942, has tickets.

The Catholic Kolping Society will hold a card party to raise funds for the work of the International Kolping Society, Sunday, April 18, at 2:30 p.m. at Rutner's Grill, Avenue D and Remington St.

The Rochester Chapter of the Alumnae Association of St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing, Elmira will hold its annual banquet on Friday, April 23, at the Monticello Restaurant, 800 Jefferson Rd. at 7:15 p.m. Guest speaker will be Kenneth Naples, director of the Wayne County Rural Comprehensive Health Program, who will discuss the migrant worker situation.



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