

Conn. Seeks Repayment Of Private School Aid

Hartford — (RNS) — Amid threats from Connecticut of possible court action against non-public schools which refuse to repay about \$1.5 million in "unconstitutional" state aid, Catholic school administrators have been advised to "stick to their guns" for the present.

In an unusual turn of events, Connecticut's attorney general formally demanded the return of the state funds paid to some 250 non-public schools since April.

His demand followed the June 30 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that Connecticut's aid statute was unconstitutional.

Catholic school officials and financial advisers immediately protested the state's demand, noting that the money had already been used for expenses incurred in good faith under the law. Principals and pastors in the Hartford archdiocese and in the Bridgeport and Norwich dioceses were advised to reply that "repayment is being studied . . ."

More recently, however, Connecticut's Asst. Atty. Gen. Michael Ahern informed non-public school officials that the state had "no alternative" but to initiate legal action if repayment of the funds is not made.

Msgr. James A. Connelly, superintendent of Hartford's archdiocesan school system, said in a letter criticizing the state's approach that "it is our inten-

tion to study this entire question further, to inform state officials that non-public schools have indeed undergone considerable expense already, and to state that at the very least, allowance should be made for expenditures incurred in good faith in reliance on the act."

A letter formally requiring repayment was sent to non-public schools by William J. Sanders, secretary of the State Board of Education. He noted that because of the challenge to the state aid law "you were advised . . . that a possibility of repayment, therefore would exist."

Auxiliary Elects

The Ladies Auxiliary, Knights of Columbus Council 178, recently elected:

President, Mrs. Albert Szembrot; vice president, Mrs. Robert Farrell; financial secretary, Mrs. Robert Conley; recording secretary, Mrs. Louis Drons. Spiritual director is Father Paul Wohlrab.



Braving the Rains

Five Sisters of St. Francis from Syracuse sit through the storm which rained on the crowd attending the annual Hill Cumorah Pageant presented by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Palmyra. (RNS Photo)

Miner's Fortune to Seek Soul Picture

Phoenix, Ariz. (RNS) — An Arizona judge has finally ended the legal dispute over a fortune left by a gold miner for work designed to prove the existence of the human soul.

Superior Court Judge Robert Myers has granted \$297,000 to the American Society for Psy-

chical Research in New York City.

Earlier, he had designated the funds to the Barrow Neurological Institute of Phoenix, a branch of a Roman Catholic hospital. The state's supreme court overruled his action, saying that the institute did not

qualify under the will of the deceased miner.

The case, one of the most colorful and bizarre in the history of the U.S. civil law, began in 1964 when a handwritten will and \$175,000 left by James Kidd, who disappeared in 1949, were found in a bank vault. Interest increased the sum to \$297,000.

Mr. Kidd never returned from a prospecting trip near Globe, Ariz., in 1949. He was 71 at the time and seven years later was declared legally dead.

The will provided that the money, with the exception of funeral expenses and \$100 for a "preacher of the Gospel to say farewell at my grave," go for "research or some other scien-

tific proof of a soul of the human body which leaves at death."

The American Society for Psychical Research was organized in 1906 by William James, the famed philosopher and psychologist. Among its interests are, investigations of apparitions, deathbed visions and "out-of-the-body" experiences.

Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons



Quite frequently, I get a letter that tells me something about the writer's parish and area, and a brief description of their beginning attempts at organizing a parish council.

The writer usually says that he (or she) reads this column, or has read the two books that I have done on parish councils.

What they want to know now is, "What should we do next?"

There are a lot of problems with that question, but not nearly as many as with the writers who want to know what they should buy or read next, or the ones who ask for a sample constitution that they can set up in their parish.

A request for still more reading suggests to me that the person is really trying to avoid action.

A request for a constitution suggests to me that the person has a static view of councils, and that he is seeking the one answer or technique that will insure whatever his idea is of the perfect council.

If my views of the last two requests indicate to you that I don't believe there is a simple answer than can be imposed upon a parish for a council, you might be ready for my answer to those people who ask, "What should we do next?"

The recommendations could be many, but I've basically boiled them down to three:

Read, study, and meditate upon Christ's actions in the Gospels.

This can be done in many ways, both individually and in groups.

An individual can read the four Gospels with that one intent—to see Christ and how he acted.

The person, in his own home, can read (say, 15 minutes each day) some of the excellent biographies and studies of Christ.

As a council, and as a small group, the leadership of the council could promote dialog homilies, group discussions of the Sunday Gospel (perhaps at a Bible Vigil), and afternoons of recollection where the priest is asked to center his meditations on the life of Christ.

The focal point of these activities should provide patterns and discussions for the council as you begin to see how Christ interacted with his apostles, and how he formed them into a community — that is, into a Church.

Growing from a Christ made more vivid and present, not only in history 2,000 years ago, but today, also — think, read,

and discuss what it means to be "Church."

What does it mean when I say, "I am the Church," and "You are the Church?"

It certainly means that there are definite roles and ministries and gifts of the Holy Spirit, but it also means a community responsibility and a sharing of joys and burdens.

It means that we can't leave it all to the priests, because we have responsibilities and gifts to exercise in our unique response to Christ.

Anyone who takes the lifestyle of Christ seriously must have a respect for small groups and for action in forming and developing the person in Christ.

I recommend small groups meeting in homes, in addition to larger meetings in the church building or hall.

For guidelines, if you don't have the inclination to develop your own, I recommend my own book, "Programs For Parish Councils" (Techny, III: 60082; Divine Word Publications, \$1.50).

This book includes first meetings to get a group to discover each other and the issues that face you in your own parish and the broader communities where you live and work.

Questions, comments and other correspondence should be addressed to "Our Parish Council," care of the Courier-Journal, 35 Scio St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

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