

State Regents Hear Parents Stress Need for Assistance

Albany — For the first time in recent years the parents of nonpublic school students had a voice at the annual State Board of Regents legislative hearing.

A father of five nonpublic school students made it clear that parents of students in nonpublic schools are firmly committed to "continue our efforts to preserve diversity in education and, as needed, to seek reasonable governmental assistance."

Departing from his official role as educator, J. Alan Davitt, State Catholic school superintendent executive secretary, spoke as a parent.

Speaking on the recent Supreme Court decision, he said parents will continue to speak their minds in public, and work for legislative programs they believe in and have no fear of being "politically divisive along religious lines."

First he commended the parents of public school children for their activity and their strong parent organizations. It was because of the lack of similar statewide bodies in nonpublic education that he wanted to speak as a parent.

He made these points:

- He thanked the Regents for their support of nonpublic education in their May 28 statement of principles and spoke of the necessity of turning this principle (support for aid to nonpublic education) into reality.

- He reminded the Regents that the overwhelming majority of parents send their children to nonpublic religious oriented schools not in "flight from the public school but to find an added or a different educational dimension." Often, he noted, it was in fulfillment of an obligation in conscience that their children be reared in their faith.

- Noting the "harsh reality of education's cost," he said, "The needs of the schools are really our (parents) need for some financial help." Nonpublic school parents, he said, "are perhaps more aware than most. We have our tuitions; we pay our school taxes; college costs affect large numbers of us beyond simple tax support; and in this time of the urgent needs of the poor and minority groups we also are contributing to the maintenance of hard-pressed parish schools. In a certain sense the schools are not in any fiscal crisis, rather we the parents are."

- In conclusion, he stated support of "political rights of parents who send their children to church-related schools."

Bishop Reed Dies

Oklahoma City — (RNS) — Bishop Victor J. Reed of Oklahoma City - Tulsa, nationally known Roman Catholic ecumenical leader and critic of the war in Vietnam, died Sept. 8 of an apparent heart attack. He was 65.

The prelate, who was named bishop in 1958 of the diocese that includes all of Oklahoma, collapsed during a motion picture in a suburb of Oklahoma City. He was taken to Oklahoma

Courier-Journal

As a consequence of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision there are some opponents of any type of aid to nonpublic education who would have me be silent as 'politically divisive along religious lines.' By some strange reasoning they would disenfranchise me because my educational convictions are har-

monized with my religious beliefs."

"If we parents remain quietly in the rear section of the street car and not disrupt or disturb legislative disregard and even exploitation, we will be less than citizens and lesser men."

Khrushchev Helped 'Thaw' Soviet-Catholic Relations

Moscow — (RNS)—Although Nikita Khrushchev's tenure as head of the Soviet Union's government was marked by a twisting of the USSR constitutional guarantees of religious freedom to mean "freedom from religion," the late dictator was not always pictured as an all-out foe of the Churches.

In some instances, the "thaw" between the Roman Catholic Church and some of the Iron Curtain countries within the Soviet orbit has been attributed to the glib Khrushchev, who was perhaps surprised by the uproar caused when he began to send birthday greetings as well as couriers with extensive messages on common concerns to Pope John XXIII.

- In 1963, following conversations with Norman Cousins, the editor of the Saturday Review, who was serving as an emissary for Pope John, the Russian leader arranged for the freeing of Archbishop Joseph Slipyi, the long-jailed Ukrainian Catholic leader. The archbishop returned to Rome, was named a cardinal, and now heads the Ukrainian Rite throughout the Catholic world.

- Although Khrushchev had a hard time refuting the charge that his regime was anti-Jewish in outlook, Jews in the USSR never suffered in his years as they have under his hard-line successors, Brezhnev and Kosygin.

Cousins wrote in November 1964 of his meetings with Khrushchev on the Archbishop Slipyi issue. He said that in 1962 Khrushchev said he would like to improve relations with the Vatican—claiming he had a "profound" regard for Pope John—but feared that release of the Catholic prelate would have a bad effect. "The moment Slipyi is released," he said, "there would be big headlines saying the bishop was tortured by the Reds. This would not exactly help the cause of improved relations."

But, the editor said, when it was pointed out that Archbishop Slipyi had been imprisoned for some 15 years and "further punishment could serve no useful purpose," Khrushchev com-



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mented that "you may be right" and promised to study the issue.

Khrushchev's "ties" to Catholicism did cause him embarrassment. Little Albania, the tail on the Red China kite, delighted in assailing his "plots" with the Vatican against world communism, picking up such items as birthday greetings from Khrushchev to both Pope John and his successor, Pope Paul, plus letters which endorsed the pontiff's stands on peace. Albania derided his "association" with a religious body, saying he was "in rapprochement and union with the imperialists and the reactionaries" and "even with the Pope in the name of humanness."

Khrushchev frequently praised such encyclicals as Mater et Magistra and Pacem in Terris or papal calls for peace, touching only on those principles which suited his purpose. Yet, never before in the half-century of communism had so much been broadcast, or printed, in the Soviet Union about Catholicism, its leaders and its policies as occurred during the tenure of Khrushchev.

Meanwhile, last week Federico Alessandrini, the Vatican press officer, said that conditions of religious communities in the Soviet Union had "worsened" while Nikita Khrushchev was in power.

This was the first Vatican reference — even indirect — to the death of the former Soviet leader.

Writing in the Vatican City weekly, L'Osservatore della Domenica, Alessandrini remarked that "hundreds of churches reopened under Mr. Stalin" were "closed again" under Mr. Khrushchev.

"Not everyone remembers," said Alessandrini, "that under Mr. Khrushchev's rule, conditions of the religious communities in the USSR, beginning with the Orthodox Church, worsened."

Wednesday, September 22, 1971

Bible Scholar Dies

Jerusalem — (RNS)—French Dominican Father Roland de Vaux, Biblical scholar and archeologist, died here Sept. 10 at the age of 68.

Funeral services were held Sept. 13 at St. Stephen's church, attached to the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Francaise, which Father de Vaux had headed since 1945.

The French Dominican achieved fame for his part in the discovery and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the first of which were found in caves at Qumran in 1947.

From 1949 to 1958, he was a leader of a group of archeologists involved in excavating the caves. He also headed the so-called "Scrollerly," a unique international team of Biblical scholars at the Rockefeller Museum in the Jordanian sector of Jerusalem which edited the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Qumran Manuscripts are a collection of 100 Biblical manuscripts, mostly in Hebrew, and other literary fragments which

were found between 1947 and 1952 in caves in the Desert of Juda west of the Dead Sea. Until the discovery of these materials, the oldest known Hebrew manuscripts were from the 10th Century A.D.

Father de Vaux played a major role in arranging for the purchase of a portion of the Scrolls containing what is believed to be the earliest copy of the Ten Commandments in Hebrew. The portion was placed in the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem.

Binyamin Mazar, one of Israel's leading archaeologists and a professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, eulogized the Catholic priest:

"Roland de Vaux impressed me as a man with an extraordinary wide range of interests and knowledge, as was evident from the massive research he did in fields outside his immediate subject matter at the Ecole Biblique. He was a very objective man, articulate and clear-minded."

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