

The Hope in Diocesan Education

By **FATHER DANIEL BRENT**
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

"Back to school" carries vibrations of freshness and enthusiasm. It suggests another beginning, a new set of opportunities, a change from what has become somewhat monotonous and boring. Most of us were unwilling to admit it, but those were our secret feelings as students when school time came around again.

It's like that for the whole Catholic school system this fall. Last year was a difficult one. There was a series of adverse court decisions on a variety of non-public school aid issues. There was our failure to find an acceptable sharing plan to enable parishes to help one another. There was our inability to sustain the inner city school program at the level where it had been operating. There was the final flood disaster which plunged Elmira and Corning schools into a terribly serious crisis.

So a fresh year and a fresh start are welcome. We have reason to look forward to this year with optimism. In my report last spring to the school boards, I indicated that, aside from issues of funding and government aid, the Catholic schools of the diocese are doing well indeed. The enrollment drop has been significantly reduced. The curriculum with its growing emphasis on individualization of instruction is, hopefully, more exciting for children than it has

ever been. Catholic schools are gaining momentum in their conscious effort to emphasize their religious uniqueness. Academic results continue to be excellent, as reflected in the achievement barometers.

Most encouraging for the future of Catholic school education has been the evolution of new organizational and administrative patterns. The involvement of parents in school boards and parish educational planning has brought a fresh sense of purpose and a new set of talents for meeting the difficulties inherent in sponsorship of a religiously oriented school system. Last week I attended the meeting of the Chemung County Catholic School Board. Having successfully completed their first year of sponsoring a regional Catholic school system, they are now dealing with the school problems left by the flood. It has been beautiful to follow the cool, the energy and the resourcefulness of the priests, sisters and laymen coping with the school issues.

Most especially, I am enthusiastic about the bishop's plan for regional co-operation within the diocese. The potential in that for providing the availability of Catholic school education is enormous. The risk in parochial sponsorship of Catholic schools is that, when the costs get too great or the enrollments get too small to justify a school in one individual parish, the school closes

Schools Today

completely. This means that none of the children there will have Catholic school education nor will any of the parish monies be available for Catholic school education. In some instances, the problem can be met by consolidation plans. More promising, however, is planning that involves a number of parishes and schools to see how together they can provide Catholic school education with the resources they have. This larger base makes it possible to plan more reasonably in the light of other parish responsibilities, and reduces — virtually eliminates — the risk of precipitous school closings.

"Regionalism" will be the major topic for discussion and planning in this new school year. The concept looks good on paper. Elmira has demonstrated that it can work in practice. No wonder even administrators are looking forward with excitement to a new school year!

Black Catholics Hold National Convention

Cleveland (RNS) — The National Black Lay Catholic Caucus will establish a theological center and has begun to work for a joint convention of all black Catholic organizations, it was disclosed at the caucus' national convention here.

Joseph Dulin, a Detroit educator who is president of the black caucus, said priests and seminarians are already working to establish the theology center and a fund-raising program is underway.

Mr. Dulin was reelected to head the organization which drew 600 delegates to its convention at St. John College here. He said the NBLCC will continue to push for a black Catholic archbishop in Washington, D.C., and to remain concerned with such issues as prison reform, welfare reform, drug abuse, crime prevention, racism and politics.

He also noted that the black Catholic organization will move toward greater involvement in public school problems, black student unions, busing for "integrated quality education" and more black parent participation in education.

U.S. Catholic Group Aids Flood Fund

The National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee is helping Bishop Joseph L. Hogan's Southern Tier Flood Relief Fund. The bishop's fund was created to financially aid the people of Elmira and Corning who were affected by tropical storm Agnes. The national committee operates under the wing of the National Conference of Catholic Charities.

Father Joseph D'Aurizio, who heads Catholic Charities in Rochester, said in a letter to John Hayes, secretary to the committee. "I am most grateful that the Rochester diocese received such a large share . . . because Elmira and Corning suffered such tremendous losses. . . ."

The relief committee presented Bishop Hogan with a check for an undisclosed sum two weeks ago.

Corrier-Journal

Mr. Dulin, who remarked during the convention that he has faith in the Catholic Church but "no belief in its leadership," said he sees no change without confrontation.

"I see more black Catholics than I've ever seen in my life talk about becoming violent," he noted. "It's good to be militant, but don't become violent." He estimates there are about a million black Catholics in the U.S.

The NBLCC president observed that the caucus had to go "all the way to Africa" to bring in someone with the rank of archbishop to address the organization's convention.

That prelate, Archbishop Emmanuel E. Milingo of Lusaka, Zambia, said black American Catholics need "the freedom to express deep feelings of concern, of anger, even of condemnation of the Church."

"And in the Church meetings, if anything comes up regarding black Americans, I can take part because I know their cause and I believe in it so thoroughly," the archbishop added.

He said that in Africa 115 of the continent's 315 bishops are Africans.

He noted that Africans and black Americans are drawing closer together as they eliminate some misconceptions and try harder to understand each other.

Misconceptions he cited were the African acceptance of the English version of the American Negroes' peaceful acceptance of slavery and the African's fear that association with U.S. blacks would give them a label of violence.

In his homily at the convention Mass, Archbishop Milingo said that what the world hears about blacks is "violence, looting, shouting provocative slogans to whites, and the ruthless manners of the community."

"This litany of evils labeled on black men in the U.S.A. must be reviewed and replaced with another list of good achievements of blacks in the U.S.A."



Curia Officers

The Junior Curia, Legion of Mary, installed officers recently at a celebrated Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Shown with Father Thomas H. Wheeland, spiritual director, are (l-r) Frank Maslyn, vice president; Marianne Villa, who was secretary for six years; Mrs. Dorothy Taillie, new president, receiving the Legion Standard from Miss Geraldine Crowley, president for the past six years; Miss Kathy King, new secretary, and Mark Mance, treasurer.

A 'Half a Loaf'

(Continued from Page 1) possible for the federal government to pay more than 25 per cent of property taxes for up to three years.

Dr. Curran likened the situation of Chemung County's Catholic Schools to a theater. "The show can go on, but no one can attend," since the parents can't afford "to pay the bill of admission."

"The federal bill ignored our most pressing need," Curran continued. "So we must go to the state for help, which we can, now that it is constitutional, to get one-year emergency aid."

Both the House and the Senate responded affirmatively to a request from President Nixon to amend the Office of Emergency Preparedness Law to allow aid to non-public schools, including church institutions.

A House-Senate conference committee had said certain facts "compel" the special measure. It cited three reasons:

Non-profit private educational institutions are not provided disaster relief benefits com-

parable to those provided to public schools.

Private institutions have a "secular educational mission."

Students in private schools that have been damaged or destroyed will have to be cared for in public institutions if their buildings are not restored.

Where to Write

On the state aid measure, you are urged to write your local state representatives and the following:

Speaker Perry B. Duryea, Jr., State Capitol, Albany, N.Y., 12224

Assemblyman John E. Kingston, State Capitol, Albany, N.Y., 12224

Assemblyman Willis H. Stephens, State Capitol, Albany, N.Y., 12224

Senator James E. Powers, State Capitol, Albany, N.Y., 12224

Senator Warren M. Anderson, State Capitol, Albany, N.Y., 12224

Senator Earl W. Brydges, State Capitol, Albany, N.Y., 12224