

The Church as Teacher

The Christian vocation is a call to transform oneself and society.

The educational mission of the Church must encompass these twin purposes. Education is one of the most important ways in which the Church fulfills her commitment to the dignity of the person and the building of community. Community is central to the educational ministry: it is a necessary condition — it is a goal ardently desired. Community is such a critical need of life today largely because the "natural" communities of the past have been weakened by many influences — pressures on the family, urbanization, racial and ethnic tensions, war and exploitation. Catholic schools must respond to these challenges by developing in their students a commitment to community — as well as the social skills and virtues necessary for its achievement.

Historically, the educational mission of the Church has been, and continues to be, an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: The message revealed by God (Didache); fellowship in the life of the Spirit (Koinonia); and service to the Christian community and the entire human community (Diakonia). Each individual educational program under Church sponsorship must make its special contribution, in its own way, to the realization of this threefold purpose of the one educational mission of the Church. Of the educational instruments available to the Catholic community, Catholic schools afford a splendid opportunity of achieving this threefold purpose of education among children and young people.

We are aware of the problems which now face the Catholic school system in the United States. We are convinced that where resources are available to provide Catholic schools, they should exist. We are

also convinced that the Church must become more aware and responsive to the spiritual needs of all its people. Opportunities to learn and grow and mature in our faith must not be available for only a few. These convictions are not contradictory as some might suppose — rather, they are complementary. The implications of these convictions have led us to regionalism — a channel which is expected to promote a climate of cooperation, mutual concern and a realistic use of our available resources.

Many have asked me, "Will Catholic Schools continue to exist in the Rochester Diocese?" My answer to them is, "I fully expect that there will be Catholic schools in our Diocese. I cannot assure you, nor do I find it desirable to guarantee, how many will continue nor where they will be located. This depends in large measure on the willingness of parents, teachers, religious women and clergy to work together towards regional education plans which will provide opportunities which deserve to be labeled a quality product, available to as many as possible to hear the Word of God and live the Christian message."

Christian education is intended to "make men's faith become living, conscious, active through the Light of instruction." The Catholic school affords a special opportunity to achieve this.

It provides regular instruction in the faith.

It makes this instruction an integral part of the student's total learning experience.

Of all the educational forms in the Church, the Catholic school has the opportunity and the obligation to be —

- Unique — because of its Christian purpose;
- Contemporary — because it enables the student to reach out and relate to the multiple problems facing individuals and society;
- Apostolic — because it encourages students to acquire greater commitment

and capability to serve others.

This presupposes that all involved in Catholic schools — parents, pastors, teachers, and students — themselves earnestly desire to make the school a community of faith which is indeed "living, conscious, and active."

One of the most important elements in creating this community of faith is the teacher.

The teacher gives personality to the school.

The teacher imparts more than she teaches, for what we are speaks more loudly than what we say.

For this reason, the Year of Renewal should have special significance for the teacher. For personal renewal must be antecedent to renewal of instruction. Teachers should update their own understanding of what the Church is, and of what it means to be a dispenser of the truths of our faith. Their mission is a special one — a serious one — a challenging one. No one can impart what he does not possess.

Workshops and teacher training programs are meant to sharpen teaching techniques. But it is of even greater importance that a teacher deepen his spiritual life which radiates to his students even more strongly than his professional expertise. Manner will be remembered long after matter may have been forgotten.

A special measure of gratitude is due to the dedicated teachers, priests, religious men and women, laity who have expressed their Christian vocation through the apostolate of the Catholic community.

I join my prayers and offer my blessing that God will bestow upon all who are engaged in the educational Mission of the Church the gifts of His Spirit that they may have wisdom to be wise, understanding to perceive, knowledge to know, as well as fortitude to carry them through this most arduous, and yet most valuable, apostolate in the Church.

The Slot Man

It was a coincidence that, just when the Courier was about to do a centerfold on older citizens, John Dash, our special projects editor, and I should run into Henry Clune at a local bar.



For those who may not know, Clune is an octogenarian whose new book, "The Rochester I Know" is about to hit the book-stalls. He says the book is not "local history" but rather, "a personal memo."

But it is not the purpose here to talk about the book (Henry, incidentally, says that he may write a novel now). Instead, I want to point out that Henry is proof that just because a person has a lot of years behind him does not somehow make him an oddity.

Old Folks Not Odd Folks

By Carmen Viglucci

I don't think most of us realize that we are prejudiced when it comes to older people. When a young guy has a unique idea, he is innovative; when an old guy does, he is eccentric.

We may be polite to old-timers but many times we simply avoid socializing with them. Why? Because we are prejudiced.

Our centerfold copy, provided by Religious News Service, reveals that surveys have shown that a majority of older people see themselves as happy and satisfied with their lives. Yet, society seems intent on painting them in stereotype shades of depressed, lonely, wrinkled, pitiable, etc.

As George Gershwin observed, "It ain't necessarily so."

True, not many men or women in their 80s are looking forward to writing a novel — but neither are many in their 30s or 40s. Henry Clune, like many others, is a peripatetic example that our so-called senior citizens deserve far more than just a passing, sympathetic glance or a token gesture of respect. They deserve to be brought into the mainstream of life; anything less is not only a blow at justice but also self-depriving.

Courier-Journal writers have run into a spate of bad luck. Our Ithaca correspondent, Joy Chalone suffered multiple fractures in an automobile accident near Elmira. She'll probably be in traction until Christmas and is presently in St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira. Could use some cheering up.

Editorial

Questionnaire Ignores Abortion

The Courier-Journal does not endorse particular candidates for political office, nor does it even imply endorsement. So we are not able to mention by name a candidate for state office despite the fact he has made an excellent point.

The League of Women Voters has sent a questionnaire to local candidates for state office with five questions: What level of government should be responsible for raising revenues for funding education? Why?; If the Federal Revenue Sharing bill passes (or if it has already passed) how would you allocate the State's share?; What role do you think the state should play in financing

solid waste management?; In addition to the UDC, what are other methods for providing low and moderate cost housing?; Would you favor legislation that would make it unlawful for landlords to use retaliatory eviction of tenants who report code violations?

The candidate in question sent the survey back to the league, pointing out that it doesn't even bother to ask candidates for their position on the two most controversial issues that faced the State Legislature this year — abortion and no fault.

He also said that there are other, more pressing, problems to be considered,

such as high cost of government, environmental protection, welfare reform, crime and law enforcement, narcotics, aid to nonpublic schools, busing, prison reform.

We agree with the candidate and join him in wondering why a respected, non-partisan organization such as the League of Women Voters, particularly with its female makeup, is ignoring abortion, surely one of the most controversial issues of this campaign.

For this and the other reasons cited by the candidate, we join him in criticizing this questionnaire and hope that it might be expanded.