

Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

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Do you feel powerless? How about as a Catholic parent who wants his children in a Catholic school, despite the strain on finances?

Father Virgil C. Blum, S.J., in his book *Catholic Parents: Political Eunuchs*, makes a strong case that Catholic parents are powerless when it comes to questions of aid to education.

And Father Blum, a professor of political science at Marquette University, puts the blame on Catholic parents.

"Because Catholic parents have failed to organize an interest group, the 'other side' is unopposed in the political arena. Its legal writings are voluminous, always cited by lawyers and frequently relied on by the courts," he writes.

As a result, new education laws are not the result of pressure from diverse, conflicting interest groups; they are the result exclusively of the pressure of groups that oppose Catholic education. Lawmakers cannot resist their powerful pressures when unopposed by Catholic school parents. It is unreasonable — naive, in fact — to ask them to do so.

Not only haven't Catholic parents gathered themselves in interest groups to represent their views in the legislation halls and courts, but they have allowed the opposition to define the controversy in terms of separation of church and state.

"What America needs," Father Blum believes, "is parent action, parent power. This requires parent organization. Without organization, Catholic parents are non-parents — parents without

Chavez Wins Court Verdict

Sacramento (RNS) — The right of Cesar Chavez and his United Farm Workers Union to use all legal means, including picketing and boycotting of products, to organize lettuce workers in the Salinas Valley was upheld here by the California Supreme Court.

In a 6-to-1 decision, the court struck down lower court injunctions against the UFWU and denied growers the exclusive right to determine what union would represent workers in their fields.

The ruling was seen as a major victory for Chavez, whose campaigns on behalf of farm laborers are supported by numerous Roman Catholic bishops, Protestant Churches and Jewish agencies.

The case grew out of efforts by growers to halt strikes, picketing and demonstrations by the UFWU against farmers who, in 1970, signed contracts covering field workers with the Teamsters Union.

While not striking down the existing contracts with the Teamsters, the California Supreme Court said the farmers had granted exclusive bargaining status to a union which obviously did not represent the workers. The growers were accused of the "ultimate form of favoritism."

In September 1970, a superior court in Monterey County issued injunctions against the Chavez organization, ordering it to halt organizing efforts because of the grower-Teamster contracts. It said UFWU activity violated a jurisdictional strike act. A boycott of lettuce that had been picked under the grower-Teamster arrangement was also ordered halted.

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voice or influence in education politics.

Organizing takes money. Father Blum says financing would be difficult, but not impossible. He points out that in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 95 percent of the Catholic school parents contributed 20 cents per child for the support of Citizens for Educational Freedom activities when the contribution was added to their school book or tuition bill.

Father Blum proposes that parents of children in church-related schools be asked to contribute 50 cents a year per private school child. That the contribution be added to the book or tuition bill, with "scratch rights" for parents who are opposed for ideological or other reasons. And that funds be sent to a national office and be allocated equitably for activities at the state and national levels.

Paper Error: Readers Oppose Change

Toronto, Ont. (RNS) — Blushing a bit on its editorial page, the Catholic Register has frankly admitted it had been wrong to run a poll of readers' opinions on changes in the traditional wording of the "Our Father."

In its letters to the editor column, it carried a letter from Bishop G. Emmet Carter of London, Ont., president of the National Liturgical Commission, under this heading — "In Which We Are Pole-Axed Over That 'Our Father' Poll."

Bishop Carter said that on his return from Rome he was surprised to find that the Register had conducted the poll, which showed overwhelming opposition to any change in the Lord's Prayer.

"Alleluia!" wrote the bishop. "The thing that puzzles me is who wanted it in the first place? The Register writes: 'A new version of the Our Father was suggested recently by the International Consultation on English Texts. This is totally inaccurate and gravely misleading.'"

Bishop Carter said. "The interesting thing is that, to my knowledge as president of the liturgical commission, not a single bishop has requested or even seriously considered this change."

"The bishops of Canada will, no doubt, be gratified to have such massive support for their non-decision not to even consider a change that nobody wants."

The last paragraph on the page

Ohio School Tax Credit Loses in Federal Court

Columbus, Ohio (RNS) — The Ohio Catholic Conference will appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court a 3-0 decision by a federal District Court panel here which declared unconstitutional an Ohio law providing tax-credits to parents of non-public school students.

The decision, handed down by the three-judge panel Dec. 29, was greeted by Catholic opposition led by Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardini of Cincinnati. He said the decision deprives non-public school parents of "benefits to which they are entitled."

The 35-page decision struck down the law which allowed parents of non-public elementary or secondary schools to take a \$90 income tax credit through a formula based on income, real property and sales taxes. At the

is an editor's note from Robert G. Vezina. It reads:

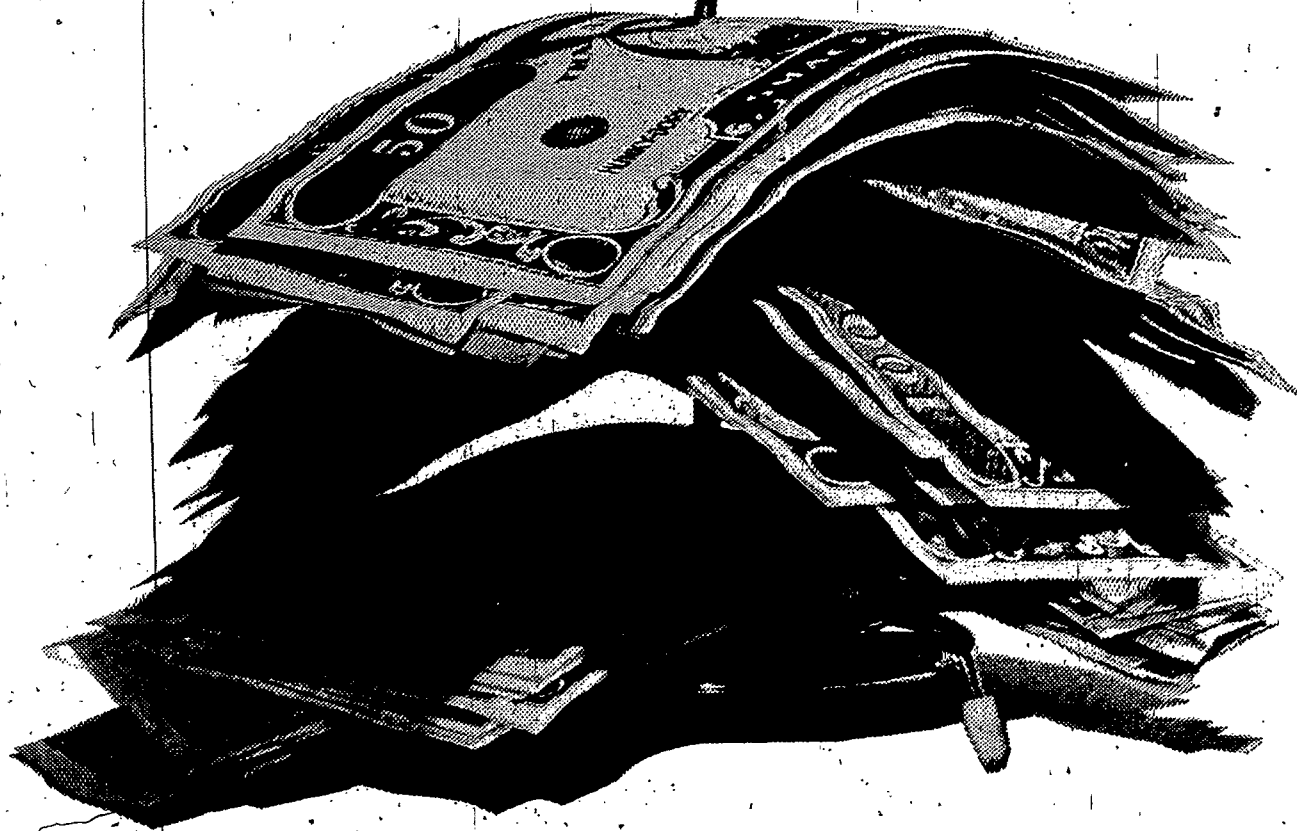
"Well, we did it the hard way, but at this joyous Christmas season, let us all rest assured that no changes in the Our Father are in the wind for the Church in Canada."

same time, the court indicated that tax credit for a "negligible" percentage of public school parents incurring special costs would be constitutional.

David Young, attorney for the Ohio Catholic Conference, told Religious News Service that the Ohio Catholic Conference, in addition to appealing the lower federal court ruling, will seek an injunction allowing the law to remain in effect until the Supreme Court rules on its constitutionality.

He said the Ohio federal panel "completely ignored" a recent decision by a federal panel in New York State which did not rule against the constitutionality of tax credits.

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