

# Catholic Schools Meet Challenges

By Father Daniel Brent  
Diocesan Superintendent of Schools

In its recent annual report, the United States Catholic Conference reported that Catholic school enrollment statistics for the 1974-75 school year exhibited a stabilizing trend. The conference attributed this to an increase in the attractiveness of Catholic schools to parents. This included improvements in the areas of teacher qualifications, class size, curriculum religious education, parental involvement in the policy process, and public communications. Most especially, the Conference believes that the new appeal of Catholic schools is arising from their responsiveness to the uniquely religious tasks outlined for them by the 1972 Bishops' Pastoral, "To Teach as Jesus Did."

Last year in the Rochester Diocese, the enrollment loss was 5.53 per cent — the second lowest figure since 1966. The new school year will see some increase in that number because of the closing of the CIGP schools in Rochester. However, the diocese shares the optimism of the USCC and for the same reasons: Catholic schools are continuing to invest in the academic and religious quality of their programs.

The impact of the closing of the four Catholic schools in the inner city of Rochester will be considerably softened by the willingness of other parishes to enroll those students. Of the 750 children that attended those schools last year, 325 are enrolled

in other Catholic schools this year. Particularly where minority cultures are involved, this will be a mutually enriching experience for the inner city students and for those already enrolled in the receiving schools. This has been true of the Urban-Suburban Plan students from inner city who have been attending other public and Catholic schools for several

years. They find it valuable, and the schools find them important contributors to intercultural understanding.

The new school year will bring improved courses in science, mathematics, religion and junior high social studies. Efforts will continue to improve the styles of teaching-learning. That effort is to incorporate the best of individualized learning approaches with care that time is not wasted nor skills neglected. This year will also see extensive activity in the schools to celebrate the national bicentennial. Much of this activity will center in reflections on the heroes of these 200 years with appreciation for our heritage and the role of the individual in building it.

The Catholic elementary schools will be doing evaluations for themselves during this year. This will involve an extensive review of their instructional program, their teaching resources and their relationships with students, parents, parish and staff. In addition, special efforts will be made to assist parishes, school boards and education committees to plan for the future of their schools.

The recent first meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council assigned a high priority to

promoting the various religious education efforts of parishes. The Bishops' Pastoral, "To Teach as Jesus Did," indicated that Catholic schools are among the most effective ways of sharing faith with young people. The beginning of a new school year is

an occasion for congratulations to parishes and Catholic high schools for the contribution the schools make to the life of the Church. It is also a time for renewed commitment to sustaining the availability of this kind of education.



Reverend Daniel Brent

## The 1975-76 High School Scene

By JOAN M. SMITH  
AQUINAS

Academic variety, curricular innovations and increased enrollment are the key words over at Aquinas Institute. Going into the 1975-76 school year the school will welcome 210 freshmen — a 21 per cent increase.

The school's subject courses will include a new senior theology program. Basically it will consist of a half-year marriage course (required of all seniors), and then a half-year of one of the offered electives; apologetics, morality, social ethics, Church history, and community services which Vice Principal Father Dennis Andrews enthusiastically explained as "the really new big addition."

The service program will offer the students a way of living their Christian teaching by involving them in the experiences of tutoring, CCD teaching, and social services.

To provide more variety in daily schedules, and to allow more interesting subject electives Aquinas has changed to a seven-day rotating schedule.

Aquinas alumni have always been a motivating force behind the school's existence, and this year is no exception. Plans are in the making for an Alumni "Homecoming" weekend Oct. 25-26.

With programs geared to spice the educational interest of its students, a well-rounded sports program, and a year of interesting activities, Aquinas is looking forward to a very successful future.

BISHOP KEARNEY

Bishop Kearney High School has a full year ahead of it in more ways than one. The incoming freshman class numbers 520, which brings the school's total enrollment to 1900. Also, there will be 12 new faculty members.

Brother William Stoldt, school principal, takes it all in stride as he prepares for the 1975-76 school year by arranging space for an added classroom, "just to sit the students."

BK is in its 11th year of operation, and though the student body is large it is an active one. Plans have already been made for the 5th and 10th year graduating classes to hold a reunion in April.

Photography has been added to the curriculum which offers 134 subjects to the students, and physical education electives which range from bowling to folk dancing are offered to the seniors.

The phys-ed classes will be held in a completely refurbished gym. During the Summer new lights were installed, walls painted, and floors repaired.

So, as that opening day of school draws near Bishop Kearney High School is ready to meet the challenges of the new year.

CARDINAL MOONEY

According to Brother Aubert Harrigan, principal of Cardinal Mooney, the emphasis is on operating a good school program. This has meant a busy Summer for the administration.

To insure a smooth opening school day on Sept. 3, school officials have been intent on completing all tasks; finishing scheduling, hiring teachers, coordinating staff.

There will be 400 freshmen entering Mooney this year, and along with them will be Brother Thomas Mulryan who will take over the duties of public relations officer. He replaces Brother John Larrere who has been reassigned after a seven-year tour of duty at the Maiden Lane school.

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