



RIGHT OFF THE TOP, MRS. DELANO—ARE YOU SURE YOU BOTH WANT COUNSELING?

Editorial

School Vigilance

Now that the school transportation problem seems to be settled amicably for all concerned it behooves all concerned to remain vigilant lest a recurrence take place next year.

Certainly the diocesan Education Department deserves plaudits for its protests against proposed cuts, as do school officials, parents and students. They proved that standing up for principle is still effective and respected.

The \$448,000 being restored to provide for the transportation of city pupils to private schools outside the city means that the state will reimburse 90 per cent of it next year. All concerned must assure that the reimbursement is applied to continuing the transportation, lest this year's unhappy sequence of events be repeated.

Christian?

In a recent homily, a pastor passed along the words of a bumper strip which he felt was food for thought. It said, "If you were arrested for being a Christian would they have enough evidence to convict you?"

We agree that it is worth thinking about.

\$100,000 a Day!

How much is \$85.3 billion? The figure boggles the mind but that's how much the United States paid for defense for just one year — 1975.

To put this in perspective, consider the following facts. Jesus Christ was born 1977 years ago; that's about 721,605 days ago, give or take a few extra leap year days. If we spent \$100,000 a day every day since Christ was born it would still not equal \$85 billion. Figure it out.

No question we must maintain a battle-ready posture in this divided world but at the same time we also must be alert to overspending on such things when so much of the world is hungry.

One item that is questionable is the B-1 bomber. One of these planes costs \$86 million and the government is considering manufacturing 244 of them at a total cost of \$20.6 billion. That would come out to nearly \$30,000 a day for every day since Christ was born. We must ask in this day of intercontinental missiles if any bomber is worth that much.

And in the name of humanity we must consider the good that could be wrought if we spent \$100,000 every day to help mankind. Or even if we spent only \$30,000 a day.

Opinion

Pastors Blast 'Irresponsible' Local Press

Editor,

The unfortunate situation which arose as a result of the recent action of our County Legislature, its Public Works Committee and its Task Force, on the subject of Pure Waters' rates, needs a public explanation from the pastors of city churches. This is particularly true because of the inaccurate reporting of said action in our daily press. On Sunday, June 5, parishioners (city homeowners) were asked to sign a petition supporting the proposal of the city pastors requesting a change in County Law 266 (levy of a service charge) to exempt city churches from the assessed value portion of the present rate structure. An assurance was given that this specific exemption could mean little, if any addition to the homeowners' charges. (About \$260,000 is involved, out of a total Pure Waters' budget of over 20 million - less that 2%!). Over 6,000 petitions were gathered in support of this proposal and presented to the County Legislature at its meeting on June 7. Not one mention was made of this action in any of the reporting articles in either daily newspaper.

Instead much space was devoted to the reporting of the Task Force proposal on restructuring the rates via a new formula, with overt implications that this was being done to correct the inequities on churches in the present formula. The Task Force proposal, as correctly pointed out, would raise homeowners' charges substantially. City pastors were not backing this proposal and the petitions were not directed in favor of this proposal. The original church proposal was buried somewhere in the Public Works Committee meeting, or somewhere on the way to the full Legislature meeting. Whatever - "a funny thing happened on the way" - and city pastors and city churches were made to look foolish, both by the irresponsible action of our elected representatives and the irresponsible journalism of our daily press.

Almost to a man the County Legislature admits that severe inequities exist in the present formula, based largely on assessed valuation as well as actual usage of water. Only ineffective action has been taken to alleviate these inequities - an admittedly weak effort to pass the buck to the State Legislature. We are still looking to the County Legislature to face up to its proper responsibility and to make the required changes to bring about equity and fairness - especially to city churches.

Meanwhile we are grateful for the support of our parishioners and those city homeowners who signed the petition.

Rev. John P. Norris
Pastor, Blessed Sacrament Church

Rev. Frederick Eismann
Pastor, Holy Family Church

Rev. Bernard F. Dollen
Pastor, St. Andrew's Church

On Schools And Taxes

Editor:

Eric Steele attacked the use of public money for busing students to Catholic schools. He wrote the following in the Courier-Journal of 6-1-77: "They (Catholics) should know that the New York State taxpayer... does not pay a mere 10 per cent of the cost of private and parochial school busing. He pays all of it. Some of these taxpayers are Catholic. Most are not."

Mr. Steele was clearly basing his statement on the dangerous principle that the "power to tax is the power to destroy, and the power to tax absolutely is the power to destroy absolutely." Such a view would encourage the enemies of Catholic schools to squeeze those schools out of existence. Deny busing to those schools and fewer and fewer students can attend them.

That money alone should determine the worth of Catholic education is as unrealistic as it is wrong. The mother of seven children wrote her disapproval of money as the ultimate criterion of any educational system. In the Democrat and Chronicle of 10-20-76 she voiced the following: "Parents are being stripped of all but the most basic prerogatives; i.e., to pay bills and soaring taxes so the state may educate their kids into money-making machines... I feel that until basic thinking about power and wealth is tried, our education and teachers... are bound to fashion money machines, not genuine, humane humans."

Mr. Steele's letter said, "The nation is committed to the education of all children. That is why the public schools were founded. Fortunately, none are forced to attend. All are free to enjoy whatever 'diversity of education' may suit their fancy."

Does not Mr. Steele imply that the nation is committed to the education of all except Catholic children? How can Catholic children be welcome in the present public schools if their religious training may not by law take place in them?

Mr. Steele also used an analogy to support his claim that taxes should not pay for busing to Catholic schools. A friend, he said, would like to have a Cadillac, but he cannot afford one. He wants others to supply the cash to satisfy his desire.

In arguing from analogy, one must show that the two cases of illustrations have properties in common. What essential properties does busing to Catholic schools have in common with a man's egoism to own a Cadillac? A Cadillac is a luxury; a Catholic education is a necessity. A luxury automobile has only temporal advantages; a Catholic education, on the contrary, assures eternal benefits.

Those benefits were stressed by the father of a child in a letter to the Democrat and Chronicle of 6-7-77: "...my son was removed from the Rochester public school system... because of the very low teaching standards in the public system. We had no choice but to put my son in a parochial school."

Mr. Steele knows only the cost of a Catholic education and nothing of its value.

John J.A. Overlander
201 Wimbledon Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14617

Agency OB Action Raises Questions

Editor:

The following letter was sent to Dr. Robert F. Whalen, the State Commissioner of Health:

Dear Dr. Whalen:

My name is Father Leary. I am a Catholic priest, pastor of St. Mary's parish in Elmira, which comprises the area south of the Chemung River to the Pennsylvania border. I have upwards of 6,000 parishioners.

On Monday, June 6, the subarea council of the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency voted 19 to 8 to retain the obstetrical unit at St. Joseph's Hospital.

On Monday, June 13, the parent group, the regional Hospital Council, met at Canandaigua, with little publicity, and overturned the subarea recommendation. They permitted themselves to be influenced by a single representative on the Board, who, I understand, cited an anonymous person on the Elmira Star Gazette who is supposed to have claimed that there is little Elmira support for the continuance of maternity services at St. Joseph's.

We would challenge that assertion. We are waiting for the Star Gazette to deny that any of the paper's representatives made such an unfounded statement. Instead we would point to the 200 and more people from Elmira who journeyed to Gang Mills of all places for a public hearing at the ungodly hour of 6:30 p.m. These protesters, unorganized and unrehearsed, were allowed to speak at a public forum, and their protests were their own feelings and personal experiences, prompting their endorsement of St. Joseph's.

I would also point to an action by the Chemung County Legislature. This body resolved by a vote of 12 to 1 to support the continuance of St. Joseph's obstetrical unit. These people represent their constituents, are elected by them, and have their ear to the ground.

The only reason alleged for the action under discussion was a saving of money for the state. No analysis of cost factors has ever been presented, no projection of the amount of money to be returned to the treasury has ever been guaranteed. When specific figures were sought, none were available. In fact one physician made an interesting observation. He said that the babies' births represent peaks and valleys at a hospital. Some days 20 might be recorded and on the next day, none. He added that the Arnot, if it is to offer the only maternity service in the county, is not equipped to give adequate service at peak times. Some mothers at the forum substantiated his observation from their own personal experience. Are the Arnot facilities then to be enlarged while St. Joseph's is closed?

We, and that we includes thousands, are opposed to the closing of the obstetrical unit at St. Joseph's because: 1. It is a restraint of liberty in that it deprives people of freedom of choice. It means the creation of a monolith with all the attendant

abuses: the end of a healthy competition, the curbing of incentive, the danger of dictatorial local management, and the consolidation of power in the hands of a few on the state level. 2. It means the restriction of religious freedom. Many of our women do not want to have their babies in a hospital where abortions are performed, and where the obstetrician is also an abortionist. 3. We object to the dictatorial power that these above mentioned groups are exercising. Their edicts, unsubstantiated, are reminiscent of the imperial decrees of the Caesars. They show not concern for the physical welfare or wish of the people. They seem not at all aware of their responsibility to those whom they represent. Their personal feelings and prejudices become their dictates.

I would like to ask you a few questions that have been put to me: 1. Who are the members of these boards? How did they get their positions? 2. Why did the presiding officer of the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, at the Canandaigua meeting, allow, not order, the tape recorder to be turned off without a chair ruling? 3. Are the tapes of the subarea meeting on June 6 available? Have you heard them? 4. If the maternity service at St. Joseph's is terminated, what service at the hospital is to go next? Is there a master plan to dismember the whole facility? 5. If savings to the state must be accomplished by the curtailment of hospital services, why must obstetrics, a relatively inexpensive department, be the prime

I beg you, doctor, to consider this whole matter seriously, and to rectify a gross injustice that might be perpetrated on St. Joseph's Hospital and the whole community. If you are reluctant to supersede some recommendations, you have a precedent in these very boards we are discussing. The subarea group, close to the local situation and in a position to make a sane and intelligent recommendation, has had its advocacy set aside by the HSA.

May principle and courage instead of expediency influence your decision.

Father John J. Leary
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Letters intended for publication must be addressed to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.