

# Week, Jan. 29-Feb. 5

## Schools:

### Heritage and Purpose

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from a protective preserving of the faith to one of competition with other institutions of education. For a period, we spent time proving that our schools had all of the trimmings and assets of other school systems.

Then came the period of the sixties when we were challenged from within. The question of whether Catholic schools had served their purpose was raised in several circles. Fortunately, the Bishops and Catholic educational leaders also asked the question, but went beyond to ask, "What is the purpose of Catholic education?" While the critics were digging the grave, the leaders were revitalizing the ministry of Catholic education to be truly unique to the needs of the times and to fulfill the threefold mission of Message, Community and Service.

For more than ten years, the Catholic schools have been experiencing a period of renewal and redirection. We believe that Catholic schools will continue to exist and to be strengthened only to the degree that they are able to respond to the challenges given to them by the Bishops of our country and by the Sacred Congregation on Catholic Education. We believe that the purpose of Catholic School Education is to provide the experience of learning the truths of the faith and the experience of participating in the practice of those beliefs through the experience of community sharing and offering service to others.

The next ten years of Catholic school education will be a period of coming alive for this ministry. Renewed and revitalized, the Catholic schools will become channels for developing the leadership for our Church and our country.

This will only be possible if we continue to have the courage and vision of pioneers who overcame obstacles during the days of infancy for our school system — both in our country and in our diocese!

## One Grows



Checking out a book in Mother of Sorrow's school library is Doug Kromer.



At St. John the Evangelist in Greece, a volunteer parent, Mrs. Judith Baker assists children with perception skill development.

## Curriculum Update

Parents, as well as educators, have been quick to recognize the significance of the child's early years. Indications of this are manifested in the rising number of prekindergarten programs in the nation and in our own diocese.

A major responsibility of the prekindergarten program is to help each child build a positive self-image and gain a sense of mastery over his environment. It helps the child develop his potential in all areas of growth — intellectual — social — emotional — and physical. The prekindergarten also helps us to know each child — his potential, his limitations, and his learning style. At present the diocese is evaluating prekindergarten programs and the use of a nationally validated curriculum, COPE (cognitively orientated prekindergarten experience) in a number of schools throughout the diocese. This is part of a design in developing diocesan prekindergarten guidelines for all prekindergarten programs.

Another aspect of early childhood education is the growing stress on prekindergarten screening programs. Many educators stress the use of these screening programs because of their importance in determining school placement. Professionals maintain that as each child is ready for school at different levels, the "school readiness" tests give the educational facility an insight into the perceptual and behavioral stage of each child. Other important objectives of the pre-testing or screening are the early detection of learning disabilities, and the screening of youngsters for their strong and weak points so that the school can gear education programs to meet the youngsters individual needs. In the diocese, personnel have been developing prekindergarten testing programs for implementation in Spring 1978. Through this prekindergarten guidance and testing not only do child and school become acquainted long before that traumatic first day of school, but the learning facility is given early direction in the education of that child.

In addition to this, all kindergarten programs were provided with a new Interdiocesan Curriculum guideline in the Fall. This curriculum was developed by teachers and administrators in the upstate dioceses of Albany, Ogdensburg, Syracuse, Buffalo and Rochester. At present it is being sold nationally and is a fine contribution to Catholic Education.

This past Fall, Science and Social Studies guidelines were updated to provide more emphasis on environmental education in the area of Science and increased motivation for participation in civic affairs through improved use of the Social Studies. In addition to this, an Education to Justice curriculum is being piloted in a limited number of schools. It is designed to work with parents and students in reviewing and renewing an understanding of Catholic Social principles in relationship to today's society. The content is rooted in scripture and the social documents of the Church.

In-service training has been provided in all areas where curriculum changes have taken place. Long range plans for curriculum development include the creation of Music, Art and Early Childhood guidelines.

## Achievement Testing Program

The purpose of all testing is to provide accurate and reliable information on the individual or group tested. This then, is the reason for the annual diocesan participation in a standardized testing program. Every September the Stanford Achievement Test batteries appropriate to their grade level are administered to all diocesan elementary pupils in grades 1-8. The information gained from these tests furnishes important data on the characteristics of our diocesan elementary school system, on individual local schools and on each student within a local school. When used effectively the information provides a necessary basis for impartial evaluation of the educational program, indicates those areas of the curriculum needing

improvement, gives direction to the individualization and improvement of the teaching — learning process, assists in the identification of students with special educational needs and aids in the identification of gifted and talented students. Used in this way the data insures that educational programs will be kept closely attuned to the changing needs of the students and schools.

The diocesan placement of the elementary schools indicates that we can continue to be justly proud of the achievements of our students and teachers. The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Rochester are truly places "where everyone grows."

| GRADE | NATIONAL TOTAL BATTERY |                 | DIOCESAN TOTAL BATTERY |                 |
|-------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
|       | STANINE                | GRADE PLACEMENT | STANINE                | GRADE PLACEMENT |
| 2     | 6                      | 2.2             | 7                      | 2.7             |
| 3     | 6                      | 3.2             | 8                      | 3.6             |
| 4     | 6                      | 4.2             | 7                      | 4.5             |
| 5     | 5                      | 5.2             | 7                      | 5.8             |
| 6     | 5                      | 6.2             | 7                      | 7.3             |
| 7     | 6                      | 7.2             | 7                      | 8.1             |
| 8     | 5                      | 8.2             | 8                      | 9.4             |

Diocesan Stanine and Grade Placements as compared with National Stanine and Grade Placements for the SAT's administered in the first month of the academic year, 1977.