

A Shared Vision Discerns The Success of Education

By Father Richard C. Kinsky
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I am sure that the publication of the annual "Back to School" issue of the Courier, Journal brings shudders of disbelief to just about everyone. "Where did the summer go, anyway?" will be a question that is uppermost at this time in the minds of both parents and students. And it will just as surely come across the minds of principals and teachers. All the books we were going to read, the workshops to attend, subject units to prepare, somehow we did not accomplish all these things. Yet, the summer break is valuable because it is rest and relaxation we are seeking. It's a priceless opportunity to slow down the timetable of our lives and get to know ourselves and our families better through hobbies, vacations and shared activities.

In a few short weeks all the schools in our cities and towns will be gearing up for the 1980-81 school year. It gives us a chance to take stock of our schools, to think of matters that are vital to their continuance. The American public has always had this perennial concern for its schools. Last June's Time magazine published an entire issue on the topic: "Help! Teacher Can't Teach!" and the shock waves of statements, made in the publication will be felt a long time across the land. As Catholics who send their children to parochial schools we simply cannot go

that care are effective schools. A school having an active PTA, an involved faculty, etc., is a school in which students achieve better. Lawrence Cremin of Columbia Teachers College observes: "A number of studies indicate that certain kinds of schools are unusually effective. Whether the students are rich kids, poor kids, blacks, Hispanics or whites, these schools look very much alike on some criteria. The principal leads, his teachers. The teachers become committed to teaching the basic skills. Expectations become high. Time is spent on classroom

tasks, and a happy order pervades the school. Rules are widely known and quickly enforced. Parents are brought into the act and are supportive. In such schools, black kids learn, white kids learn, green kids learn." (Time, June 16, 1980, p. 63)

When I first read that observation I said to myself that it could be said of all of our Catholic schools. These things are already occurring in our diocesan schools. There has always been something unique and distinct about Catholic education. Parents choose a Catholic school for their children because they

share the same vision, values and interests as other parents and teachers. We start from a theology in which there is a meaning of God and man, Christ and the Church and the process of education. This shared vision or common purpose of the Catholic school must pass the test of being distinct from and more attractive than the vision or purpose offered by the alternative opportunity. It is the religious setting of the schools which does make the difference. The potential users of our schools, our parents, continue to entrust their children to us because they recognize these values in the

schools; indeed, they play a part in maintaining such values.

St. Paul wrote in I Corinthians, c. 13, v. 13 "there are in the end three things that last, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love." Your Catholic schools continue to be centers of gospel faith, sustained by a vision of hope, and places where love and caring are practiced.

Parents, students, teachers and principals, welcome back to the Diocese of Rochester schools in this school year 1980-81.

on being unconcerned about what is going on (or not) in all the schools of our cities and towns.

One of the interesting conclusions that came out of the article was that there is strong evidence that schools

DeSales Festival

DeSales — Dates for the DeSales Summer Festival, sponsored by the Parents Club, are Sat., Aug. 23, 2-10 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 24, 7-7 p.m. Sleepy the Clown will perform Saturday, 3-6 p.m., and a magic show will be presented Sunday at 2 p.m. Various food booths as well as pony rides and moonwalks will be a part of the scene. According to Frank Delamere, director of Promotion and Development, in case of rain the event will be moved inside the school gym.

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