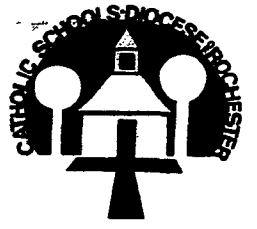




# EXPRESSLY ELEMENTARY



## Rodeo on Bikes

Deputy Jim Beer from the Monroe County Sheriff's Department recently conducted a Home-School Association sponsored bike rodeo at Guardian Angels School in Henrietta. The bikes were inspected for proper safety features and the children had to demonstrate their ability to handle a bike by riding it through a number of maneuvers.

## Diocesan Education Board Reports on Second Year

The Board of Education commenced its second full year of operation with its Sept. 8 meeting held at St. Mary's School, Canandaigua. Action was taken on a number of matters and reports from the diocesan office were received and reviewed by the board.

The board amended its constitution to provide for the establishment of standing committees in order to allow smaller groups of board members, with the assistance of support staff, to accomplish specific goals between the regular meetings of the board which are held four times each year.

The following standing committees were then approved: Funding of Religious Education; Personnel Policies; Curriculum/Programs; and Public Relations.

Each committee was given the initial task of developing a charter outlining the

jurisdiction and functions of the committee and of selecting an initial item for consideration and possible action.

The board also took action to approve the Process for Development and Implementation of Diocesan Educational Policies which was discussed at its June meeting. This process, which is also under review by a number of other advisory and consultative bodies within the diocese, provides for a thorough procedure to insure that proposed policies are carefully considered by all affected.

As part of its own continuing education, the board reviewed the Department of Education's semi-annual report to the Ministerial Review Committee and received an update on the development of a fund raising vehicle for tuition assistance for needy families who seek a Catholic education.

## A Tour of St. James

By Sister Theresa Ruddy

With Fall comes cooler nights, windy days, happy faces of school children and a plethora of activity. A quick tour of St. James School in Irondequoit reveals a few of these busy days.

First, one will notice colorful bulletin boards spotlighting birthdays, upcoming events and children's work. Green handprints of the kindergarten children replace leaves on a tree.

Upstairs one may find a unseemly sight -- a full garbage bag. But not for long! The bags are full of cans and bottles which are being collected and redeemed. The money earned will be used towards prizes for Mission Day in the Spring. So far, over 1,000 cans and bottles have been returned! A chart in the hall keeps a daily count for each classroom.

As one walks through the classrooms one will observe a variety of learning activities taking place. In the Early Childhood Program three

and four year olds are painting or modeling play dough. Recently, a group took a walk on the grounds to collect items for their nature hangings. In kindergarten the children are learning shapes and colors and are beginning the "readiness to read" book. First graders are well on the road to reading. One group earned a "wise owl" to wear by reading the first story in their first book.

The sixth graders did genealogical studies as evidenced by the family trees. This parallels their study of the ancestry in the Old Testament.

One will find some eighth graders working hard on first-year algebra as part of the advanced placement program. All of them are learning the intricacies of politics in the 19th century.

Some of these projects and others were on display for the Sept. 26 Open House. Parents and children were invited to tour the school, visit classrooms and meet the teachers.

## Annunciation 'Shares The Spirit'

Annunciation School has begun a program titled "Share the Spirit", which will honor the lives of saints who worked for peace and justice each month during the year.

Each homeroom chooses one student who is most like that saint, and then his or her picture is taken and displayed with biographies and drawings of that saint.

Each month, the "saint" visits the classrooms, retelling his or her life story.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Francis Cabrini, St. Nicholas, St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. John the Baptist are among the many saints that provides strong role models for the children.

## French Classes At St. Charles

St. Charles Borromeo School has introduced this year courses in "Beginning Conversational French."

Ms. Linda Wilhelm is instructing the students. A French teacher, she twice studied in France and was a secretary for UNESCO.

## Why Attend Catholic Schools?

By Father Alfred McBride

In the mid-1960s, some Catholics raise the question, "Are Catholic schools really worth it?" And some people said, "No."

At the time, the public schools were offering quality education, especially in the multitude of newly affluent suburbs. The revised liturgy and new thinking in religious education, these people thought, could supply the formal religious training students needed. And families would provide the rest.

In the years that followed, public education faltered in a variety of ways. Family life eroded. Liturgical renewal, admirable as it was, proved for many to be an insufficient substitute for formal religious training.

In the 1980s, a growing number of Catholics have begun rediscovering the value of the American Catholic school system. Four reports about the values of Catholic schools have bolstered this newfound faith in them: 1) "Catholic Schools in a Declining Church," by Andrew Greeley, Kathleen McCourt and William McCready; 2) "The Coleman Report"; 3) "The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Report"; 4) "Effective Catholic Schools: An Exploration," by Dr. Anthony Bryk, Peter B. Holland, Valerie E. Lee and Ruben Carriedo.

The finding from these four reports emphasize the advantages of Catholic education today.

"Catholic Schools in a Declining Church" (1979). This study reports five positive values found in Catholic school graduates:

- The graduates tend to be hopeful in their attitudes about themselves and life in general. This hope is not a naive optimism, but rather a hope that accepts challenge and suffering as part of life and the search for fulfillment.

- The graduates tend to be racially tolerant. Even when matched with well-educated graduates of noted liberal schools, graduates of Catholic schools have twice the capacity for racial tolerance.

- The graduates tend to remain loyal to the Church. Most graduates will become active Catholics and members of parishes. In fact, Catholic education is 38 percent more effective than other approaches in bringing about this loyalty.

- The graduates tend to be flexible. They will support traditional Church positions but are more willing than other Church members to be open to changes, such as those of Vatican II.

- The graduates tend to be upwardly mobile. Catholic schools have proved to be excellent agencies for moving people from the bottom of the social ladder upward to social acceptance and well-being.

And while it must be noted that the material success of graduates of Catholic schools is not a principal reason for the Church's educational ministry, the Church is interested in the social and economic betterment of the poor and disadvantaged. Providing minorities the chance to move from the ghettos to a life of human dignity and be freed from the oppressiveness of deprivation is a clear ideal. The Church teaches, moreover, that the earth's resources and wealth are to be shared by the whole human family, rather than hoarded by a privileged few.

"The Coleman Report" (1981). While the report (named after sociologist James S. Coleman) was a study of all private schools, much of what it says pertains to Catholic schools in particular. The most startling finding is that private schools -- most of them Catholic -- are closer to the American ideal of the "common school" than are the public schools. (Ideally the common school aims at providing the poor with a good education and the possibility for a life of dignity and self-respect.) Perhaps Catholic schools could serve as a stimulant to public schools to find fresh ways of achieving the dream of the common school.

In comparing private schools with public ones, "The Coleman Report" shows that the private (including Catholic) ones:

- Have teachers who are more committed to seeing that students learn.

- Spend more time on essential academic subjects.

- Demand stricter discipline.

- Experience less absenteeism or skipped classes.

- Assign more homework and more of it is done.

- Have students who watch less TV.

- Do not safeguard student rights as much as public schools, yet students feel they are treated more fairly and have greater control over their destiny.

- Enjoy greater support from parents.

- Find that their teachers say their work is more rewarding.

"The Coleman Report"'s positive news about Catholic schools can also serve as a note of encouragement of public educa-

tion. It is in every American's interest, of course, that all schools succeed as well as they can.

"NCEA Report" (1982). The National Catholic Educational Association is also the bearer of good news, calling Catholic education a "growth industry." According to the NCEA study, Catholic school enrollment increased in 52 dioceses (out of 165). Fourteen new elementary schools opened, as did four new high schools.

The Catholic school statistics are impressive for a private school system:

- 7,937 elementary schools.
- 1,464 secondary schools.
- 225 colleges and universities.

- 200 seminaries.
- Four million students.
- 160,000 teachers, of whom 110,000 are lay people.

"Effective Catholic Schools: An Exploration" (1984). An environment conducive to learning -- in both the moral and academic spheres -- is a key characteristic of the effective Catholic school, according to this report. Mutual faculty and student commitment contributes to this effectiveness.

The researchers also conclude that Catholic schools are peopled with "committed individuals who seek to preserve what is of worth from the past, while recognizing the need to reinterpret tradition in bringing meaning to contemporary problems."

Are Catholic schools worth the money and the effort? The four reports just cited certainly seem to say so. An important axiom surely applies here: **Don't abandon an institution that is producing a desirable effect, unless you are certain that another one will do at least as well.**

It is not worth the effort to have schools that, in addition to teaching the traditional three Rs, also teach three other Rs as well -- religion, respect and responsibility.

The continuing success of Catholic schools hinges on the commitment of parents and teachers and the support of the whole Catholic community.

Research has shown that the other essential values are very much present in the Catholic school system. As long as the spark of loving commitment is maintained, we can trust that our Catholic schools will remain healthy and will continue to serve faithfully both the Church and society.



## Thanks from Mission

Christi Alessi, Keith Zenkel and Stacey Selner of St. Ambrose School look over pictures from a summer school in Pine Apple, Ala. St. Ambrose students donated their pennies and nickels this past Lent to the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Selma, who directed the money to the school in Pine Apple. Over \$350 was contributed by the St. Ambrose community to help provide books and tuition for the children in Alabama. As part of a "thank you," Sister Mary Maloy of the mission sent St. Ambrose some photographs of their efforts and a map showing the location of the Pine Apple school.

## A Parent's View

By Jean Gilbert  
President, Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents

A total of 1.8 million children across the United States are currently missing. Fifty thousand children are abducted every year and 2,000 of them are found dead each year. According to various estimates, between 100,000 and 500,000 American children will be molested this year. Few offenders will be reported and fewer, still, punished.

There is a thin line between caution and fear. In the past, parents have tried to shield their children from ugly realities -- and probably have not told them enough.

To help young children to avoid being abducted or molested, a preventive program, "Safety With Strangers," has been produced by the Adam Walsh Child Resource Center. The MONY Associates of Rochester has purchased 150 copies of this slide/tape presentation for the Rochester area. We were pleased to be able to obtain 25 copies for our schools, and they can be obtained for use from the Diocesan Education Office.

Our Parent Federation urges you as parents to encourage the use of this program in your school.