

A time of challenge and study for future of Catholic schools

My dear people,

The chalk dust has hardly settled on the closing of school in June, when we turn our efforts and attentions to the new beginnings of an academic year. I hope that all who are involved in the ministry of education have had the opportunity for rest and renewal during the summer months.

Looking forward to the new year, we see many challenges for Catholic school education in our country and in our diocese. The Supreme Court decision on July 1, 1985, which declared it unconstitutional for teachers paid by a public school district to teach in our schools, is a serious blow for special services to our children. It is most unfortunate that the court looks upon this remedial assistance as an interference with the constitutional clause for separation of Church and state when, in fact, it is a direct service to students who are in need of remediation or special attention.

In our own diocese, we are in the middle of an intense study of our Catholic elementary schools in the city of Rochester. I have requested that our parish leadership in city parishes with schools work cooperatively with our divisions of Education and Urban Services along with the consultant from the Center for Governmental Research. The purpose of this study is to examine facts and attitudes about our schools. It is hoped that a plan for the future of the Catholic city schools will be presented to me by December, 1985. We will be able to use some of the information and skills gained through this process to assist planning for all of our schools.

As we look to the implications of such a study, we call upon all of our parishes — those with schools and those without schools — to cooperate and support the opportunity for parents to choose the type of education they desire for their children. It is more and more evident that Catholic schools of the 1980s and '90s will not be strictly "parish schools" but schools serving the people of many parishes and sharing in the ministry of those parishes.

Finally, I wish to call upon parents, teachers and administrators to be open to these challenges and to be ready to accept possible changes from "what has been." If we believe in the value of a truly Catholic education, we need to be ready to strengthen and preserve that education, even if it means a change from a tradition that is dear to us.

Let us reiterate the lesson from the Acts of the Apostles, that if this be a work of God, it will surely prevail!

With every blessing, I remain,

Your brother in Christ,



+ Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester

School decisions require consensus

By Sister Roberta Tierney
Director
Diocesan Division of Education

Other articles in this issue of the Courier-Journal will contain information about many exciting programs that will be continued or initiated to ensure that our Catholic schools are both quality educational programs and religiously oriented programs. I would like to address another aspect of all of our religious education programs — namely the governance.

The revised Code of Canon Law does not mandate a board of education at the diocesan or parish level. It does, however, endorse shared decision making as promulgated by the Second Vatican Council.

In our diocese, we endorse the Christian Formation Committee as a standing committee for each parish council. Due to the complexity and extension of the educational programs, it may be necessary for the Christian Formation Committee to have subcommittees of its own to deal with specific modes of education, e.g. schools, school of religion, etc.

Analogous to this, the diocesan Board of Education exists to assist the bishop and the Division of Education in designing goals, objectives and policies that will further the

teaching mission of the Church. One of the goals of this board for the 1985-86 year is to strengthen its communication with parish councils and Christian Formation Committees.

These various boards, committees and councils enable the laity to have direct involvement in making decisions and planning for the educational ministries. This is done in collaboration with the professional educators and with the spiritual leaders of the Church, e.g. the bishop and pastors. The key to a successful board or committee is communication and open discussion among all of the members. When decisions are made and directions are given, these should be the result of participatory consultation and a final consensus from the group.

It is also important that the members of these boards and/or committees realize that they are part of the total Church, be that diocese or parish. Therefore, communication and consultation is often necessary beyond the scope of the board or committee. Definite lines of communication need to be established and used to ensure that the goals and objectives of the educational programs reflect the needs and goals of the total Church.

This model of collegial decision making and direction for education would not be possible without the generous service of so many of our laity and the pastoral support of our bishops and pastors working cooperatively with educational administrators at both the diocesan and parish level. May this good work continue!

Catholic school system exhibits brilliant 'Rainbow of Excellence'

By Sister Theresa Rutty

"Catholic Schools: A Rainbow of Excellence" is the theme of Catholic Schools Week, which will be celebrated February 2 through 8, 1986. The rainbow is an apt metaphor for Catholic schools. A rainbow, as we all know, is the effect we see when light is diffused into its several wavelengths. When light is applied to a prism, or is viewed through water droplets after a rain, we see light in its many brilliant colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Similarly, when we look at the Catholic school system we can see that it, like white light broken into its spectrum, is the sum of its several attributes.

The most important of these attributes is religion, specifically the Catholic faith that is taught and practiced in the Catholic school setting. Not only is religion taught as a subject in the curriculum, but it is incorporated into the daily program as well. The teachers and students begin their days with prayer. Eucharistic celebrations on First Fridays and holy days, as well as other religious events form an integral part of the life of the students. The Catholic school also gives us the opportunity for special seasonal devotions: Advent, Lent, May Day and patronal feast days.

The second attribute of the Catholic school system is its organization. Linked together by diocesan office personnel, the Catholic schools are a system rather than 75 individual institutions. This allows for pooling of resources, sharing of ideas and direction toward a common goal: excellence for our schools. It also ensures compliance with state regulations and curriculum guidelines.

Each school has an organization at the local level, too. It may be a school board or Christian Formation Committee. This group provides assistance and support to the individual school. It is a vehicle for parents and parishioners to give direction and color to their parish school.

Catholic schools are also unique for their many years of history and tradition. The Catholic school in the United States was the response of the Church to American society in the 1800s and early 1900s. With waves of European immigrants, mostly Catholic, a systematic approach was needed to educate these people for life in a pluralistic society. As time passed, the Catholic school has evolved to meet the needs of each new decade. Many Catholic schools in the

Rochester diocese can boast of long years of tradition — some 50, 75, 100 or more years old. The schools continue to serve the Church well.

Children in Catholic schools are also taught important lessons about giving. The social justice principles of Catholic teaching are infused into the various secular subjects taught throughout the day. Science, social studies and literature provide a springboard for discussions of the justice aspects of the major issues of the day. The Catholic school setting also provides the opportunity for service projects in Christ's name. On a daily basis, each child is taught to share with and care for each of his classmates.

The system requires each child to do his or her best. We can be proud of the scores on New York state tests and other standardized tests that measure one facet of the excellence in our schools. The curricula of our Catholic schools meet the requirements of the state and in many instances go beyond.

The emphasis of Catholic education is on involvement and the individual. At baptism, parents are reminded that they are the first teachers of their children. As such, they are encouraged to take an interest in and to be involved in their children's education. Many parents contribute a wealth of volunteer time and services.

The teacher in the Catholic school must have the flexibility to meet the needs of the individual. Every possible means is taken to help the child in the classroom before special services are sought. "Mainstreaming" had been a tradition in Catholic schools long before budget cuts made it a necessity in the public schools.

Last but not least are the values the faculties of Catholic schools strive to impart to their students. Life and person, integrity and honesty, faith and respect for others' beliefs, liberty and patriotism are shared through the vision of our Catholic faith. These values are integrated into the whole of life.

Religion, organization, years of tradition, giving, best from each, involvement and individual, and values are the colors of the rainbow of Catholic schools. The rainbow is the reminder of God's promise — His promise not to destroy his creation with a flood, His promise to be near and protect His own. We all rejoice when we glimpse a rainbow. Let us rejoice in the rainbow of excellence which is our Catholic school system!

New administrators at Bishop Kearney

Bishop Kearney High School will open the 1985-86 academic year under the direction of a new administration. Brother John J. Johnson, CFC, has assumed the responsibility of principal. Brother Johnson has taught at Bishop Kearney for the past nine years and

has been treasurer of the school for the past four years.

Brother J. Michael Binkley, CFC, has assumed the dual role of assistant principal and dean of men. The business office will be under the direction of Brother James L. Casey, CFC, who, in addition to being superior of the brothers' community, will also function as school treasurer. Sister Evelyn Breslin and Linda D'Onofrio will remain as assistant principal and dean of women, respectively.

The 1985-86 faculty will include seven new teachers: Brother Robert Burke, CFC, English and religion; Dan Burke, science and math; Margaret Barron, math, history and computer; Joe Kenney, religion; Mark Kollmer, physical education and science; Carol Richards, English; and Nick Teta, psychology, life skills and guidance office.

Classes at Bishop Kearney will begin on Friday, Sept. 6.



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It is the policy of the elementary and secondary schools of the Diocese of Rochester not to discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities which it operates.

The diocese is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the implementing regulations not to discriminate on the basis of sex. This requirement extends to employment by the diocese and its elementary and secondary schools.

Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and the implementing regulations to the diocese may be referred to Sister Edwardine Weaver who has been designated by the Diocesan General Education Office at Title IX compliance officer. (Sister Edwardine's office is at 1150 Buffalo Road, telephone 328-3210.)

On the Cover

A variety of the school-day mementos of Courier-Journal staffers and their families were mined from attics, basements and the deepest recesses of closets for the cover photo-illustration by C-J photo editor Jeff Goulding.