



Fortunate fate

Charles Prindle never set out to become a parish religious educator, but he's grateful for the twist of fate that brought him to St. Margaret Mary Parish. See page 7.



Personnel upheaval

A new varsity coach as well as dramatic changes in personnel for some diocesan boys' soccer teams make the upcoming season a tough one to predict. See page 16.

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Pope arrives today; will fight selective mentality

By Agostino Bono

Vatican City (NC) — Pope John Paul II plans to make a strong statement on basic Catholic teachings while visiting the United States, in an effort to counteract tendencies among American Catholics toward a "pick-and-choose Church," said Archbishop Jan Schotte, a trip adviser, in a Sept. 4 press conference.

At the same news briefing, another Vatican official said security concerns are high for the U.S. trip because in the United States guns are easily obtained, some mentally disturbed people are unconfined and the crime rate is high.

The pope will present a clear choice to U.S. Church members, said Archbishop Schotte: "Do they want to be Catholic or do they want to create their own concoction?"

But the pope's approach "should not be construed or perceived as accusatory finger-pointing," said the Belgian archbishop, who is secretary general of the world Synod of Bishops.

The pope also plans "an open encouragement of the positive values" in the U.S. Church, such as its dynamism and generosity, he added.

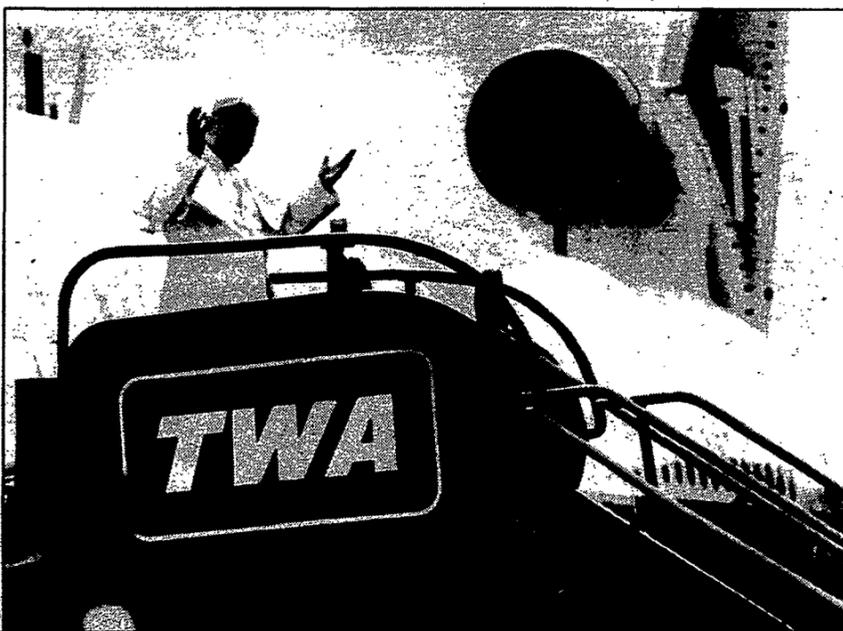
In general, "the Catholic experience in the United States is a success story," he said.

Archbishop Schotte is advising the pope on the visit because he has followed developments in the U.S. Church and has visited the United States numerous times in the past eight years. The pope plans to visit nine dioceses during the Sept. 10-19 journey.

The pope is aware that many U.S. Catholics disagree with some Church teachings, the archbishop said.

"There is also an increasing but gratuitous assumption that one can tailor one's Church to one's own desires and turn it into a 'pick-and-choose' Church where it is accepted that being Catholic has little to do with adhering to all the Church's teachings," said Archbishop Schotte.

The pope "will clearly defend Church



DEJA VU — Pope John Paul II, shown here disembarking from his 1979 flight to the United States, is scheduled to arrive today in Miami for a whirlwind 10-day, nine-diocese tour.

teachings that are under attack, fully aware of the fact that in the United States dissent, protest and pressure groups are part of the American scene and are seen as instruments for the shaping of public opinion," he said.

However, the pope will not try to impose the teachings because "faith is a personal decision," said Archbishop Schotte.

The Vatican sees "no potential for schism" in the U.S. Church, he said. The problems the American Church faces are similar to those in other Western, industrialized countries, the archbishop added.

At the news conference, Father Roberto Tucci, Vatican coordinator for papal trips, said several factors make security worries greater in the United States than in many other countries the pope has visited.

The United States is "one of the few countries in the world where a person can easily buy arms" and where "there are mentally unsound people who are not in asylums," he said.

The United States also has an unusually high crime rate, Father Tucci said.

But he said he has confidence in the

security forces of such a "superorganized country."

Also during the press briefing, Father Robert Lynch, the U.S. bishops' coordinator for the trip, said that while small demonstrations are possible in the cities the pope will visit, he knew of no large protests being planned.

The press conference was held after several surveys showed that a majority of U.S. Catholics disagree with Church teachings on birth control, married priests, women priests, abortion and remarriage in the Church of divorced Catholics.

The surveys also reported strong respect for the pope.

Archbishop Schotte said U.S. Catholics are trying to bring the "unchangeable parameters" of the Gospel message alive in their culture and adapt the positive elements of their society to local church life.

In all local churches this involves "struggle and tension, searching and momentary insecurity," he added.

"The Lord never promised his Church immunity from troubles," the archbishop said.

Catholics "must discern the elements that can be a true enrichment for the Church" and reject "what is not compatible with the Gospel or with the nature of the Church," he said.

The pope is well aware of the positive and negative aspects of U.S. Catholicism because "he follows on a day-to-day basis the life of the Church in the United States," said Archbishop Schotte.

On the positive side, the U.S. Church is "young and well-organized, dynamic and generous," the archbishop said, noting that the U.S. Church runs 14,500 educational institutions and 3,700 hospitals and health-care centers.

The U.S. Church is "blessed with a devoted episcopate, clergy, men and women religious, and with a sharing and participating laity," he added.

Bishop acknowledges urgent need for diocesan school plan

By Teresa A. Parsons

To arrest the "painful process" of school closings by attrition, Bishop Matthew H. Clark has called for the development within the next two or three years of a diocesan master plan for Catholic schools.

Speaking to pastors, principals and other diocesan educational leaders Wednesday, September 2, the bishop reaffirmed his own commitment as well as the diocesan commitment to supporting quality Catholic education. But he also warned that such a commitment will require change and sacrifice for some school communities.

"We have to be open to the strong possibility that there will be fewer Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the diocese in the years ahead," he said. "If it is necessary to have our elementary and secondary schools in fewer buildings, then we will have fewer buildings. If cost factors require us to reconfigure and consolidate schools, then we will."

Bishop Clark's statement responded specifically to one of eight recommendations presented to him last April by the Five-Year Financial Planning Process Task Force, which called for reconfiguration and consolidation of Catholic schools. Task force members urged that the bishop convene a group charged with "designing by January 1, 1988, the implementation steps necessary to achieve this recommendation within the next five years."

In principle, Bishop Clark has approved all eight of the task force's recommendations. But in addressing the group of pastors and educators called together for a superintendent's conference at St. Thomas More School in Pitts-

ford, the bishop stated that the diocese does not have the luxury of five years to plan and carry out school reorganization.

"The time to investigate and talk about creating a master plan for our schools has passed," the bishop wrote in a prepared statement delivered to reporters at a news conference shortly after his speech to educators on Wednesday. "The future is now, and we must make some decisions."

As evidence of the need for more immediate action, Bishop Clark pointed out that diocesan elementary and secondary schools in the diocese are operating this year on deficit budgets. Diocesan officials declined to specify which or how many of the eight secondary and 68 elementary and junior high schools in the diocese are losing money. But School Superintendent Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, described deficits among Catholic schools as a "general trend."

Consequently, the longer a plan is delayed, the greater the number of diocesan schools that will continue to suffer from "a painful process of attrition," Bishop Clark warned.

Attrition has already claimed four schools in the past four years. Although the bishop observed that Bath was the only Catholic community of the four left without the option of Catholic education, the closings have nevertheless prompted great concern over the future of Catholic education.

Rising costs are dictating that parish communities alone cannot continue to support schools, Bishop Clark said. In response, he restated the diocesan commitment to finding new sources of funds. The Catholic Founda-

tion of the Diocese of Rochester is one potential source for increased funding. "Through their agencies, we will try to cultivate streams of financing that we have never reached out for before," the bishop explained.

Money already available for Catholic education may also be spent more effectively if some resources are pooled, he pointed out.

These are not the first hard times Catholic schools have faced. "Back in 1967, 20 years ago, the headlines screamed about Catholic schools in crisis," Brother Walsh pointed out. "Well we're still here."

Bishop Clark likewise affirmed the strength of the Catholic school tradition in the diocese. "People built our school system in (former Bishop Bernard J.) McQuaid's day with penny donations," he said.

But the bishop emphasized the need to "expand our vision" beyond the "parochial rootedness of our schools." His statement reaffirmed the diocesan policy that requires parishes without schools to support neighboring schools their parishioners attend.

Although such a policy has been in effect for nearly 10 years, reaction to it has been mixed. School and parish leaders in Bath, for instance, charged that a lack of support from surrounding parishes was one of the factors that contributed to the closing of St. Mary's School last year.

The bishop said he envisioned no specific new initiatives to support the diocesan policy, other than to restate it and praise those who have responded.

The beginning of a breakdown in parochial attitudes was evident in the largely positive

reaction to the bishop's statement. "I was glad he finally came out publicly and said he was behind Catholic schools," said Anne Sentiff, principal of St. Mary's School in Dansville.

As principal of St. Joseph's School in Penfield, Sister Nancy Kelly, RSM, welcomed the bishop's call for reorganization, even though her school is healthy and growing.

"Those of us that are doing fine can't become complacent. We have to remember we're not all out for our own good. We're a Gospel people, a part of a whole faith community," she said. "I would love nothing better than to keep what I've got here . . . (but the plan) might call for my school to change. I have to be open to that."

Others were relieved that the bishop had shortened the time line recommended by the financial planning task force. "We've been planning and studying for what seems like years," said Joan Countryman, president of the diocesan Board of Education. "Now we need to take some action, and it's a good direction we're heading in."

Sisters Dolores Ann Stein, principal of St. Ann's School in Hornell, was pleased by the audience that assembled to hear the bishop's statement. "The fact that so many pastors were there, and that a number of them were from parishes without schools, says that the total Church is working toward good Catholic education," she said. "I am a firm believer that we are all the Church and that it's the responsibility of everyone to contribute to Catholic education, whether or not they have students in a particular school."

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