

Columnists

The rebirth of Catholic education

By Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's readings: (R3) John 20:1-9; (R1) Acts 10:34, 37-43; (R2) Colossians 3:1-4.

Easter means resurrection. I would like to conclude last week's remarks on Catholic education, to resurrect a genuine interest in our Catholic schools.

Consolidation of schools, I said, must include a specified number of students from the participating parishes, not just a specified number of dollars. A fund, like those most universities have, must be set up to meet annual salary increases and to subsidize needy students. I suggested some ways and means of developing this fund.

To try to run the Catholic school on tuition alone is self-defeating, unfair and erroneous. First it penalizes Catholic parents for doing their duty of giving their children Catholic education. Secondly, it creates elitism, making Catholic education possible only for children of the affluent. Thirdly, it causes enrollment to dwindle, because many parents cannot afford the rising tuition costs. And finally, it is wrong, because the entire Christian community — not just parents — are responsible for Catholic education.

Last year, when my term was up on the De Sales High School Board, I wrote an examination of conscience on Catholic education. Here is part of the examen:

Why do some people question the effectiveness of our Catholic elementary and high schools in the face of scientific statements to the contrary — e.g., Coleman and Hoffer?

Do they feel money spent on Catholic education can be better utilized elsewhere? If so, where?

Is the education of our youth a dispensable luxury?

The first step of a dictator who seizes the reins of government is to take over the schools. Why?

Why the inertia in actively recruiting students for the Catholic schools? The mind of the church has not changed. Have the minds of some churchmen changed? If so, why?

Why aren't the Church's teachings on Cath-

A Word for Sunday

olic education being propounded loud and clear, as enunciated by Vatican II, by the Sacred Congregation on Catholic Education, and by the national conference of bishops in America?

Why is choice in education being denied to parents? Parents are the primary educators of youth. Schools exist *in loco parentis*.

Taxpayers pay for Medicare and Medicaid, but the recipients are not required to go to government hospitals or government physicians to receive these benefits. Taxpayers pay for food stamps, yet the recipient is not required to go to government stores to get the benefits.

Why, then, when taxpayers pay school taxes, do we tolerate it that the recipients are forced to get their benefits from government schools only?

Why is monopoly in public education being permitted when our government decreed the breakup of such commercial giants as AT & T? Can economic control harm society as much as mind control can?

Vatican II said: "School monopoly is opposed to the native rights of the human person, to the development ... of culture, to ... peaceful association ... and to pluralism..." (On Education, #6).

In every other area of our economic lives, we have choice. We can choose from more than 100 cereals, just for breakfast; from more than 200 makes of cars; from 300 religious denominations; and so on. Why in this land of choice is there no choice in our public school system?

Yes, why, when C.S. Lewis said godless education produces "the trousered ape and the urban blockhead?"

The new encyclical — Part II

By Father Richard P. McBrien

Two well-known conservatives have sharply criticized Pope John Paul II's new social encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. Columnist William Safire of *The New York Times* accused the pope of moral relativism because the encyclical equates the East and West blocs, calling them both "imperfect and in need of radical correction;" and adopting "a critical collectivism."

"In sum," Safire complained, "the West's greed is the moral equivalent of the East's power lust, and both are guilty of impoverishing the innocent and exploited Third World. If words have meaning, that is now the official world view of the Vatican. I think it is wrongheaded."

William F. Buckley Jr. was no less displeased with the encyclical. In a syndicated column entitled "Papal Misfire" Buckley suggested that the encyclical was so bad that it would take scholars and friends of the Church "uncounted hours" of study before finding "a little gold in all that alloy."

Like Safire, Buckley found the pope's East and West blocs "so mystifyingly anti-historical as to jeopardize the credibility of any thought accompanying it."

He was no less sympathetic with the pope's traditional concern for the world's poor. "On the matter of helping the poor," Buckley wrote, "one must ruefully conclude that the pope is adamantly unaware of the great 20th-century lessons of economic emancipation. The raging disease in Catholic social thought," he continued, "is the inattention given to the problem of production."

I think both Safire and Buckley have read the encyclical correctly, and they have good reason to be unhappy about it. The encyclical is directly opposed to conservative and neo-conservative economics and geo-political theory, the sort one finds not only in the writings of Buckley and Safire but also of people at least as much concerned with intra-Church debates.

I have in mind, by way of examples, Richard John Neuhaus, author of *The Catholic Moment*; George Weigel, author of *Tranquillitas Ordinis*; and Michael Novak of the American

Essays in Theology

Enterprise Institute and a widely published author and columnist.

Such writers, however, do not enjoy the same freedom as Safire and Buckley in criticizing the encyclical and its author, Pope John Paul II. Safire, after all, is a Jew, and Buckley, although a Catholic, rarely allows himself to be drawn very deeply into ecclesiastical discussions. His horizons and interests are much wider.

But Catholics like Novak and Weigel, and even a Lutheran kibitzer like Neuhaus, have more at stake. For them, Pope John Paul II is central to a neo-conservative redefinition of Catholicism. This pope, they say, is realistic, not utopian. He knows that "the first component of justice" is freedom, and that "freedom is key to being a person" (Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment*, pp. 166-286).

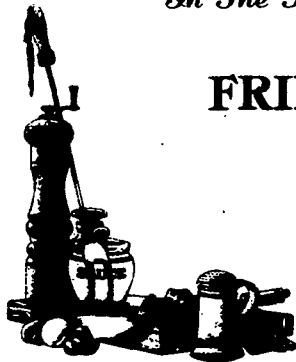
"It is hardly sufficient to count the number of times that John Paul criticizes the East and the number of times he criticizes the West," Pastor Neuhaus has written. "One must attend to the substance of his argument regarding freedom and unfreedom in order to see that this pope discriminates very nicely. He is hardly evenhanded; nor, be it quickly added, should he be" (*ibid.* p.169).

With this encyclical, Pope John Paul II has clearly confounded many of his supporters, and he is in danger of making "a lot of enemies of exactly the kind he does not need," to quote Buckley. The pope is a great man, but he is also a complex man, which means that he is proving to be as much a problem for the conservative and neo-conservative Catholics as he is for liberals, progressives and moderates.

That's the way it ought to be. Our religious leaders should challenge us all, including even those of us who cheer the loudest.

HICKS & McCARTHY

In The Heart Of Pittsford Village



FRIDAY'S SPECIAL
Fish Fry
\$5.75

Open 7 Days a Week
Mon-Sat 7:00am-8:00pm
Friday till 10:00pm
Sunday till 3:00pm

23 South Main Street • Pittsford

★ TRAINS ★ WEEKEND SPECIALS ★ COMMERCIALS ★ GROUPS



THE STAFF OF
JEAN BROWN TRAVEL
WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY
EASTER AND THANK YOU
FOR CHOOSING US TO
HANDLE YOUR TRAVEL
ARRANGEMENTS.

Remember us for your next
worry-FREE Vacation!

We Have ...

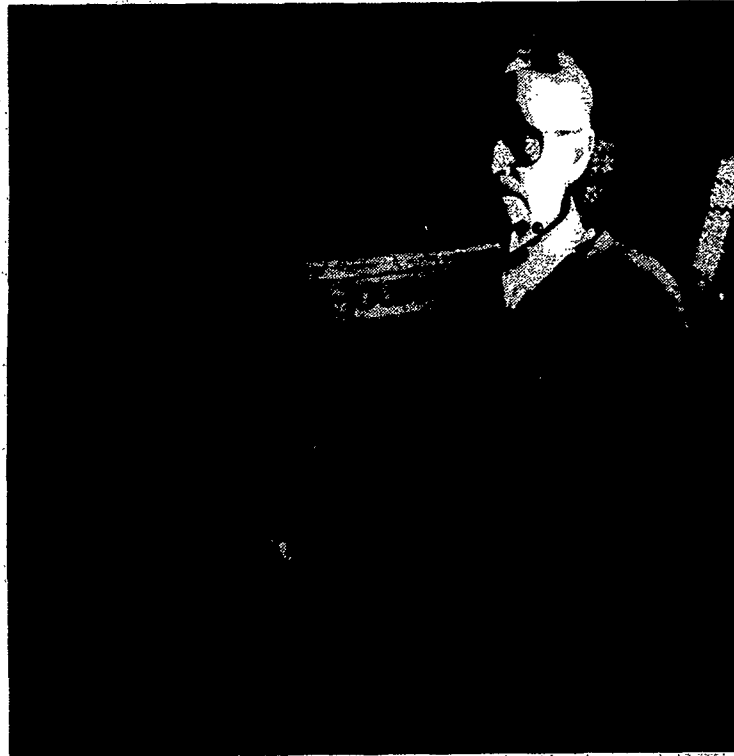
- FREE Computerized Information
- FREE Competitive Pricing
- FREE Immediate Ticketing
- FREE Parking
- FREE 24 Hr. Answering Service
- FREE Luggage Tags
- FREE Assigned Seating
- FREE Typewritten Itineraries
- FREE Ticket Delivery to Commercial Accounts
- FREE Video Presentations



889-9098 3220 Chili Avenue

★ HOTELS ★ CAR RENTALS ★ SENIOR CITIZEN FARES ★ RESORTS ★

For An Ad To Be Read, The Newspaper Must Be Read!



When people read the articles in the Courier-Journal, chances are they will read the ads too!

If the newspaper they are scanning does not hold their attention, an advertisement could slip by unnoticed as well.

Based on a McGraw Hill readership survey, the Courier-Journal subscriber has been reading our paper for 14.6 years, and most of those same subscribers spend an average of nearly 45 minutes reading a typical issue. What's more, 87% of all Courier-Journal subscribers spend at least some time looking through, or reading 3 out of 4 issues of the Courier-Journal they receive.

Why not consider the Courier-Journal when making your media selection and reach over 100,000 readers weekly.

With facts and figures like those above, it's no wonder the ads get read too!

The Courier-Journal
1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, N.Y. 14624
(716) 328-4340