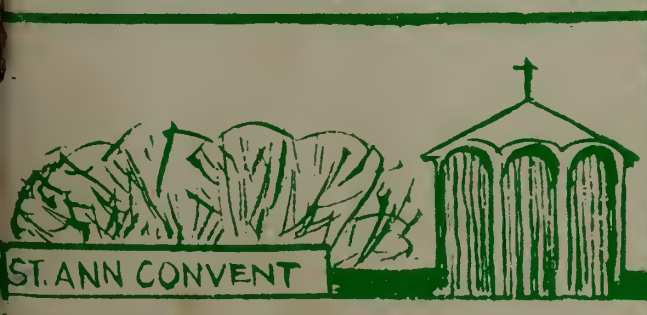


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Church Support. -

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CHURCH SUPPORT



MOST REV. LEO A. PURSLEY D.D.
BISHOP OF FORT WAYNE - SOUTH BEND

Church Support

by

Most Rev. Leo A. Pursley, D.D.

Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Lawrence F. Stander

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Church Support

Your Excellency, in your experience as parish priest, pastor and Bishop, have you found American Catholics to be generous in their support of the Church?

The question is too broad for an unqualified answer. On the whole, Americans, including Catholics, are generous. They answer many appeals for help. To what extent they give out of sacrifice is anybody's guess. Over all, I think you can break down Catholics into three groups: the top third contribute very well, the middle third not so well and the bottom third give little or nothing. Hence the low average.

Low average?

Last year in this diocese our records indicate that Catholic families, not individuals, contributed to all religious needs an average of \$2.09 per week. That is certainly a small percentage of the average income and a very small percentage of total spending. Of course, we cannot have a record of all private donations outside the regular channels of Church support.

In your travels about the country have you found parish support to be a major problem everywhere?

In older parishes, out of debt, with surplus funds and no need of building, there is obviously no financial problem. A relatively low income will maintain such parishes. In new parishes, however, where buildings are going up and facilities being expanded, and of course, in the mission fields, the need is always great and urgent.

The population boom and new schools—are they forcing this need, Bishop?

Yes. Many new parishes, beginning from scratch, have heavy

debts and large interest payments to meet. Here the problem is acute. A shifting population is creating demands for new parish facilities in suburban areas where young Catholic families with a growing number of children expect to find fully equipped parochial schools. Downtown churches are half filled, suburban churches are bursting at the seams. The change came so rapidly that we were not prepared for it. If, years ago, a diocesan school building foundation had been established, it would have gone far toward meeting the so-called population explosion. I am considering such a plan now in this diocese.

Will increased parish support solve the problem?

Yes, of course, but there must first be a wider vision on the part of both clergy and laity.

What do you mean by "wider vision", Bishop?

I mean this: Too many Catholics have a narrow viewpoint about the Church. To that extent they are not truly Catholic in their thinking. For them the Church is their own parish. Necessarily we try to develop a strong spirit of parish loyalty. The parish is the basic unit, the center, of Catholic life—the center but not the circumference. The hub is essential to the wheel but it has no meaning without the wheel. Many of our people fail to understand fully the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ and its practical implications. This failure shows up at times in a lack of inter-parish cooperation in support of diocesan and universal needs of the Church.

Could you give an example?

We might suggest the public school system. All citizens support it through taxes, whether they use it or not, whether they have a dozen children or none at all. Funds are distributed equitably according to need. This is necessary because, while every child has a right to an education, not all areas within a school district have equal means. It seems to me that this should also be true for our Catholic schools, particularly now that the "squeeze" is on. All

Catholics should support our school system. If we truly believe in Christian education, we must believe in it for all of our children and be ready to forget selfish interests and parish boundaries to pool our common resources for a very great common cause. This is the way I see it.

How about parents whose children have completed their courses in Catholic schools? They say—

Some of them say: “We have done our duty toward our own children. Why should we worry about others?” When this happens it is another unfortunate example of the narrow point of view mentioned above. Supporting Catholic education is not like paying for Johnny’s hair-cut or Mary’s new dancing slippers.

The Fifth Precept of the Church obliges us to support the Faith. How would you specifically state this obligation?

In relation to one’s parish and diocese, this obligation is a matter of justice, of paying a debt, because the parish and diocese are serving the spiritual—and sometimes the temporal—needs of their people. The obligation in regard to other religious causes arises from the virtue of charity.

When, Your Excellency, should a person confess violation of this precept?

When, through his own deliberate fault, he has not observed it. It is well to point out something here that many people miss. The precept does not say: Contribute what the pastor asks for, or what the parish needs. The precept says, Contribute according to your means. Each Catholic is obliged to determine what he can give on the basis of an enlightened and sincere Catholic conscience. I’m afraid there are some who think nothing of spending a hundred dollars on a week-end and then dropping a dollar in the basket on Sunday morning. There is no proportion here, no recognition of the prior and higher claims of religion.

Why is it that Catholics do not have the enthusiastic spirit of

giving that you find among the Mormons and certain other denominations?

I wish I knew. Making the comparison cautiously, I would say that a partial answer might be that these groups are small and cohesive, relatively new on the religious landscape, still in their first fervor. They have generated enough momentum to keep them going. On the other hand, it may be that we have failed to keep alive in our own people the spirit of sacrifice and sense of community that characterized the early Christians.

Bishop, we hear all kinds of complaints about parish financing, certain pastors, how money is spent, how the parish is operated and so forth. Why?

Well, I won't deny that there may be grounds in some places for such complaints. I have usually found, however, that they come from people who do little else but! Of course, there is room for intelligent and sincere lay opinion concerning the administration of Church affairs. Much of this, however, is a kind of articulate confusion which results from inadequate knowledge of how and why things are done, the work of the pastor, the office of the Bishop, the needs of the parish and diocese and their relationship to each other. Also, there is sometimes a failure of communication between clergy and laity which makes for further misunderstanding on both sides.

Poor public relations?

Yes—public and private, but with a difference. The Church is not a business enterprise attracting investors or customers; it has no sales pitch, no advertising techniques, as we use the terms today in the commercial world. But it does have its business side, its material needs, its dependence on the good will of its members. The whole situation in this respect is vastly improved when two things are accomplished.

What are they, Bishop?

Better understanding and deeper motivation.

Would you please explain?

I mean a better understanding of the real nature of Church support. We do not tell the whole truth about it when we say that it is an obligation required by justice. It is more than that. It is an act of religion, of sacrifice, a giving back to God of His own gifts to acknowledge our dependence on Him, to praise His goodness and thank Him for it. Our crowded churches and Mass schedules won't permit the people to bring their gifts directly to the altar. Actually, though symbolically, that is what they do. Out of this understanding should come the only right motive for giving, the love of God. Even on the strictly human level a gift for any other reason is hardly a gift at all. In relation to God the love with which we give sanctifies the gift and the giver and makes them worthy of supernatural reward. In other words, we must keep our Church support strictly in this category of giving to God because we love Him above all things. A fretful anxiety about where the gift is going and how it will be used indicates a lack of faith. When the gift leaves our hands it is no longer ours.

In other words, there must be the right spirit of giving?

Yes, as in all such matters, it is the spirit that gives life.

Bishop, do you think that most people understand the relationship between the parish and the diocese?

Unfortunately, no. But this is understandable. People are concerned mainly about their personal affairs. Most of them go to church once a week, to the parish rectory less often, to the diocesan chancery almost never. They have no way of knowing, of seeing the whole picture in detail and in perspective. It would help if we told them more about these matters. I once had a letter from a woman who told me to stop taking money out of her parish and putting it in Fort Wayne!

This complaint is common: All we hear from the pulpit is the Bishop asking for money.

I don't know how common it is but I do know that it is a

purely emotional reaction. It reminds me of the story of a timid but faithful employee who asked for a day off so that he and his wife could celebrate their silver wedding anniversary. The boss replied grudgingly: "All right, but are we going to have to put up with this every twenty-five years?" In this diocese we have only two annual collections for diocesan needs. Like all Bishops I must appeal for general causes in the Church, such as the missions. The parish must be strong but not merely to support itself. It must be strong enough to help support the whole Church. Every Catholic belongs to a parish, but every parish belongs to a diocese and every diocese belongs to the Universal Church. St. Paul summed it all up in a few words: "You are Christ's and Christ is God's."

How, then, can you get by with so few collections in this diocese?

Because we use another means which takes the place of several collections. More than thirty years ago my predecessor introduced a quota system by which a portion of parish revenue is allocated annually for various diocesan and extra-diocesan needs and obligations.

What portion?

Ten per cent of ordinary receipts. The parish retains the rest of its ordinary income in addition to receipts classified as extraordinary, such as special funds raised for building or debt retirement.

Does the quota system provide enough money?

Not for all purposes. Pastors are expected to invest surplus parish money—if they have any—with the diocese so that it can go to work for the Church. This money is loaned at low interest to parishes that need it. Meanwhile the parish that made the money available is also helped by the interest received. It's a revolving fund—and it does get around. Sometimes it slows down.

The rich helping the poor?

In a sense. Actually, the money thus provided is not always

loaned. When a new parish is cut off from an older parish, the “mother” frequently gives the “daughter” a financial start. This is a practical application of St. Paul’s “Bear ye one another’s burdens” which is certainly one aspect of the Mystical Body in operation.

Then, again, Bishop, if people see that their parish is quite well off, they might say: “I’ll send my contribution to a missionary society.”

This is another area of misunderstanding. I am certainly not opposed to special mission appeals, but there are more of them than any diocese or parish can honor. This most worthy and necessary cause could be supported adequately through ordinary parish and diocesan channels if there were a more general and generous response to regular annual appeals, as on Mission Sunday and when memberships are solicited in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. I heard recently of a diocese which has “adopted” a needy parish in another country. According to the present arrangement, mission funds collected in the diocese are divided thus: Forty per cent to home missions, sixty per cent to foreign missions.

In giving directly to a missionary, however, isn’t there an emotional response that is lacking when contributing to a general collection?

Yes, I suppose there is that psychological factor involved. Certainly it is not a primary consideration. Catholics are free to dispense their charity as they wish. Many of them have their favorite charities. But such donations are not a substitute for what they can and ought to contribute to their own parish and diocese.

But would direct, personal giving not strengthen the giver’s supernatural motivation with greater benefit to himself?

Not necessarily. The motive can be the same, good or bad, in any form of giving. We can’t judge motives, but we know that their quality depends on purity of intention and the highest motive is to forget about ourselves and think only of pleasing God.

But is there not a special benefit in personal giving? If I meet someone who is hungry and I give him food, I am personally involved, am I not?

Yes, and the testimony of your eyes is supporting your faith. But the faith must be there. If I see Christ in the poor I am exercising my faith, not my vision. In a sense, we are personally involved in all of our giving. I am not opposed to direct giving. It is good but not enough. Few of the world's millions of needy could be served by direct contact with them.

This brings us to the changing needs of charity, from the personal to the institutional approach.

You've heard, no doubt, the verse of John Boyle O'Reilly about

“Organized charity, scrimped and iced,
In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ.”

Today the growing complexity of our society—

Socialization?

Yes, if the word is rightly understood. Charity on the large scale demanded by present conditions must be socially organized, but it is still charity. Several types of service must be provided and each department staffed by trained workers. Needs and problems must be investigated and evaluated. There was a time, not so long ago, when a generous person could go to an orphanage after the death of a mother or father and take one or more of the children home with the consent of the living parent. This cannot be done legally today. The law is meant to protect the rights of the child as well as the parent. All sorts of abuses can and do crop up when such situations are not controlled by responsible agencies. But, once again, the necessity of organized charity does not do away with direct personal charity. There should be more of it. It is easier to write a check for the United Fund or the Community Chest than to carry food to a poor family or help nurse a sick mother. Each of us must determine how he can best discharge his social responsibilities.

Does the tax deduction influence support of organized charities?

Undoubtedly. I know at least a few men of substantial means who take advantage of the full allowance of thirty per cent and I am surprised that more of them don't do likewise. When taxes began to rise we became conscious of deductible items and I am sure that religion and education as well as charity have profited by this state of mind.

Bishop, do you think it would help if parishioners knew more about how their money is being spent?

They can learn this from the annual financial report which every pastor is obliged to send to the Chancery. It is usually read to the people or given to them in printed form. I think the details should be discussed for the better understanding of the people. A difficulty in many parishes is the lack of time on Sunday morning. And even an attempt to clarify the report would probably sound like another "money talk" to those who don't like to hear about it.

Do you have any further suggestions on this matter?

Yes. If pastors could sit down with their parishioners in their homes and talk over the business of the parish in a pleasant, informal way, I am sure this would help both a great deal to understand each other's problems. Other good results would follow. Again the trouble is lack of time. In a large parish it would take a daily visit for two or three years to make the rounds. And it isn't as easy to find people at home as it used to be. But this handicap can be surmounted. I know of one pastor who has zoned his parish and meets at regular intervals with a neighborhood group of families for friendly discussion of their common parish interests. In any event, I am sure the benefit would more than repay the effort.

What would these discussions concern?

All parish problems are by no means financial, but we are talking about Church support and it is likely that this would be a frequent subject of discussion between the pastor and his people. He

would have an opportunity to tell them specifically about the needs, present and future, for which he must seek their support. He could give them a closer and more complete view of what it costs to keep the parish going. He could outline plans, answer questions, correct misconceptions, get opinions and suggestions representing the lay attitude. All in all, mutual confidence, morale, "esprit de corps", would grow and the ideal expressed by the Good Shepherd would come closer to realization: "I know mine and mine know Me."

And a more personal interest and sense of responsibility would result?

Yes. Most people are reasonable. With all the facts before them, they would see more clearly that the pastor is simply trying to help them and in doing so must ask them to help themselves. There is a lot of mystery in our religion but there need be no mystery about the money that goes for Church support.

Most large corporations send their stockholders a periodic report on the economic status of their company. Could not the same technique be employed in the parish?

The comparison is valid only up to a point, but the idea has merit. I know that some pastors do make a monthly report to their people, especially if the parish is engaged in some particular project.

Is there any effort being made to teach parish management, including fiscal prudence, along with other pastoral studies in the seminary today?

I can't say what is being done in all seminaries in this regard. I know that the curriculum is already crowded with courses more directly related to the priesthood. It seems, however, that some time could be devoted to the very practical subjects that we are discussing. At least, now and then, some successful business executive or administrator could lecture to the students.

You think this would help?

It should, though a man's success in his own business does not qualify him to speak with authority on every other kind of business, except insofar as basic rules of economy are much the same in all kinds of business. Let's not overemphasize this point. A student who keeps his eyes open and develops his common sense and capacity for practical judgment should learn enough under an able pastor to manage the fiscal affairs of a parish. It's really pretty much a matter of getting bills and paying them.

Do most pastors seek lay advice?

Any priest is wise to use whatever help he needs and there are times when he does need the counsel of lay people. In fact, he is expected to have a group of parish councilmen.

By Canon Law?

By diocesan statute.

How many?

No definite number. Usually from three to seven.

Can they make decisions?

They serve the pastor—and the parish—as advisors.

Do all pastors seek their advice?

Obviously I cannot answer for all pastors. I have a distinct impression, however, that some do not consult with their councilmen. I'm sure that others do.

And those who don't—are they risking the mishandling of parish funds?

I assume you refer to competence rather than integrity. I'm sure you are not implying that lay people are more trustworthy than priests. But even if some risk is involved, for whatever reason,

it must be remembered that reasonable safeguards are set up by the Church. A wise old priest once remarked that the word "Episcopus" means one who "oversees", not one who overlooks. The Bishop must maintain a careful supervision over the temporal as well as the spiritual interests of the diocese. By visitation and conference he keeps in touch. Diocesan regulations limit the expenditure of parish money without his permission. Building plans are submitted to the Bishop and, often, to a building commission, for approval before the project begins.

It would seem, then, that pastors would find it difficult to let things get out of hand.

The vast majority of priests are dedicated men who know their duty and do it. Mismanagement of parish funds is a rare occurrence. It need not disturb the laity.

Could more participation of the laity help in this problem of competent management?

As I have indicated, there are ways in which lay people can and do help. Their direct involvement in the administration of church affairs would create more problems than it would solve. In this question there are so many others—who, what, when and how—that I cannot give it a firm answer.

Then you see no problem in this handling of money?

The most common problem is to get enough to handle.

Do you think the day will ever come when laymen will take over the management of the temporal affairs of parishes?

Anyone who has lived through all the changes that have taken place so far during this century should hesitate to play the prophet and say that something or other will not happen. It does not seem likely to me that lay people will be asked to assume full responsibility for the temporalities of parish life. Some will always be critical of what the pastor does but this does not mean that they would do it better.

But wouldn't it relieve the pastor of part of his burden, permitting him more time for the spiritual care of his flock?

Ideally, it would, and this would be a great blessing. But it isn't quite that simple on the practical plane. Actually, under ordinary circumstances, it does not take a great deal of the pastor's time to keep his parish accounts in order, but he could get occasional lay help for that. I know that some do. But the full time employment of lay help would run parish expenses pretty high. In this diocese, the monthly salary of the pastor is \$100.00; his monthly table allowance \$50.00; his monthly car allowance \$25.00 with \$100.00 for annual car insurance premium. How many lay people could live on that income, especially if they have families to support? In fact, were it not for his stipends the pastor could not get along himself.

Do you think these facts about the priest's income are generally known, Bishop?

Well, they are reported each year in the pastor's financial statement. It is quite possible that many lay people overlook them. Keep in mind, however, that diocesan clergy are not bound by the vow of poverty, which means that they may accept gifts and make investments, though they are not permitted to engage in business enterprises.

They could then lay away considerable savings for their retirement?

Yes, but not all of them do. We have a Diocesan Clergy Relief Association which every priest is expected to join when ordained. He pays annual dues of \$50.00 while he is able to work and receives a monthly benefit of \$125.00 when incapacitated or retired. We also have a health insurance plan for all diocesan and parish personnel.

At what age do priests retire?

There is no fixed age. Some priests are active at eighty and over. Others fail in health much sooner.

You mean that there is nothing to prevent a priest from piling up a fortune if he is able?

Theoretically, no—nothing but his conscience. A priest is prudent to save something for his old age. Few people in any walk of life want to be utterly dependent on others. I think, however, that beyond personal needs and obligations, a priest, in the true spirit of his vocation, should turn over to the Church, to some religious cause, whatever else he may have.

Would it not be better if priests could forget such matters entirely? Did not Christ warn about storing up earthly goods when He spoke of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air?

To the first part of your question the answer is Yes. It would be better if it were possible. Regarding the second part, you must read the passage from the Sermon on the Mount in the whole context of Christ's teaching. A literal interpretation would justify a life of complete indolence and irresponsibility. St. Joseph supported the Holy Family by his work as a carpenter and Our Lord most certainly helped him. What He condemned in the passage quoted is the excessive love for material things that keeps us from "seeking first the kingdom of God". In the first apostolic college there was a treasurer.

Did you say a treasurer, Your Excellency?

Yes, and it may be significant that he turned out to be a traitor. Nevertheless he held the money bag to meet the simple necessities of food and lodging.

In other words, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's".

Precisely. But we have to remember also that all things belong to God and must somehow serve Him. Every person endowed with brain and brawn is expected not only to earn his own living but to use these gifts of God in His service.

Do you think, Bishop, that there is more willingness on the part of Catholics today to support their parish?

Well, I would say that there is a keener awareness today of the need of more generous support.

What explains it?

For one thing, the needs ARE greater. We have grown—and we have grown accustomed to many services which the Church, specifically the parish, is expected to provide.

What services in particular?

Education mainly. That is, a quality education for their children with all the fringe benefits. This is quite understandable. It is less understandable that so many of our people do not realize that they must pay for what they want. I keep hearing the question: “Bishop, when are YOU going to build us a high school?” The only sensible answer I can make is: “When YOU give me the money”.

They should identify themselves more closely with these needs?

Exactly, and not only for themselves and for their own children. The present generation must always provide for the next. A great many children are attending schools which their parents did not help to build. This brings us back to that “wider vision” which I mentioned earlier, that truly Catholic understanding of what it means to be members of the Body of Christ privileged to help the whole Body grow strong and great.

What about the people who move from one new parish to another? They have a double load.

This happens, of course. I don't know what can be done about it. We can't leave our obligations behind and we meet the situation that confronts us. I know one man with a large family who has lived in the same house for fifteen years but in three different par-

ishes. Each division of the territory caught him. He is cheerful about it. Confirmation makes us good soldiers.

Since the parish school is a heavy burden, do you see more centralization as a necessity?

Many years ago my father was a township trustee and part of his job was looking after the rural schools. I recall that there were seven in the township and all quite small. Today, in the same area, there is one large school for pupils through the sixth grade and they are transported by buses. But to answer your question, we do have central high schools, as you know, to serve a number of parishes; and there are places where two or three grade schools should be consolidated. The people concerned are usually unhappy about closing even a small parish school but it is not sound economy or efficiency to do otherwise. It is not right to have a teacher tied up with twenty-five children in her room when a block down the street there is another teacher with seventy-five.

Bishop, what are your views on tithing?

I favor it strongly. I think it is the answer to our financial problems. That's almost like saying that I believe in the Bible. There is a definite trend toward tithing today. A recent survey conducted by OUR SUNDAY VISITOR indicated that 289 parishes are now tithing and 1,258 pastors intend to introduce the system.

Just how does tithing work?

The modified form, which seems to be the most popular, is a five-and-five method: five per cent of income—either gross income or take-home pay, depending on the local arrangement—goes to the parish; the other five per cent goes to all other religious and charitable causes.

Has tithing proved effective?

I have heard nothing but favorable reports. Pastors have told me that since tithing was adopted the parish revenue has more than doubled, even though it was not accepted by all of the people.

Why does tithing appeal?

For several reasons. It is a one-collection method; to use a rather crude expression, a one-package deal. It covers all parish needs. It does away with multiple, separate appeals for money. The people know exactly where they are, what is expected of them, and they like that feeling.

Tithing, then, would put an end to school children peddling raffle tickets, Christmas cards, candy, magazine subscriptions . . . ?

Yes. In this diocese I have made myself clear about that. I don't want our children used as agents and salesmen bothering everybody up and down the street.

And tithing would also do away with bazaars, carnivals, bingo games and other such fund raisers?

That's the idea. The Church is not in the circus business.

But haven't these affairs what Father Joseph Fichter, the Jesuit sociologist, calls a "latent function"? Do they not develop parish unity by cooperative effort?

There are other kinds of cooperative effort, other and better ways to unify the parish. It is a good thing for the people of a parish to get together socially but the purpose need not be to raise money. I have had some experience with these affairs. They often leave scars; and usually the same small group of people do most of the work.

Then there's no room at all for money-raisers in any parish?

I don't know about every parish. I am simply expressing my dislike and disapproval of any sort of gimmick or gambling, trick or treat, as a substitute for straight giving. These things offer a distorted notion of the whole purpose of giving to God. They encourage people to expect an immediate return in some material form. In some communities civil law forbids lotteries and games of

chance. In all communities there are people of other faiths who wonder why Catholics have to resort to such methods to support their churches. And I'm afraid they come to some proper conclusions.

Some claim that tithing is inequitable. That is, the single fellow making \$50,000 a year can give more than ten per cent to the Church and other charity, while the family man with seven or eight children but an annual income of around \$5,000 can't come up with that percentage without denying his family essential material comforts.

That is an old, old problem for which there is probably no solution. Under any system of Church support some will give out of abundance, others out of sacrifice. Certainly the general precept still stands—give according to your means. Individual cases must receive individual attention. On this point, I might tell you about the experience of Bishop Begin, pastor of St. Agnes Parish in Cleveland. I understand that it is made up largely of middle-class, working people. When he asked them to tithe he promised to reimburse anyone who found tithing too much of a hardship. Only one person accepted the offer, and when the claim was investigated it turned out that the man had not been tithing at all, that he was in financial difficulties for other reasons and thought of this way of getting money.

Bishop, you are obviously very much in favor of tithing. If you had your choice of any type of Church-support program—and if you knew that it would be successful—what would you prefer?

Tithing, and for a reason I have not yet mentioned. The strongest point in favor of tithing is its educational and spiritual value. It is not merely good for the Church, it is good for the members of the Church. It teaches them that God comes first, that to Him belong the first fruits of our labor. And there is no record that God has withdrawn His promise to bless those who are faithful in this regard.

Some pastors publish annually a list of their parishioners along with their contributions. Bishop, do you favor this?

I don't think it serves any good purpose. I suppose it is intended to glorify the givers and shame the slackers and thus stimulate better returns from both. It may work the other way. People will make comparisons. When Mr. A sees that his neighbor, Mr. B, who makes more money than Mr. A, gives less to the Church, Mr. A may decide that he is giving too much. I think that a private talk by the pastor to those who need it would be more effective than a public report of their failure to do their duty.

In this matter of Church support, must it always be considered as an outright contribution of money? Are there other ways?

Yes, there are professional men and merchants and manufacturers who offer discounts, reduced fees, free service, to the clergy, religious and to our various institutions. In a few places people make loans to the parish without interest. Incidentally, such loans, with or without interest, not only help the parish but they are a good, safe investment for the parishioner. They are secured by the assets of the diocese. It seems that this news hasn't got around. Also, much expense has been spared certain parishes by volunteer labor.

What about wills and bequests?

Every Bishop and priest has his own experience in this regard. Many of our people remember the Church in their Wills and many others do not. Mass bequests are common among good Catholics who are concerned about their eternal future, so to speak. It is a mistake, however, to include these stipends in one's estate. There is always a delay, sometimes a long interval, before final settlement. The priest responsible for offering the Masses must frequently send some of them to other priests because he cannot take care of all of them himself. He cannot do this until he has received the stipends. Another mistake is not to specify whether the bequest represents High Masses or Low Masses. Catholics are well advised, also, in drawing up their Wills, to consult the Bishop or

pastor about existing needs in the diocese or the parish. The terms of the Will must be carried out and sometimes bequests are made for institutions already well provided for and for causes less important than others.

In what other ways can Catholics support the Church?

Lay groups are invaluable, indispensable, on every level of Catholic life. I hesitate to name some at the risk of neglecting others. All in all, devoted lay people are making a great contribution to the apostolate of the Church in many ways. Their time and energy cannot be equated with money. There is no price tag on zeal. We need lay help today as never before and we are getting it. There are still some gaps in the line but the ranks are closing.

Bishop time is running out. One more question, a hypothetical question but one which may prove enlightening to people not only of your diocese but throughout the country as well: If you had unlimited funds, what would you do—what dreams do you have in the back of your mind to further the cause of the Church?

Dreaming is a dangerous luxury. Our most critical need is for more religious vocations. They are not for sale. Confining myself to the things that can be bought, I would build new high schools at once—and then pray God to help me staff them. I would make better provision for the care of the aged. I would set up a more extensive program for retarded and physically handicapped children. That is at least a start.

Couldn't such institutions be staffed by lay persons?

To a great extent they are. In our fifty-six grade schools the number of lay teachers has increased in the past fifteen years from five to one hundred and ninety-two. Most of the work for retarded children in this diocese is being done by lay people. Except for a priest director, all of the staff in our Diocesan Social Services are lay people. The same is true in our Chancery. It is understandable that the Bishop wants his own priests to represent him in such un-

dertakings, to coordinate the work of others and to carry out diocesan policy.

Finally, which do you need more—manpower or money?

That is easy. Money has no meaning to the Church unless it can be put to work for the glory of God and the good of souls.

Thank you, Your Excellency.

The pleasure is mine.

