

*Chaplaincy,
Newman Club or
Catholic College*

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“WHAT are we going to do with the Catholic students in the non-Catholic colleges?” one was asking, and the other answered, laconically: “Get ’em out.” Thus did a correspondent sum up for me the discussion between the Rev. Ignatius W. Cox, S.J., and the Rev. J. W. R. Maguire, C.S.V., which enlivened the sessions of the recent Louisville educational convention. As a summary it was not bad. The question seemed fairly put, and the answer expresses the ultimate aim not only of Father Cox and those who think with him, but of the Catholic Church. The ultimate aim, I said. But the vital question comes when the query is put: “But meanwhile, until you get them out of there, what are you going to do with them?”

The real debate, naturally, hinges upon the answer to this further question, what is our proximate aim, what are we going to do here and now? It is not too strong to say that the immediate future of the Church in this country depends on the right answer to this question. On the one hand, the eternal interests of the students themselves might be compromised by too rigid and narrow-minded a handling of their case, and, on the other, by going too far in helping them, Catholic education in this country runs the risk of being set back a hundred years. Yet certain groups are calling for some solution of a problem that is engaging the serious attention of thinkers in educational circles.

The answer, when it comes, will be one which takes account of the one all-important fact. That all-important fact is this: that the problem of the Catholic at the secular college is not a separate problem in itself, but merely

one part of the main problem, which is the problem of the education of all Catholics. To attempt to solve one part of this problem at the expense of the other parts of it, would be illogical and might lead to disastrous results. To take the Catholic at the secular college and treat him as if he were a problem in himself, irrespective of the whole great question of the education of Catholics, is to take a merely partial view of the subject. It will easily be seen to what such a procedure might lead. Energies will be used up which should be turned elsewhere, and the whole emphasis of Catholic attention in the country be focussed in the wrong direction.

This is no exaggerated view of the matter. This fact of the essential unity of the education question is so important, and so much in danger of being overlooked, that I wish to emphasize it, at the outset of this analysis, with all the power at my command. If the partial problem, that of the Catholic at the secular college, is solved to the prejudice of the major part of the problem, which is the education of Catholics *in the Catholic college*, then Catholic education will suffer irreparable harm. The whole problem is *one*, and no part of it can be handled without reference to all other parts, and in due proportion.

Consequently the question: what shall we do with the Catholics at the secular colleges here and now?—will of course continue to be answered by the stock “something must be done,” but that something will be something within due limits, and these limits will dictate both what is to be done and how extensive it will be.

In other words, remembering: (1) that our ultimate aim is to get all Catholic students, if possible, into the Catholic institution, and (2) that the major part of the problem is the Catholic student in the Catholic college, not the Catholic student in the secular college, we will still bend our main efforts to the building up of the Catholic college, and on the other hand, do nothing which will make it ultimately impossible, or extremely difficult, to get the

bulk of Catholic students, gradually and in due time, away from the secular college. These are the positive and negative aspects of the question, and both of them will be disregarded if the Catholic establishments at the non-Catholic colleges are built up out of due limits.

I take it for granted, of course, that since the Louisville convention there is no longer doubt in people's minds that Catholic education and education at the non-Catholic college are irreconcilable, no matter what correctives are offered for the latter. In the heat of argument, there have not been wanting those who have defended education at a non-Catholic college as in itself desirable and allowable. This position, indeed, came as a reaction to the assertion of our ultimate aim to reduce as far as possible the number of legitimate students there. Some, it is true, took the position imagining they thus defended the chaplaincy or Newman club. For the good of their cause they were well advised to abandon it. The Church only *tolerates* the presence of Catholic students at non-Catholic institutions, at the same time that she commands the shepherds of the flock to safeguard their faith in dangerous circumstances.

That this is not a personal or party attitude has been proved over and over again, in AMERICA and elsewhere. The Church has an official theory of education; the Popes in letters to England, Ireland and this country, the Code of Canon Law, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, and individual bishops, before that and since, have laid it out in almost complete detail. The only education which receives the cordial sanction of the Church is a religious education, that is, not one merely in which religion is taught as a subject, but one in which the truths of natural and revealed religion pervade every course in the curriculum.

Nor is this an arbitrary stand of the Church from any point of view. Looking at education from a psychological point of view, the religious atmosphere of a Catholic

school cannot be replaced; from a moral point of view, the example of teacher and companion is not found elsewhere; from a religious point of view, the knowledge of the Faith and the practice of its precepts are in danger everywhere except there; from an intellectual point of view, the Catholic mind is formed only where the truths of religion are the postulates of everything that is taught; and this latter is especially true in higher education, and is even more important than any of the others, for it is the foundation of the others.

Having thus cleared the ground, and arranged a basis of complete general agreement, I propose to submit the whole question to analysis, in the hope that, with all the elements of both the problem and the solution in clear sight, assent may be yielded at once to a reasonable thesis.

The problem is easily stated. According to recent figures, nearly one half of all our Catholic students are being educated in non-Catholic colleges and universities. This means that we have two classes of Catholic students in this country, about equally divided. One class is being educated under the auspices of the Church, according to the tried pedagogical principles of the Church. The character of its members is being formed by the fourfold action named above, psychological, moral, spiritual and intellectual.

The other class is listening to lectures which at the best are pagan in the cleanest sense. First, from this education the supernatural is excluded, and often denied in it; and the supernatural is the basis of the Christian formation of youth. Secondly, whether the course followed be literary, scientific or practical, many truths are excluded or denied, which constitute the whole color and form of the Catholic mind, and whose exclusion discolors and deforms it. Thirdly, religious teaching, if any, is only an accidental, and religious practice the exception.

This class, thus exposed to admitted danger, is again divided into two, those who could without serious incon-

venience receive the same courses in a Catholic institution, and those who cannot without serious inconvenience receive the same courses in a Catholic institution. It will be at once evident that in any discussion of the rights of these students and the duty of the Church to them, there will be a sharp distinction between these two sections.

The mere statement of the position of our Catholic young men and women in secular institutions is the statement of their problem. It is a threefold problem. 1. How shall we reduce their number, in this school generation or the next, to the smallest possible figure? 2. What shall be done for those who are there now or will be in the future, to safeguard their faith and morals in the midst of conceded danger? 3. What are the limits, consistent with Catholic doctrine and needs, within which this work for such students should be carried on?

It will be noticed at once that this statement of the problem expressly assumes that the Catholic students at the secular colleges are not to be neglected, but that on the contrary they are to be cared for in every way consistent with the general welfare of the Church.

II

I have just laid the groundwork for a discussion of the burning question of the care of the Catholic at the non-Catholic college. As a first general principle I held that this question is only a part of the larger question of the education of all Catholics, and that any attempted solution of it must take account of our whole general policy of education, that it cannot be handled as a separate problem in itself, and that to try to do so would cause serious embarrassment to our system of Catholic education. I thereupon freely admitted the existence of a problem of these Catholic students, and said that it arose both from the large number of those attending non-Cath-

olic colleges and universities, and from the inherent danger of their surroundings.

This situation, however, admittedly grave, does not give rise to the simple question "what is going to be done for them? or even "what is going to be done with them?" but to a whole series of questions. Are we prepared to admit that our ultimate aim is to get as many as possible of them out of these colleges? And if so, are we prepared to face the consequences of such an admission? And the first thing to remember in this connection is that if we do succeed in reducing their number very considerably, the problem will have almost disappeared, for those who remain can be very easily handled. And on the other hand, if we go too far in "doing something" for them, we may very easily render the problem impossible of solution forever, for then we will never "get 'em out."

I am not, of course, treating of the rights and wrongs of attendance of Catholics at secular institutions; I take that as settled by the authority of the Church. Similarly, defense of such attendance is beside the point, and not an argument against the thesis of these papers, which have to do with the practical questions of the limits within which work for such students should be confined.

This practical question follows upon another of more speculative interest. It is this: "Should the Church engage in work for these students?" That question is answered in two ways: first, the Church is already engaged in such work in numerous secular colleges and universities; and secondly, the Holy See has expressly commanded it. Thus the ground is cleared at last for the immediate problem: "What kind of work shall be done for these students, and how far shall it be carried?"

The law of the Church on this subject merely states (Can. 1374) that religious instruction shall be available to such students as attend secular institutions. Therefore, it is not true to say that the chaplaincy or the Newman Club or the Foundation is commanded by the Holy

See. The obligation imposed by positive law is fulfilled if it is made possible for these students to receive religious instruction. Thus far the positive law, as binding both the authorities and the students.

What of the laws of justice and charity? The Church's law is fulfilled if the pastor of the parish in which the students live sees that they have religious instruction. Do the interests of the students require that more than this be done for them? It is held and seriously urged that experience has shown that only a resident chaplain can do what should be done for them, that the Church should enter the university just as it enters any town or city, and exercise its pastoral care on the Catholic students through a full-time chaplain. The Catholic or Newman Club which he establishes there will be for the few who are interested, but the chaplain will be for all Catholic students in the institution, who will be under him as parishioners are under their pastor.

Naturally, since there is no general law on the subject, the establishment of such a full-time chaplain is a matter for each individual to decide for itself, according to the emergencies there, arising from local conditions. I merely wish here to discuss the expediency of such a course, and the limits within which one has a just right to expect that it will be carried out.

There are several considerations which bear on this subject. In many universities the Catholics have no just reason for being present. The Holy See has not yet absolutely condemned their presence there; the Holy See reprobates it, but tolerates it, *on condition that they cannot without serious inconvenience receive their education in a Catholic institution*. If they can do so, they have no just reason for being in a non-Catholic institution. In any discussion of rights, say as against the right of a Catholic college to be helped, it is clear that the Catholic in a secular college yields precedence.

Moreover, what is done for those who can show title

to being rightly in a secular institution (permission of the Bishop in certain conditions) is also subject to grave qualifications. Their problem, as I have said, is only part, and the minor part, of the great general question of the education of Catholics in this country. This is so true that, if our Catholic colleges—the major part of the problem—are built up to such a degree that they can care for the great majority of Catholic students, then the problem of the Catholic at the secular institution will be reduced to almost disappearing proportions.

Our first duty, therefore, is to see to it that this happy consummation be not made impossible. It could be made impossible in two ways: by diverting our resources in men and money away from the Catholic college into the secular college to such a degree that the Catholic college is crippled, and by building up the position of the Catholic student at the secular college so strongly that it will be well nigh impossible to dislodge him, even if the Catholic college problem is satisfactorily solved.

Such an unfortunate situation would be vastly aggravated if, as was for a time threatened, the Catholic establishment at the secular institution were to be offered as a *substitute* for a Catholic college, and the public were to be led to believe it just as safe and profitable to attend there, as at a Catholic college. As a statement of theory and a philosophy of education such a position was reprobated at the Louisville educational convention, and rightly.

Nevertheless, even if the theory is expressly abandoned, the impression will always remain. This, too, therefore, is a consideration to be borne in mind in determining the scope of the chaplain's work at the secular university. No matter how well explained or how well defended, the presence of the chaplain at a secular university will always be an argument for many people that they may send their sons there, even if their title to so doing is not at all clear. And this result will be the surer, the more active and the greater is the scope of the chaplain's work.

Indeed the very zeal of the chaplain,—and there are very zealous ones—increases the difficulty. Here, then, is another reason for the restriction of the scope of the chaplaincy, and it affects the personal activities of the chaplain less than the material size of the establishment erected.

Lastly, there is the question of whether the student at the secular college should be given anything more than the usual religious instruction and the personal direction, enlightenment and correction, which an intelligent and active chaplain usually gives.

This question, too, cannot be answered, like all the others, without reference to the whole problem. If, fortunately, our colleges were well supplied with professors and buildings, if, in a word, the student in the Catholic college were adequately taken care of, I hardly think there would be objection to further educational activities undertaken by the chaplain, if such activities did not act as a magnet to draw students away from Catholic colleges. But has that time come? Are our Catholic colleges so well equipped? The presence of so many Catholics at secular colleges is a partial answer to that. And a visit to any of the Catholic institutions will supply the rest.

Once again, if the chaplains enter definitely the educational field, as distinct from the pastoral, in the present state of our Catholic colleges, these latter are sure to suffer from neglect still more than they do now.

To sum up, therefore, this discussion: only a clear title to presence at a non-Catholic college gives a student a full right to all the ministrations of the Church specially designed for him as a college student. Such a title consists of the special permission of the local Bishop in the case where he cannot receive the educational facilities which he demands at a Catholic college; and not necessarily at the local Catholic college.

In those places where attendance at a secular college is a practical necessity, the work for Catholic students is subject to certain grave restrictions. As a general principle

the work cannot in justice be such as would cripple Catholic education itself, or make impossible our expressed aim of having all, or nearly all, of our young people in Catholic colleges. What is being done cannot be presented as a substitute for a Catholic education, nor as an excuse for attendance at the secular college, where other reasons are absent. Moreover, the general principle of the prior rights of the Catholic college will exercise a strict influence both on the magnitude of the establishment erected and on the extent of the work of the chaplain himself. It will in any case exclude him from entering the educational field, properly so called, at the secular college, and confine him to his most useful field.

III

The objections that can be raised against the thesis upheld in these articles can be better understood if the thesis, consisting of two assumptions, three propositions, and a conclusion, is recalled to mind.

The first assumption is the express, declared mind of the Church that there is no satisfactory substitute for a Catholic college education, no matter what correctives are offered Catholic students in secular colleges. The second assumption is that our ultimate aim in this country is to get as many as possible of our college students into Catholic institutions, thus reducing to a minimum the problem of the Catholics at the secular institutions. These assumptions I do not propose to discuss, as I take it they are by now universally accepted.

The first proposition based on these assumptions is that the whole problem is one problem, no part of which should be solved to the prejudice of any other part. The second is that the major part of this problem is the Catholic college, and the minor part the Catholic at the secular college. The third is that the real solution of

the problem of the Catholic at the secular college will come when complete educational facilities are offered him at the Catholic college.

The evident conclusion is that, admitting the necessity of pastoral work for Catholics at secular colleges, then the prior right of the Catholics at Catholic colleges, and the prior duty of the others to be in Catholic colleges, preclude any extensive program of expansion of that pastoral work until the Catholic colleges have been fully provided for. Let there be pastoral work for those students, but let it be within the limits demanded by the general problem, not subject to the danger of being offered as a substitute for Catholic education or as an excuse for being in a secular college, and not such as will make forever impossible the ultimate solution.

At the outset let it not be said that this is merely a negative contribution to the discussion. It is negative merely as it sets a limit within which a solution is to be sought. It is extremely positive in that it presents the only true and lasting solution of the problem, namely, such a building up of the Catholic colleges as will reduce the Catholics at secular colleges and universities to a handful. Any attempt to find the immediate solution in large Catholic establishments at secular colleges will only end in disaster.

The solution is not to be looked for in a day. The immediate solution is to begin immediately to bring Catholics over from secular colleges and if there is not room now, to begin immediately a nationwide program which will make it possible to have more and more Catholic freshmen enter there each year.

I consider as irrelevant any argument against this position which is merely an argument in favor of attending non-Catholic institutions. That point is settled. Thus we are told that Catholics in England and Germany attend secular universities, therefore why not here? This is not even a valid argument in favor of attendance at our uni-

versities, for the Holy See only tolerates it there because there is no provision for Catholic college and university education in those countries such as we have here. The Holy See tolerates it here where and when there is no such provision. The point to be kept in mind is that the principle of the preëminence of Catholic education must never be lost. Besides, the attempt to present a secular education plus a course in Christian doctrine as a Catholic education has been publicly disavowed.

Likewise, the claim that we must have in this country more contact between Catholic and non-Catholic is beside the point, and really an argument for attendance at secular colleges, and not a good one at that. It fails as an implication of a fact, that we have not such contact; there is too much already for certain classes, and no good has come of it. It fails as a theory, for it means, if it means anything, in the concrete, that the immature minds of young Catholics are to be the material of the experiment. Let us have contact, and more of it, but between the proper people.

An argument that comes nearer the point is drawn from the fact that in many localities there is no proper facility for Catholic college and university education. The existence of such a condition, of course, is no reason why it should continue, rather the contrary. But while it does continue, the Holy See has made ample provision for it, keeping always our own principles intact; for in those places the Bishops are authorized to give the permission to attend non-Catholic institutions in each particular case as it arises. But even this case is no ground for argument that in those localities a large Catholic establishment in the secular colleges should be built up.

There is in this matter much misapprehension. Mr. Heithaus showed conclusively from statistics last year in these columns, that the vast majority of our Catholic population are well provided with Catholic colleges in their immediate locality; the curve of population follows

inevitably the curve of colleges. If there are not enough educational facilities in those colleges, it is merely a matter of time and cooperation until they have enough. Moreover, it is not true that Catholics depend exclusively on their local State University. The registration lists show surprising results along this line. Large numbers go away from home, and far away, to attend college. The absence of a Catholic college in the locality is not always, in fact it is rarely, a valid excuse for presence at a secular college or university. Such presence will have nearly always to be excused on other grounds than that.

It has been said: "We are confronted with a condition, not a theory." This is not altogether true. We are confronted with a condition *and* a theory. And it is only by recognizing the proper theory that the condition will be corrected. If that saying is offered as a reason why we should overlook the Catholic colleges and universities, and come out strongly in favor of large establishments in secular colleges merely because there is a large number of Catholics there, then in our search for a practical solution, there is grave danger of overlooking the theory, too. The theory, properly applied, will correct the condition.

The mere number of the Catholics at the non-Catholic colleges and universities is not in itself a reason for enlarging and multiplying Catholic facilities for them there, as has been alleged. The condition is alarming, it is true, both because there are so many there and because they are so clearly exposed to danger. It is not like the Catholic Church to neglect those who are in danger of losing their souls, no matter how few they are; and where there are many, the necessity is the more urgent. One would sin against both charity and justice who would urge their total abandonment. But their right, clear though it be, cannot stand against the clearer right of the Catholic college and its students, if these are to be hurt or hindered. When these have been fully cared for, it will be time to talk about enlarging Catholic facilities at the secular col-

leges. The immediate problem, if there is one, is the Catholic college. The very best thing that can be done for the Catholic at the secular college is to make room for him at the Catholic college.

But, it is urged, if not the number of these students, then their quality entitles them to prior consideration. It has been said that our Catholic leaders have come, and will continue to come, from secular colleges. This is so untenable a position that one is surprised to see it seriously advanced. There are literally thousands of communities, large and small, in this land where the Catholic leaders are products of Catholic colleges. The number of Catholic leaders from secular colleges, outside of a few men known chiefly for their wealth, is so notoriously small that we experience surprise when we encounter any of them. It is not surprising that they are so few, for it is an observed fact that one of the effects of a non-Catholic education is that it segregates its subjects almost entirely from the stream of Catholic life and action.

The problem still ahead of us is very great. There is such a vast amount to be done, both in strengthening our faculties and courses and in enlarging our material facilities, that one might well despair, if it were not for one clear fact. That fact is that the distance we have to go is not nearly so great as the distance we have gone. True, a large number of our Catholic college students are still outside the orbit of a Catholic education. But on the other side we have 176 going concerns caring for 60,000 Catholics already. A few more highly trained professors, a few more buildings, a few new courses, and an ever renewed consecration to the highest type of education, and the work is done. May the dawn of that day be near!