



# Should Children learn about God - in School ?

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## *Why the Knights of Columbus Advertise Catholic Faith*

The reason is simple. We Catholics want our non-Catholic friends and neighbors to know us as we really are and not as we are some times mistakenly represented.

We are confident that when our religious Faith is better understood by those who do not share it, mutual understanding will promote the good-will which is so necessary in a predominantly Christian country whose government is designed to serve all the people—no matter how much their religious convictions may differ.

American Catholics are convinced that as the teachings of Christ widely and firmly take hold of the hearts and conduct of our people, we shall remain free in the sense that Christ promised (John VIII, 31-38), and in the manner planned by the Founding Fathers of this republic.

Despite the plainly stated will of the Good Shepherd that there be "one fold and one shepherd," the differences in the understanding of Christ's teaching are plainly evident. It has rightfully been called "the scandal of a divided Christianity."

If there is anything which will gather together the scattered flock of Christ, it is the nationwide understanding of the Savior, what He did and how He intended mankind to benefit by the Redemption.

To this end, we wish our fellow-Americans to become acquainted with the teachings of Christ as the Catholic Church has faithfully presented them, since the day the apostles invaded the nations of the world in willing and courageous obedience to Christ's command: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt. XXVIII, 19).

**SUPREME COUNCIL  
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS  
Religious Information Bureau  
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# CATHOLIC SCHOOL QUESTION DIFFERS IN U. S. AND CANADA

The United States is not, of course, the only land in which Catholics have their own schools.

But the chief controversy and disagreement over the separate system of Catholic schools is centered largely in the United States; and for that reason, this pamphlet is limited to an explanation of why and how Catholic schools operate in the United States.

It is highly improbable that any system of public education could provide Catholic children with the type of religious instruction which their parents are duty-bound to give them. How, then, could Catholic parents be satisfied with a system of public education which prohibits any religious training by law?

The existence of Catholic schools in Canada does not create the same problem. In the predominantly Catholic Province of Quebec, for example, both Catholic and public schools are supported by public funds. In the Province of Ontario, the law requires daily prayer, Bible reading and other religious training in the public schools.

People everywhere are becoming increasingly aware of the need for the adequate religious education of our children. This is true not only of Catholics, but non-Catholics, too. It is true not only in the United States, but also in Canada.

A careful reading of this pamphlet will enable you better to understand why Catholics pay for the building and operation of their own parochial schools, while also paying their full share of taxes to support public schools.

It will remove from your mind many erroneous ideas sometimes entertained by non-Catholics, such as the belief that Catholic schools are different and inferior to public schools... that they fail to educate children for full and responsible citizenship... that their purpose is to segregate Catholic children from others.

It will give you a clear, understandable picture of why Catholics have their own schools... and what goes on in a Catholic school, whether it is located in the United States, Canada or any other land.

# JUST WHAT IS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Have you ever visited a Catholic school? Very likely there is one in your neighborhood. It may be called St. Dominic's, or St. Leo's, or Holy Redeemer, or by some similar name, but we shall call it St. Stephen's Parish Grade School.

You have passed St. Stephen's numerous times; you have read about it in your local newspaper; and you have friends or business acquaintances whose children attend school there. Perhaps your own children have friends at St. Stephen's, or have played against it in baseball and other sports, or have participated with its students in community programs and civic celebrations. In appearance St. Stephen's is much like any school—desks, blackboards, a library, and a playground; but you wish to learn about the character, the purpose, the operation, the achievement, and the contribution to the nation of St. Stephen's and other Catholic schools.

You may have certain questions about Catholic schools for which you have long been intending to obtain the answers, but have not had the time or the opportunity



to do so. Let's visit St. Stephen's.

On the way over, we can discuss briefly the history of the Catholic schools in the United States.

The first schools in our land were Catholic. History tells us that Catholic schools appeared in New Mexico as early as 1516, in Florida in

1565, and in Texas and California throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those schools, educating children and youth of all ages, were erected by the Spanish missionaries, and continued through many years until Indian revolts and political upheavals destroyed almost all traces of them.

During the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries schools were also erected throughout the Mississippi Valley and around the Great Lakes by the French missionaries. One of those early schools, an academy for girls founded in 1727 in New Orleans, has continued down to the present time.

Georgetown University, in the District of Columbia, has the distinction of being the oldest Catholic college in the United States.

It was formally established in 1789, the year when the Constitution went into effect and George Washington became the first president of our land.

The first free parochial school for boys and girls in the United States was started in St. Joseph's Parish, Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1810. That was thirty years before Horace Mann instituted the public school system.

Today, there are Catholic schools in every state, in the District of Columbia, and in our territorial possessions. You will find Catholic schools in downtown business areas, in factory districts, in congested residential neighborhoods, in the great cities, in villages and small towns, and in rural areas. The Catholic schools constitute a complete educational system, elementary, secondary, graduate, and professional, and within their walls American youth can spend a happy and profitable twelve, or sixteen, or even more years.

Here we are at St. Stephen's, which is one of 10,372 Catholic elementary schools in America. It is named after St. Stephen, who was the first Christian to give up his life rather than to deny his religion. Catholic schools have the names of saints in order that the pupils may be constantly reminded to practice the virtues and to imitate the holy life of the particular saint. The cross above the entrance, being the symbol of Christianity, impresses the pupils with the necessity and obligation of considering and obeying God in all their actions. The American flag hang-

ing there in the hallway reminds the students that they are at St. Stephen's to learn to be loyal and useful citizens as well as good Christians.

The first person whom we will talk to at St. Stephen's is the pastor, Father Colby, who has just finished a conference with the principal on matters of school policy. St. Stephen's belongs to the parish of the same name, and for that reason it is classified as a parochial Catholic school. A small number of Catholic grade schools, known as private Catholic schools, are owned and operated by religious teaching communities.



As pastor of St. Stephen's parish, Father Colby is the head of the school and generally responsible for its policies and operations. The direct and daily administration of the school is, however, delegated by Father Colby to the principal and her staff of teachers. He is

busy enough with the purchasing of supplies and equipment, the supervision of repairs and maintenance, and, especially, with finding the money needed to support St. Stephen's. You may ask Father Colby your questions about the financing of St. Stephen's.

"Where did I get the money to build St. Stephen's?" Father Colby replies. "Where do I find the money to meet current expenses, purchase supplies, and pay the salaries of the sisters teaching here? The answer is simple and magnificent. From the self-sacrificing men and women of this parish.

"When it was decided fifteen years ago to build our parochial school in accordance with the wish of the Church that every parish have a Catholic school, I called my parishioners together and we worked out ways and means of raising the substantial down payment which was required. A special collection was taken up each Sunday to which the people contributed as generously as possible. The men ran bazaars; the women conducted cake sales. The school fund grew; and, finally, we hired an architect and a contractor, built St. Stephen's, and assumed a large mortgage.

"St. Stephen's does not charge tuition. The school is free to every boy and girl in our parish. The same situation prevails in a number of parochial schools throughout the country. Those that do charge tuition require it only of parents who can afford to pay; and then the tuition will vary according to the financial condition of the parish. St. Stephen's also furnishes

textbooks free, as do many of our elementary schools. Some parochial schools rent textbooks at a nominal rate, and others have the parents buy them if they can afford to do so. In Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Oregon, the State supplies textbooks other than religious ones.

"The money to operate St. Stephen's", continued Father Colby, "comes from the free-will donations which my parishioners make to the collection each Sunday. You will find this true of all parochial



schools. They depend for their financial support almost entirely upon the generosity of our Catholic people. The cost of building and maintaining parochial schools is, as you surely realize, a heavy, heavy burden upon the Catholic laity. The burden would be still heavier were it not for the self-sacrifice of the religious men and women who teach in our schools. We pay the

sisters at St. Stephen's, or more accurately the religious community of which they are members, \$900.00 per year or enough to feed, clothe and shelter them on a modest scale. In some parts of the country, where Catholics are few and the parishes very poor, the sisters are paid as little as \$500.00 per year.

"No, the sisters do not complain because they are underpaid for the hard work of teaching. The sisters have dedicated themselves out of love of God to the education of Catholic youth; and they ask no other reward than the privilege of assisting Catholic parents in educating their children to be good Catholics and good Americans.

"There are approximately 5,000,000 students in Catholic grade and high schools in the United States. Using \$350.00 as an average per pupil for operating costs in public schools, this means that these Catholic school students are saving taxpayers over 1.5 billion dollars annually. This is in operating costs only and does not include tremendous capital expenses for school construction, etc. I am sure you will agree with J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a non-Catholic, who in speaking of the Catholic schools declared: 'No gift of the Rockefeller or Carnegie foundations, or any other Christian denomination, can equal the gift presented to the American people by the Catholic Church.'

"But to be a real and enduring gift the Catholic schools must do more than save the American tax-

payer \$1,500,000,000 each year. If, as some individuals like to think, Catholic schools exist solely for the benefit of the Church and accomplish little more than the teaching of religion, they would be a gift of value. And yet they do much more. For the answer, talk with the principal and teachers here at St. Stephen's, observe our boys and girls, visit the classrooms, and find out for yourself what a Catholic school is and what a Catholic school does. Then you will be able to decide whether I am right or wrong in asserting that the Catholic schools render a much needed public service, and are, therefore, a gift of great value to the American people. When time permits, please let me know your decision."

The principal of St. Stephen's is Sister Mary Helen. She is a member of the religious order of women that conducts St. Stephen's, and has voluntarily bound herself to serve God by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Sister Mary Helen and the sisters of her staff were appointed by the officers of their religious community, and after a term of service at St. Stephen's will ordinarily be transferred to some other Catholic school conducted by their community.

The teachers at St. Stephen's, as in the Catholic schools throughout the country, meet state requirements for public school teachers. In most parts of the country the elementary teacher must have at least two years of college education, and high school teachers must have four. Catholic schools volun-

tarily comply with these state requirements. Since, in the words of Pope Pius XI, "perfect schools are the result of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and grounded in the matter they have to teach . . .," the training of teachers for the Catholic schools is an especially important part of Catholic education. Many religious communities have organized normal schools within their motherhouse where the sisters, or brothers, or priests, can obtain the necessary training. Others send their members to Catholic colleges that specialize in teacher training, and, for special courses, to non-Catholic and state institutions. There are, in addition, 31 diocesan teachers' colleges and normal schools, all approved by their respective state departments of education. A diocese, from which the word diocesan is derived, is an administrative unit of the Catholic Church which comprises a number of parishes like St. Stephen's and over which a bishop presides. Summer school, teachers' conferences, and professional literature keep the Catholic school teacher informed of the latest teaching methods and equipment and conversant with the progress and changes in his or her field of work.

Here is Sister Mary Helen's office. As principal, she is responsible for the day-to-day administration of St. Stephen's, directs the education program, co-ordinates the work of the teaching staff, and holds faculty meetings at regular intervals to discuss disciplinary and teaching problems as well as to

plan phases of the school program. She and her staff are assisted in their work by a sister who is called the community supervisor. All the religious teaching orders have supervisors who visit the schools which are taught by members of their order, help the teachers with their problems, and try to see that each teacher is doing the work for which she is best suited.



"Sister Mary Helen, may we interrupt your busy day for a few minutes? We are visiting St. Stephen's to learn what a Catholic school is and what a Catholic school does. Since it is wise to begin a quest for information with a definition of terms, will you define for us the term a Catholic school?"

"That's a good question," Sister Mary Helen replied, "because there is so much misunderstanding about Catholic schools. But first, let me tell you what a Catholic



school is not. It is not, for instance, a Sunday school operating five days a week. Its curriculum does not merely add religion to the practical subjects taught in other schools. Its object is not merely to acquaint children with the prayers, rules and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. And the Church has not established its own school system merely to promote its own interests, to keep Catholics apart from other people, or to wield any undue influence upon the lives of its people.

"The Catholic school is built upon the conviction of the Catholic people, that God is the all-important consideration in our lives—and therefore in our education. We recognize that the talents and abilities which education seeks to develop are God-given talents and abilities, and that their development and use must be in keeping with the purpose for which God gave them to us.

"To achieve this, we believe that God must be the beginning, the core and the end of the school curriculum. Our understanding and appreciation of Him, our Creator, must permeate and color all that we learn and think and believe. In a Catholic school, therefore, religion is not merely a separate or additional course, but rather the basic principle which gives direction and meaning to all that we learn.

"The Catholic school seeks to provide the highest type of intellectual, cultural, physical and moral education—to equip Catholics to live usefully and worthily in a complex human society. It plants

in the minds and hearts of its children a deep sense of responsibility to their community, their nation and their fellow-man. It impresses upon them their obligations to government, to the upholding of law and order, and to the fulfillment of their duties as good citizens.

"The Catholic school does not minimize in the least, the importance of training children in all the practical aspects of living. Its curriculum is, therefore, quite like that of the good public school except for the motivating principle which casts God's understanding light on all things taught and learned.



"In our modern society, even the individual who does not believe in God at all can acquire the intellectual and cultural advantages of a good education—by looking only through the eyes of the mind. In the Catholic school, a child is taught to search for knowledge through the windows of the soul."

The school calendar which you see posted outside Sister Mary Helen's office was drawn up by the diocesan superintendent of schools, Father Ellis, and is followed by all the parochial schools of the diocese embracing your community. The bishop of a diocese is the head of its diocesan school system which includes the parochial grade schools, the diocesan central high schools, and other institutions of learning conducted under the direct auspices of the diocese.

Each diocese has a school board appointed by the bishop and responsible to him for the general supervision and progress of the diocesan school system. The executive officer of the school board is the diocesan superintendent of schools, a priest who has had thorough training and extensive experience in education. He is appointed by the bishop and represents him in the administration of the diocesan schools.

As diocesan superintendent, Father Ellis is the unifying and guiding factor in the schools of his diocese. Under his guidance improved methods of teaching have been introduced, standard tests have been adopted and plans have been put into operation, for supervision by diocesan supervisors who visit the class-rooms to see that the highest standards are maintained. The course of study followed at St. Stephen's is planned and the textbooks used are selected by Father Ellis together with the curriculum committee of the diocese. Every year he publish-

es a report giving a complete statistical account of the diocesan schools and making recommendations for their improvement. In addition to all of this, he is a member of many committees and is called upon to give many talks. You may have seen him last Sunday on television when he participated in a round-table discussion of the question: "Are new teaching methods needed to meet the present world crisis?"

Our next stop will be the school auditorium where a meeting of the Parent-Educator Group is in progress. Catholic parents do not free themselves of all obligation in regard to their children's education by sending them to a Catholic school and contributing to its support. The Church teaches that parents have the primary and an incontestable right to educate their children, and it insists that even the best school is unable to handle the job of education without parental help and cooperation. Catholic parents have the duty, as well as the right, to take an active vigilant interest in the education which the Catholic schools undertake to give their children.

The majority of Catholic elementary schools, and many of the high schools and colleges, have parents' organizations. These groups serve many purposes. They function as an invaluable liaison between the parents and the teachers, so that home and school may work together for the betterment of the child. They also perform all sorts of activities in the school, such as running the lunchrooms, assisting

the public health nurse, and providing library service, radio equipment, and other educational aids. In a number of dioceses Catholic lay men and women serve as members of the diocesan school board and thus have a direct and major role in the supervision and management of their Catholic schools.

St. Stephen's Parent-Educator Group has planned for this year a series of lectures intended to acquaint parents with organizations which promote Catholic education on a national scale. The speaker today is Bishop Sheen, who is Director of the Education Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington, D. C. This department is a clearing house of information and a service agency for the Catholic schools. It collects data concerning Catholic schools, furnishes information to school officials and the general public, advises Catholic educators on problems of national concern and represents the interests of Catholic education generally. There is no over-all national agency which controls the Catholic schools.

Bishop Sheen is speaking on the National Catholic Educational Association. This is a voluntary organization of Catholic educators, lay and religious. At national meetings the members exchange ideas, hear discussions upon important problems, and learn of new teaching methods and equipment. At regional meetings the members discuss problems peculiar to their own areas. The Association issues a quarterly bulletin and an occasional

newsletter which brings important items in the field of education to the attention of the members.

So far our visit to St. Stephen's has shown you how a Catholic school is financed, staffed, and administered. But these, no matter how excellent they may be, are, at most, only the framework of a school and of themselves cannot work the deep and abiding changes which are necessary to produce pupils loyal alike to God and



country. The vital process of St. Stephen's is to be found in the classrooms where by guidance and instruction and through example and environment the pupils acquire a full measure of the truth, a deeper love of the good and a finer appreciation of the beautiful. Our next stop then will be the classrooms. There you will see what a Catholic school does, and thereby will learn more about what a Catholic school is.

# WHAT GOES ON IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

Since the bell has rung for recess at St. Stephen's, we shall postpone our visit to the classrooms until classes are resumed. We can spend the time observing the children at play.



Notice how they look and act, and are exactly like any group of American school children. They represent various classes of society, different nationalities and races, and every economic level. The boy at bat is the son of the president of the steel fabricating plant on the River Road. The father of the boy pitching is the president of the union which struck that plant last fall. The catcher lives in an expensive rambler on fashion row; the first baseman calls home a tenement house in shanty town. You can see Norway in the blonde miss rushing down the slide, and Italy or Spain in the dark-eyed boy crowding after her. The parents of the child going up on the seesaw came to America from Japan; the great-grandparents of the boy coming down were brought here as slaves from Africa. You will find the same diversity of backgrounds in most Catholic schools. Attendance there is neces-

sarily an experience from which American youth derives such important concepts as brotherhood, democracy, and equality.

In contrast to St. Stephen's, there are in certain sections of the country Catholic schools where virtually the entire enrollment consists of a single people or nationality, for example, Chinese, or Mexican, or Negro. This situation, which is also true of the public schools, results from the fact that racial strains are at times found living in one community or neighborhood. Where state law requires, the Church operates parochial schools exclusively for Negro children. There are also Catholic schools for the Indians on the various reservations throughout the country. The Church builds and maintains schools wherever her children are to be found, so that all may have the Christian education to which they are entitled.

This may surprise you. The tow-head you see skipping rope is not a Catholic. She is a Presbyterian. While Catholic schools are intended primarily for Catholic children,

they, as a rule, admit non-Catholic children if there is room for them and their parents want them admitted. This is particularly true of Catholic high schools and colleges. The percentage of non-Catholic students attending Catholic schools varies from two percent in some schools to almost fifty percent in others. Non-Catholic students are not required to take religion courses or to attend religious services, although they may if they so wish and their parents do not object. Many of the most loyal and representative alumni of Catholic schools are Protestant or Jewish.

The boys and girls whom we are now watching at play will one day be the men and women of America, and will be found in every walk of life. They will be farmers and laborers, housewives and civic leaders, soldiers and bureaucrats, voters and statesmen, and many will be fathers and mothers. In order that each in his or her own way may work to build a better America and a better world, and attain the ultimate goal of mankind—union with God in heaven—as do all Catholic schools, St. Stephen's is seeking to assist its pupils to develop the ideas, the attitudes, the abilities, and the habits that are demanded for Christian living in our American and democratic society. Our visit to various classrooms at St. Stephen's will show you what a Catholic school does to attain that objective. You will learn that St. Stephen's does more than teach its pupils the answers to the catechism, and has them do more than recite prayers,

all important as those activities are in a Catholic school. You will learn that St. Stephen's furnishes its pupils a full and a fine education, equal in content and method to what they would receive at a public school in your community, but different in that whatever they learn, they relate to God as the source, the center, and the final goal of every human action. The bell ending recess has sounded. The children are returning to their classrooms. We will follow them.

Our first stop will be the third grade where a class in safeguarding physical health is under way. Physi-



cal fitness is a major goal of a Catholic student. In the classrooms of St. Stephen's the boys and girls are learning about the structure of the human body and its beauty as the handiwork of God, are acquiring proper habits of health and diet, and are being taught how to cooperate with public agencies in

the maintenance of safety for themselves and others. St. Stephen's has its pupils undergo periodic examinations by the doctors and nurses of the Public Health Service which your community maintains. If any physical defects are discovered, parents are made aware of them so that steps may be taken to correct them.

In addition, St. Stephen's has baseball, basketball, football and volleyball teams, as well as formal physical education classes, in order that the pupils may develop coordination, teamwork, and habits of fair play. Some Catholic schools are handicapped by the lack of a gymnasium and proper sports equipment, but by ingenuity in the use of hallways, school yards, and vacant lots, they provide their students with adequate exercise and recreation. Meanwhile, the priests and the people are working together to raise the money needed to improve conditions.

From the third grade we shall cross the corridor, and will watch the fifth graders as they work out their arithmetic problems. Since economic competency is a major goal of every Catholic student, the pupils at St. Stephen's are learning the use of numbers, fractions, and decimals, and are acquiring skill in applying them to the solution of everyday problems. They are also being taught to read, and write, and spell, and are developing the ability to express themselves orally and in writing as well as the habit of thoughtful listening. But, because St. Stephen's is a Catholic school, its pupils are attaining more

than proficiency in earning a livelihood. Notice the problems the children at the front blackboard are solving. They involve and emphasize charity and justice in community living and business practices. Later the children will discuss and learn to apply Christian principles to problems concerned with social justice, such as fair rates of interest, reasonable profits, and family wages and budgets. In reading classes they will read Bible selections and religious books, as well as fiction, biography, and poetry; and in writing and spelling classes they will learn that truth and virtue, as well as grammar and diction, should guide their pens and move their lips. Thus, the pupils of St. Stephen's in gaining economic competency acquire also the moral and spiritual values which they must have, if they are to earn their living with due regard for the laws of God and America and with sincere respect for the rights of others.

Our next stop will be the sixth grade where the pupils are studying examples of early American arts and crafts. Cultural development is another of the major goals of a Catholic student. The Catholic schools have art classes to encourage the creative ability of their pupils and to teach them to see and appreciate beauty wherever found. They have music classes to enable their pupils to cultivate a taste for good music, to study the lives and the works of great musicians, and to foster individual talents. Nor do the Catholic schools neglect science in developing the

cultural knowledge and background of their pupils. They have classes in which the students study the world about them and the heavens above them, learn the laws that govern the universe, and through field trips and laboratory experiments delve into the workings of nature.

Cultural development in a Catholic school, however, is not attained apart from man's relation-

God; and that the plants, the animals, and all the resources of the earth are gifts of God, which man has the responsibility to use wisely and to conserve for future generations.

Before leaving the sixth grade, we shall ask the teacher in charge, Sister Jane Marie, to answer your questions concerning the teaching methods employed in Catholic schools. "Sister, what teaching



ship with God. The Catholic student learns of music's role in the worship of God, as shown in the chants of the Church and the religious compositions of great composers and of art's role in the glorification of God, as found in the devotional works of master painters and famous sculptors. Through science the Catholic pupil comes to the realization that the order, the harmony, and the beauty of the universe could not exist without a Designer, whom we call

methods do Catholic schools employ? Are they modern, democratic and conducive to independent thinking and personal development? Or, as some people claim, do Catholic schools merely tell their pupils what to think, what to do and demand of them blind obedience and acceptance?"

"There is," Sister Jane Marie replies, "no complete uniformity among Catholic schools as to the teaching methods employed. Teaching methods, as well as courses of

study, differ from one diocese to the next, from one section of the country to another and are varied to meet local conditions. Here at St. Stephen's we favor the learning-through-activity methods of education; elsewhere the more traditional methods are favored.

"Catholic educators, generally, regard the successful school as a place where children live and do, not merely sit and listen. They consider education as an active, not a passive, process, as something that is accomplished by means of self-activity under the direction and guidance of teachers and not by blind acceptance of what one reads or hears. A Catholic school deserving of the name operates on the principle that the best way to train the mind is to confront it with real problems and to give it the opportunity and the freedom to solve them. I am at St. Stephen's to guide and direct our children, not to spoon-feed them nor to make of them puppets echoing my words and parroting my opinions.

"You ask whether our teaching methods are democratic. Let me quote from this book on my desk, entitled *Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living*. It sets forth the curriculum prepared for Catholic elementary schools by the Commission on American Citizenship of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., and is widely used in parochial schools. The book says, in part: 'A democratic teaching procedure is given particular emphasis in the curriculum established by the Commission. Since the ability to govern

oneself is such an essential requisite for citizenship in the American democracy, it is necessary that it should be acquired through experience in the school. A school is a community in which a number of human beings are working together in a common endeavor. Its discipline should reflect an understanding of this fact. Good order must be insisted upon, and respect for authority. But these are best fostered in an atmosphere of freedom in which it is possible to be natural. When a child goes to school he loses nothing of the sacredness of his personality. He cannot learn the art of living in a free society from training under a classroom dictatorship.' In my opinion most Catholic schools are conscientiously following that advice.

"But in a Catholic school, above all procedures and methods, no matter how modern, or democratic, or active, is the realization that God's help is necessary if the pupil is to attain the full growth, spiritual and moral, intellectual and physical, which education to be true and complete must give him. While employing all human means to promote the full growth of the student, the Catholic school teacher does not rely upon them alone but depends especially on God, Whose authority and holy law are the foundations of Christian education. For this reason, in a Catholic school the day begins and ends with prayer; religion is made an integral part of the daily lives of the students; and by example and guidance they are encouraged to cooperate with God in becoming



loyal citizens of earth and heaven. Yes, Catholic schools employ modern, democratic, and active methods of education, but they remember always that it is 'God who gives the growth.' "

To find proof for Sister Jane Marie's answers, we shall visit the seventh grade classroom. The children there are enacting a dramatization which illustrates the contrasting ideas of Jefferson and Hamilton on government and democracy. The posters you see on the walls were prepared by the students after visiting the state capitol, and depict representative government in action. The exhibit in this corner, which is the work of the boys of the class, shows the development of American transportation from ox cart to jet plane. These and related activities in history, civics, and geography are directed toward aiding the seventh-graders to develop social virtue, which is another of the major goals of a Catholic student.

Social virtue may be defined broadly as the ability to live with one's fellow men in peace and unity, to be an active and useful citizen, and to demonstrate in one's life the principles of God's eternal law and the ideals of American democracy. The course in social studies at St. Stephen's is designed to provide the student with a broad knowledge of America, its setting, its people and its resources, with a sound understanding of American government, local, state, and federal, and with a full background in America's history, past and present. But, being a Catholic

school, St. Stephen's adds another and most important element to the social education of its students. Notice the list of goals which the seventh-grade sister has written on the blackboard for her students to seek in their social studies. The goals are copied from *Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living*, the book that Sister Jane Marie mentioned. I shall read some of them to you:

"To study how American democracy, and our own lives as Christian citizens, are based on Christian principles of human dignity and liberty, and responsibility to God and fellowmen.

"To realize our responsibility for keeping these principles fixed and unchanged in our rapidly changing American life.

"To recognize our privilege as Americans to benefit from the Bill of Rights, and our obligation as citizens to keep it intact, and see that it is never violated by individuals, by groups, or by the Government itself.

"To acknowledge the equality of all men in the sight of God and to recognize it in our dealings with persons of another race, color, or creed.

"To appreciate the spiritual ties that unite the people of the United States to one another and to men throughout the world as human beings made to the image of God and destined for Union with Him.

"To fulfill our obligation to use the freedom of election to

vote for upright leaders and for measures that protect human rights." As you can see from those goals, St. Stephen's adds to social education the moral and spiritual values without which democracy will not long survive. William Penn aptly expressed that need when he said: "The people who are not governed by God will be ruled by tyrants."



So far we have visited four classrooms at St. Stephen's, and have learned that the work of a Catholic school includes the physical, the intellectual, the cultural and the social development of its pupils. Essential as these goals are for a Catholic student, the crowning goal is moral and spiritual perfection, which is achieved in and through all the rest. To attain that goal the student must develop both a knowledge of religious truths and habits of religious observance. He must both know and practice

his religion. The one fortifies the other. Therefore, in a Catholic school the study and the practice of Catholicism are a pre-eminent and a fundamental part of the curriculum. This does not mean, however, that the religion class takes up the major portion of the school day nor that the pupils spend most of their time in church or at prayer. While Catholic school children devote perhaps ten minutes a day to reciting prayers and occasionally spend an hour or two in attending religious services, their practice of religion parallels and supplements but does not supplant the curriculum.

Catholic schools aid their pupils to develop habits of religious observance principally by providing a Christian atmosphere in which to learn and by encouraging the pupils to worship God at home and at church, to obey the law of God at all times, and to show themselves to be fervent Christians in living and working with others. The religion class likewise takes up only a small portion of the school day, about thirty minutes on the average. More time than that is ordinarily not needed, since, as you observed in the classrooms which we visited, a Catholic school relates the moral and spiritual truths of religion to every branch of human knowledge. Furthermore, as you will learn when we visit the eighth grade, a religion class in itself contributes effectively and substantially to the development of loyal and useful citizens for this world as well as for the next.

On the way to the eighth grade classroom, we shall look in at the school library. St. Stephen's has an excellent library, as do many Catholic schools. Some are not so fortunate, but they are striving to improve their library facilities to the extent that straitened financial circumstances permit. You can see from the shelves that the library here furnishes the pupils with adequate facilities for research and supplementary reading, and that it brings them into contact with the writings and viewpoints of non-Catholic as well as Catholic authors and scholars. If you were to examine the textbooks used at St. Stephen's, or any Catholic school, you would find that they expand the intellectual horizon of the students to include truth and goodness wherever found rather than limit it simply to Catholicism. Since the word "Catholic" means "universal", a Catholic school would belie its name if it were narrowly sectarian in educating its pupils.

Here we are at the eighth-grade classroom. The religion class has begun. In previous lessons the children have studied the life of Christ in His Church, how He continues to teach and govern through her. This week they are studying how Christ calls mankind to holiness in different states of life.

The vocation to married life is now being discussed. Let's lean over the shoulder of the second boy in this row and read the notes that he has jotted down. "Marriage is a noble vocation to which God calls men and women. The Sacrament of Matrimony gives married

persons special help to enable them to grow in mutual love and holiness. Parents are responsible to God for the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual education of their children. The need for love, sacrifice and obedience in the home. My duty to pray for the strengthening of family life."

Whether our notetaker marries or remains a bachelor, those notes, if remembered, will make him a better American. The same is true of the other knowledge which he obtains in his religious instruction — the laws of God, the teachings of Christ, the truths of religion. I am sure you will agree that in a democracy which acknowledged its reliance on God in declaring its independence of foreign tyranny, the laws of God and the truths of religion are as important to know and to follow as the laws of arithmetic and the truths of history.

You have visited St. Stephen's and have seen a Catholic school in action. If you were to visit other Catholic schools, you would find the same objectives, the same high standards and the same zeal on the part of the priests, the sisters and the laity to train boys and girls to be loyal to God and country and to give them a complete and fine education. The schools will differ only in appearance and equipment — some are new and prosperous, others are old and impoverished. The courses of study followed and the methods used will also differ. Some Catholic schools are in great cities, others are in small towns and still others are in the rural

areas, and each must meet local needs and conditions. But of all it can be fairly said that they render a public service, for, like the public schools, their aim is to prepare their students for the responsibilities of American citizenship.

By now a number of your questions concerning Catholic schools have been answered, but still there are many for which we should find the answers. One of these is: "Why do Catholics have their own



schools?" Let's visit the snack bar across the street and over a cup of coffee we shall work out the answer. On the way, we can discuss briefly Catholic high schools and colleges and universities. You should visit a Catholic high school and a Catholic college, if the opportunity ever presents itself, and learn for yourself how they continue and perfect the Christian and American

education which you have seen St. Stephen's begin.

There are 2,433 Catholic high schools throughout the United States with a total 1960 enrollment of 844,299 students. They have been built in every state and vary in number from Wyoming, which has two, to New York which has 266.

There are three types of Catholic high school. Of the three types, the most numerous is the parish high school, which belongs to the particular parish, as does St. Stephen's, and ordinarily does not charge any tuition.

Private high schools are the oldest type. They are operated by religious orders and are supported by tuition, although frequently the tuition in whole or substantial part is paid by the respective parishes of the students.

While the parish high schools are co-educational for the greater part, there are usually separate private high schools for boys and for girls. The newest of the three types is the diocesan central high school, which is conducted by the diocese and which, depending on the locale, may or may not be co-educational. While some diocesan high schools charge tuition, the majority do not and are supported by diocesan funds or by funds from the various parishes in the community.

Catholic high schools vary greatly in curriculum, administration, and teaching staffs. The diocesan high school is under the direct supervision of the diocesan superintendent of education, and, ac-

ording to its character, may be staffed by sisters, or brothers, or priests, or a combination faculty. The parish high school is the direct responsibility of the parish priest and usually is taught by the same order of sisters that has charge of the parish grade school.

The private high schools are administered and taught by the religious orders of men or women to which they belong. In addition, thirty percent of the Catholic high school teachers throughout the country are lay men and women. While, as is true of, the public school system, many Catholic high schools emphasize the academic or college preparatory courses, an increasing number offer vocational training and commercial courses. Ninety percent of the Catholic high schools are accredited or approved by State authorities, for Catholic administrators endeavor to meet all standards respecting teacher qualifications, attendance and health requirements, and rules governing graduation. Consequently, while receiving the benefits of an education centered on God, most Catholic high school pupils also obtain an education in secular subjects that equals and in many respects surpasses what they would have received elsewhere.

In addition to the Catholic high school system, there are in the United States 265 Catholic universities and colleges with a total enrollment of 302,908.

Virtually all Catholic colleges and universities are recognized by a number of accrediting agencies, and in providing their students with a Christian education they enable them to obtain a higher education which is as diverse in character and as excellent in quality as that offered by non-Catholic or state institutions. The majority of Catholic colleges and universities are owned and conducted by religious orders.

The Catholic University of America is conducted by the bishops of America through their joint representatives, and belongs to the Church in America as a whole.

Costly as they are to erect, maintain and develop, Catholic colleges and universities are supported almost entirely by tuition. On the whole they have no large endowments. Their inestimable contribution to America in providing it with Christian leaders is made possible only by the self-sacrifice of religious men and women who receive practically nothing for their services. It is also made possible by the great sacrifice of the lay men and women who comprise fifty percent of the faculties in Catholic colleges and universities. They teach for lower pay than they could get elsewhere because they realize how necessary and important it is for Catholics to have their own schools.

Here is the snack bar. Two coffees please — one with, and one without.

# BUT WHY DO CATHOLICS HAVE THEIR OWN SCHOOLS?

Do you ever think back over your school days? Remember how important school was to you from the day you entered the first grade to the final day of graduation from high school or college? Books and lessons were often boring and irksome, and the teachers were at times annoying in their demands; yet, thinking back, you will recall that during childhood and youth, school was of the greatest importance to you.

That was to be expected. You spent twenty-five hours a week, eight or nine months a year, for twelve or sixteen or more years in school; and during all that time what you were learning in the classroom was most important to you. At first it was most important because you were required by your parents and your teachers to study seriously each subject in the curriculum, so that you could one day take your place in the world as an educated person. Later, as you grew older, you, yourself, realized that what you were learning in school was most important to you because it was preparing you for your adult life, and upon it depended to a



great extent your future success and happiness. Consequently, you came to view the many things taught in school as more important for you to study and to learn than any other matter.

And if you were to talk to the children of St. Stephen's, where we have been visiting, or to the students of any school, public or Catholic, you would find that the same is true of them. Ask any student what is the most important thing for him to study and to learn, and he will answer: "My school work."

A child's life of learning is based almost exclusively on the school which he attends. What he learns there, he views as important to know. What he is taught elsewhere, he considers less important or not important at all. Moreover, within the school itself the child gauges the importance of a thing by the stress which it is given in the classroom. The things that are scarcely mentioned there are by the child judged to be inconsequential. Those that receive some but not great consideration the child views as being of minor importance. It

is only those things which are continuously stressed by the teacher that the child comes to view as being of major importance to himself and to others. You may remember yourself saying: "We don't have to study that subject very hard. It can't be important. The teacher didn't stress it."

Because a child judges the importance of a thing by whether it is taught in school and by the stress placed upon it there, modern educators realize that if a factor for successful living is to influence children in their adult lives, it must be taught in school and it must be given a foremost place in the curriculum. Take, for example, the factor of democracy. Conceivably, the teaching of democracy could be left entirely to the home and to civic organizations or, if taught in the school, democracy could be relegated to a place of unimportance. But experience has shown that if this were done, democracy would not come to mean as much to children as it should, nor would it exert upon them the influence which it must if they are to practice the principles and to seek the ideals of democracy in their adult lives. Therefore, the American school, Catholic and public, teaches democracy as an integral and principal part of the curriculum and endeavors to have democracy permeate all other subjects and characterize teaching methods and classroom environment. The purpose in this is to have children come to view democracy as important, or more important to themselves and to others than arithmetic,

or grammar, or other phases of their education. A further purpose is to enable children to learn democracy in relation to the other things which they are being taught in school, so that as adults they will practice democracy in every aspect of life for which the classroom is preparing them, and not merely on election day. A person who has learned to relate democracy to economics is more likely to practice democracy in business life than one who has not.

Now, Catholics are convinced that religion is the most important factor in life, and that upon it all other factors, including democracy, ultimately depend for their validity and growth. It is through their religion that Catholics learn to know and to love God, to distinguish right from wrong, and to follow God's holy law in every aspect of human life—personal, domestic, social, economic, and political, so that after death they may attain eternal salvation, and be united with God in heaven and there enjoy the perfect truth and perfect happiness which union with God brings to man. Since the attainment of eternal salvation is man's principal work in life, Catholics believe that the gravest obligation imposed upon parents by God is to secure the religious education of their children. For Catholic parents the education of their children in religion and morality takes precedence over all other matters.

However, the conviction of Catholics that religion is the most important factor in life, and that parents have no graver duty than

to provide their children with a religious education, is not based solely upon the need to attain eternal salvation. Common sense and the story of mankind have convinced Catholics that religion must also be made the core of human life if the nation and the world are to know peace, progress, and happiness, and that children must receive a religious education, if they are to become useful and devoted citizens.

One has only to read the daily newspapers to appreciate the correctness of that conviction. Recent revelations of widespread corruption in civic and political life, have awakened the people to the realization that religion cannot be ignored and the religious education of children neglected, without tragic consequences to the individual and society. Those tragic consequences are also showing up more and more clearly in the broken homes that plague America, in the lack of personal morality that is beginning to characterize American youth, and in the indifference to moral and ethical principles that has become prevalent in American life.

For even more appalling consequences of the neglect of religious education in the lives of children, one can look behind the Iron Curtain which separates the democracies of the free world from the tyrannies of the Communist totalitarianism. When the Communists seized control of Russia at the close of World War I, they outlawed religion and instituted a system of education which was

based upon the denial of God and which excluded from the schooling of children all moral and spiritual values. The graduates of that system are today the barbarous conquerors and inhuman rulers of eastern Europe and much of Asia, and are a growing menace to the freedom and security of the rest of the world. It is not without purpose then that today, after conquering a nation, the Communists outlaw religion and destroy the efforts of parents to provide their children with a religious education. The Communists have learned that tyranny and evil flourish most rapidly among people who have no



religion and have not been taught to know and to serve God.

Since Catholics are convinced that religion is the most important factor in life, they wish their children to make religion the core of their existence and to have it permeate and govern every phase



of their adult lives. Catholics, therefore, have built their own schools where religion can be made an integral and principal part of the curriculum, can permeate and give direction to all other subjects, and can characterize teaching methods and classroom environment. It is only in such schools that Catholic children will come to view religion as more important to themselves and to others than any other subject which they may be studying, and will learn to relate religion to the vast number of things which they are being taught in the classroom.

Public schools, on the other hand, are by law required to be neutral in religion, and are forbidden to educate children in the Catholic religion or in any other religion. Consequently, though satisfactory and praiseworthy in other respects, the public schools are unable to develop in Catholic children the awareness of the importance of religion and the understanding of its relation to other phases of their education, which they must have if they are to make religion the most important factor in their lives. Thus the public schools offer Catholic children at most a partial education, an education which, since it omits religion, fails to prepare Catholic children to live the whole of their lives successfully. The complete education which Catholic children require to be wholly successful in life is available to them only in Catholic schools.

Moreover, experience has shown and common sense indicates that,

if Catholic parents are to succeed in having children make religion the core of their existence, the teaching of religion cannot be limited to the home and to the parish church. If it were, children would in general come to view religion as something less important than the vast number of things which they are being taught in school. It is not to be expected that a child who attends religion class once or twice a week at home or on Sundays at church will ordinarily consider religion as important to learn as a subject which he has five times a week at school and which he must know in order to pass or to graduate.



Then, too, if the teaching of religion were left entirely to the home and to the parish church, children would be denied the opportunity of learning to relate religion to what they are being taught in school and, hence, would

come to view religion as something apart from and unrelated to the other aspects of life, economic, social, cultural, and political, for which school is preparing them. It is axiomatic in the education of children that they learn to associate things by studying them in their relation to one another rather than by studying them in isolation.

Furthermore, when one considers the realities of the situation, the conclusion is inescapable that even if the religious education of children were simply a matter of instruction, neither the home nor the parish church, with some exceptions, would be equal to the task. Very few parents have sufficient preparation for the fundamental work of instructing their children in religion and morality. While the average parent is able to explain that God exists, he is not prepared to establish God's existence against the clever and subtle attacks of non-believers, nor is he able to justify God's holy law against the immoral philosophies and "isms" which characterize much of today's written and spoken thought.

Moreover, the home ordinarily cannot provide an adequate opportunity for instructing children in religion. A day that is filled with regular school for the children and work for the parents allows little time for family classes in religion, and the week-ends, devoted as they are to recreation and relaxation, do not offer much more. And then there are the distractions which make studying at home difficult and would make teaching almost

impossible. Consider the problem of getting children to listen to father or mother explaining the truths of religion when a favorite program is being televised, or when the neighborhood theater is showing the latest Hollywood release. One might as well be trying to explain the theorems of geometry.

While Catholic parishes conduct a Sunday school or its equivalent for children who do not attend Catholic schools, either because the particular parish is not able, as yet, to provide such education for them or because their parents for serious reasons choose to send them to other schools, Catholics have learned through experience that though taught by trained personnel, Sunday school does not provide an adequate opportunity for the instruction of children in their religion. After a full week of regular school most children are reluctant to attend another class, especially when it must be done on playtime; and furthermore, because of the inconvenience involved or because of their own indifference many parents make little or no effort to send their children to Sunday school. The inevitable result, as the reports of the various denominations show, is that children will attend Sunday school only infrequently and a tragically large number will not attend it at all. This has become increasingly true in modern times whose swift tempo and materialistic attitudes have subordinated the importance of a religious education and have weakened the close ties which once

existed between the home and Sunday school.

Even when Sunday school succeeds in securing the attendance of children, lack of time usually prevents it from doing an adequate job. The doctrines and principles of religion are not so few nor so simple that they can be learned by attending a class which meets only once or even twice a week. There is no short cut to the complete and satisfactory religious education which children need, if they are to make religion the core of their existence.

Catholics do not, however, think that the religious education of children is solely the work of the school, nor that Catholic parents fulfill their obligation in this regard by sending their children to a parochial school. The home and the parish church can and should make a substantial contribution to the religious education of children, if they are to be fully educated in their religion and are to consider it the core of their existence. By a family life of morality and piety and by constant good example in the fulfillment of religious duties, parents can be most effective in teaching their children to love and to serve God. The home should also be the place where children learn their prayers, are taught the elementals of religion and morality and are zealously encouraged to make religion the most important factor in their lives.

The parish church is likewise an indispensable place for the religious education of children and serves to supplement the work of

both the home and the school. Catholics appreciate the immense educational value inherent in sermons, sacred ceremonies, religious music and devotional art, and depend upon them to contribute significantly to the growth of Catholic children in the knowledge and the practice of their religion. In addition, Catholic churches have clubs and organizations through whose social and educational activities Catholic children are able to obtain a deeper understanding of their religion and a finer appreciation of its moral and spiritual values. Thus the school, the home, and the church have vital roles in the religious education of Catholic children.

So far you have seen what a Catholic school is and what a Catholic school does and you have learned why Catholics have their own schools. There is a further question which we should consider, one in which you and I, as Americans, are greatly interested. It is the question of how Catholic schools benefit the nation. We can discuss that on our way home.

The importance of coordination of the home, Church and school are emphasized in Catholic education for very sound reasons. While children spend five hours a day, five days a week, and 40 weeks each year in school, a larger part of their time is spent in and around the home, or under the supervision of parents. They are exposed at such times to a wide variety of associations, forms of entertainment, recreational activities and sources of influence which

can color their thinking and affect their education.

Catholic parents are therefore counseled by the Church not only to enroll their children in a Catholic school, but to interest themselves in the children's school work, and to see that the home environment and outside activities of the children are in accord with Catholic ideals and principles.

A complete and proper educa-

tion, Catholics believe, involves not merely the training of the mind and body, but the heart and soul. This, we maintain, is possible only when the home, the Church and the school—the three chief agencies concerned with shaping the lives of our children—are all working together on the same principles, with the same objectives.



# HOW CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BENEFIT THE NATION



If you have purchased new tires for your car recently, it is likely that they are made of synthetic rubber. You are benefitted then by an important discovery which a Catholic school helped to give the nation. The science department of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, pioneered in the field of synthetic rubber, and has made significant contributions to its development.

Another Catholic University, Georgetown, of Washington, D. C., established the first school in the United States for the training of diplomatic representatives. Graduates from Georgetown's School of Foreign Service are today serving the nation in our embassies and consulates throughout the world.

To the list of Catholic schools which have made and are making notable contributions to the progress and welfare of America, many more could be added, and not only in the field of science and government but equally as well in the fields of the fine arts and social studies. But when Catholics are

asked how their schools benefit the nation, they prefer to point to the American men and women who are products of a Catholic education rather than to the singular achievements of particular Catholic schools.

Since 1810, when the first Catholic parochial school in America opened, the Catholic schools have, without a penny's cost to the public, educated millions of boys and girls. Each generation those boys and girls have taken their places in America as men and women, and by their lives have demonstrated the value of a Catholic education. They have shown themselves to be loyal Americans. During two world wars millions of Catholic men served the nation as courageous soldiers, and thousands of them died in its defense. The graduates of Catholic schools have also shown themselves to be useful Americans. They have entered every vocation in life and have rendered competent and at times outstanding service to their country.

Moreover, the graduates of Catholic schools have shown themselves to be devoted Americans. They are in the main law-abiding,

civic-minded, and sincerely interested in the advancement of the principles upon which America was founded. Loyal, useful, and devoted citizens are the greatest benefit that the schools of a nation have to confer. Such has been the Catholic schools' free gift to America for the past 150 years.

"What about the charges that certain people level against the Catholic schools? I read a pamphlet the other day which stated that the Catholic schools, since they are private and denominational, are not in accordance with American tradition and custom, but are foreign in origin and control. Another pamphlet claims that the Catholic schools lead to division in the community and to bigotry between Catholics and non-Catholics. Furthermore, a recent book refers to the Catholic schools as being undemocratic in organization and practice and as constituting a menace to American democracy. It is sometimes said that the Catholic schools are hostile to the public schools and that Catholics are opposed to and seek to destroy the public school system." Let's examine these charges to see whether they are fact or fiction.

Are Catholic schools truly American? The history of America indicates that they are. Private and denominational schools have existed in this country from the earliest times. Indeed, the public school, as we know it today, dates only from 1840. For generations all Americans—including those who fought for liberty and independence during the Revolution, and who

drafted the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States—were educated in private or denominational schools, and mostly the latter. Perhaps no institution is older or a more intimate part of our national life than denominational schools, both Catholic and Protestant. Out of them have developed our greatest colleges and universities. To consider only public schools as being in accordance with American tradition and custom is to be unaware of the essential position which private and denominational schools have occupied in American life from the very beginning of our history.

The Catholic schools are also American in that they have been built by Americans, are conducted by Americans, and serve to educate Americans and to benefit America as a whole. Of the Catholic schools J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has said: "Not a single non-Christian or non-American principle is taught there." Catholics rightly consider their schools to be an integral part of America's system of education and a principal source of America's freedom and strength.

Are Catholic schools divisive? Obviously, Catholic schools divide or separate Catholic pupils from their non-Catholic neighbors during the school day. They do so for the sole reason, as previously explained, that Catholic parents consider religious training to be a necessary part of their children's education and that the public schools are by law forbidden to supply that need.

But if the word "divisive" is

used in its secondary meaning to indicate the creation of dissension and discord, Catholic schools are not divisive. The charge that the education of Catholic children in Catholic schools, separate from the public schools in which the children of their neighbors are educated, causes social conflicts, prejudice, ill-will, and mutual discrimination and bigotry, is without basis either in fact or in reason.

Look about your community. You will find Catholic school graduates beside you at work or in business, with you in clubs and civic organizations, and among your friends and acquaintances. Do those Catholics assume an arrogant, aloof, and self-righteous attitude toward non-Catholics, or discriminate against them, or hold them in hatred or suspicion? Rather, do they not have a friendly, helpful, and open-minded attitude toward non-Catholics, and do they not treat them as fellow Americans entitled to the same rights and privileges as Catholics? The Catholic school system in America is 150 years old, and so far there is not a modicum of reliable evidence that it has led to the establishment of a Catholic bloc, separate and aloof from the rest of America, or that it has created dissension and discord.

The problem of separation between Catholic and non-Catholic children during their school days is met directly and frankly by Catholic educators. Most Catholic schools have a carefully planned unit of study in the Catholic school child's relationship to public school children. The purpose of this unit

is to guide Catholic children to develop a friendly, helpful, and open-minded attitude toward their public school neighbors. Through reading, discussion and activity, the Catholic school child is guided and encouraged to join his public school neighbors at play, in trips to the public library, in visits to his neighbor's homes and in a host of other activities that will build mutual respect and understanding between them. The motivation suggested is one of the basic doctrines of a Catholic child's faith — all men, regardless of race, or color, or creed, are his brothers in Christ. Moreover, the Catholic schools, wherever possible, pool their efforts with the public schools in civic programs and activities so that the children of the two school systems may have the experience of working together for the general welfare of the community.

Another reason why Catholic schools are not a divisive factor in the community is the attitude of children on friendship. Young children do not discriminate against each other; that is a characteristic of maturity. They give and receive friendship without regard to creed and without thought to what school, public or Catholic, the friend attends. During childhood the neighborhood is the true melting pot of religious differences, for a child makes friends with the boy next door or with the girl across the street rather than with a schoolmate who lives in another neighborhood. If the children next door, or across the street, or around the corner are Catholic and non-Catho-

lic, as is commonly true in America, they will become friends and will learn to know and to understand one another, although they attend different schools. Was that not your own childhood experience?

Are Catholic schools undemocratic? If by a democratic school system you mean a state monopoly of education—a uniform school system which excludes private or parochial schools—then the Catholic schools in the United States are “undemocratic” and they have a right to be proud of it. Such is the school system that prevails in Soviet Russia and her totalitarian satellites, and it is called “democratic” by Communist propagandists. But such a school system, the Supreme Court of the United States has indicated, would not be considered democratic in America. In the celebrated case of *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U. S. 510, the Supreme Court was called upon to determine the constitutionality of a law of the State of Oregon which made attendance at public schools compulsory for all grade school children, and, in effect, denied to parents the right to send them to private or parochial schools. The Court held the law to be unconstitutional, declaring:

*“The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture and direct his destiny*

*have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.”*

The United States Supreme Court’s decision reflects the true meaning of democracy in a striking and emphatic manner. It re-states the right of the people to maintain a diversity of schools—large and small, elaborate and plain, public and private—with the right in the parents to select the schools of their own choice in which their children shall be educated.

Catholic schools, therefore, are democratic and constitute an integral part of our democratic school system. To suggest the contrary because Catholic schools are privately owned is to misrepresent American democracy. Public ownership is not a requisite for an institution to be considered democratic in America. Nor would any reasonable person suggest that only those colleges and universities which are tax-supported are truly democratic in principle and teaching.

Do Catholic schools teach democracy and do they afford an opportunity for experience in democratic practices? The answer is yes, as you learned in visiting St. Stephen’s. Remember the list of goals which the seventh-grade teacher had written on the blackboard for her students to seek in their study of American government? See page 15. Those goals encompass the fundamental principles of our democracy and provide the moral and the spiritual values upon which our democracy rests.

With regard to democratic prac-



tices, the Catholic schools do not, as some critics of Catholic education imagine, constantly employ heavy-handed, authoritarian, sternly disciplinary methods. The discipline of a Catholic school reflects rather the statement which the sixth-grade teacher at St. Stephen's read to us from *Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living*:

"Since the ability to govern oneself is such an essential requisite for citizenship in the American democracy, it is necessary that it should be acquired through experience in the school... Its discipline should reflect an understanding of this fact. Good order must be insisted upon, and respect for authority. But these are best fostered in an atmosphere of freedom in which it is possible to be natural... The student cannot learn the art of living in a free society from training under a classroom dictatorship."

Are Catholic schools organized democratically? Like public schools, Catholic schools operate under a system of laws which protect the individual child's rights and parental rights and which also promote the common good of society. Catholic schools comply with all basic education laws that manifest the desire of a democratic nation to give every child educational opportunities that meet commonly accepted standards of adequacy. Catholic schools also observe Church laws which provide a democratic basis to school administration by requiring that the good of the child and the good of the

Church be balanced as perfectly as possible. Under these laws Catholic school policies are developed in a democratic manner in the give-and-take sessions of diocesan school boards, faculty meetings and conferences of Parent-Educator Associations. Even though Catholic school boards are appointed rather than popularly elected like many public school boards, there is probably less authoritarianism and less high pressure politics in Catholic schools than in many public schools.

Are the Catholic schools hostile to the public schools? The answer is: No. Both the Catholic schools and the public schools are approved by the State. Both are supported by the people of the community, the one by free-will offerings, the other by taxes. Both are equipped to train intelligent citizens and both work together—in different ways—for a common purpose—the general welfare. Consequently, the Catholic schools and the public schools are and should be partners in our nation's education. Public-parochial school relations are in great part friendly and cooperative, for fair-minded people realize that whether a school is called St. Stephen's or Public School No. 60, it contributes to the common good of all.

Only the uninformed or prejudiced can regard Catholics as enemies of the public schools. As citizens, Catholics recognize that it is their duty to support the public schools by the payment of taxes, to work for improved public education and to maintain a close and helpful interest in the public schools and their problems.

The following incident is typical of the general attitude of Catholics toward the public schools. A year or so ago in a mid-western city, a bond issue for the expansion of public education was to be voted upon. On the Sunday before the election, the Catholic bishop of that city addressed a letter to all the Catholics, urging them to vote in favor of the bond issue so that additional public schools could be erected and the present facilities could be improved. As the Bishop pointed out in his letter, the public schools belong as much to the Catholics as they do to other citizens and are, therefore, as much their responsibility and concern. The bond issue passed.

It is sometimes said that the Catholics conspire to destroy or to subvert the public schools. Such a claim is entirely lacking in merit. No respectable evidence has ever been adduced to show that the Catholics as a group have hostile designs on the public schools or that they are behind any movements detrimental to public education. Catholics appreciate the vital and important role which the public schools have in American education, a role which is truly essential in view of the composition of our republic. For this reason, Catholics are and should be firmly opposed to anyone who would seek to destroy or to subvert the public schools.

In our democracy there is a need

and there is a distinct role for Catholic schools and for public schools. It is to the best interests of our democracy that both systems of education continue and increase in strength and service. Each has an invaluable contribution to make to the progress and the welfare of the American people.

Other charges are levelled at the Catholic schools from time to time, but, like those we have discussed, they are based in most part upon misinformation and lack of understanding of the character and purpose of Catholic education. As is true of all schools today, the Catholic schools are faced with serious problems and are in need of improvement with respect to facilities, teacher training, textbooks and curricula. Great efforts are being made by the Catholic people to remedy those deficiencies; and the Catholic schools are moving steadily forward. Today Catholic schools serve their students and our nation well. Tomorrow they will be of still greater service.

And here is where we part. Our visit to St. Stephen's and our discussions have given you some knowledge of Catholic schools and some understanding of their character and purpose. The more you learn of Catholic schools, the greater will be your appreciation of why the Catholics of the United States are justly proud of the Catholic schools and of their role in our democracy.

# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS — RELIGIOUS INFORMATION BUREAU

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✠JOSEPH E. RITTER

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