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Editorial Comment

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Editorial Comment

Society today is in great turmoil. This is very evident in the academic area. Violent and nonviolent demonstrations have taken place and are taking place on college campuses throughout the land. They are also arising more frequently in high schools, and there is some indication by organizations such as S.D.S. that they are interested in fermenting activity in the elementary schools. All this is done in the name of freedom, but a freedom whose concept is incorrect and, moreover, can end only in anarchy.

While it is true that each era seems to look upon its youth as being in a state of moral decay, there is evidence that today there is a real breakdown in moral structures. Crime among youth is at an all time high; the use of drugs is not only spreading, but in some areas receiving social acceptability; the concept of authority is constantly challenged.

It is significant that in the last presidential campaign each candidate adopted the "law and order" theme as a plank of the party. In the minds of many, order is to be restored by the use of force rather than a renewed quickening of the moral fibre of the country.

It is therefore imperative to present to parents and students the opportunity of choosing a school system which believes in the existence of a loving God, which presents a sense of values that not only recognizes the sacredness of creation, but gives a view of life that transcends the material and that is not afraid to recognize good and evil as opposing forces in our society. Church related schools do not exist solely as indoctrination centers for the teaching of sectarian dogmas; they do exist to teach the arts and sciences within the framework of the Judaeo-Christian ethic and to inculcate those moral and spiritual values indispensable for the orderly conduct of human society.

Our nation is a land of strength because its people can exercise many liberties. The more these liberties are fostered, the stronger will be our states and country. One of the most basic of these liberties is the freedom of parents to enroll their children in either a public or nonpublic school which meets academic criteria established by civil authority. If this liberty were only a paper one, because nonpublic schools did not exist,

the state and country would be that much weaker. The experiences of other countries with a monolithic school system should give us pause for thought as to the future of our country. The uniqueness of church-related and private schools is therefore essential to a healthy America.

Today, however, there is a grave fiscal crisis facing all education, and especially church-related educational institutions at all levels. Unless some form of state aid is afforded nonpublic school pupils, the wholesale closing of church-related schools will inevitably result and could condemn a generation of American children to substandard education.

Aware of this grave challenge, this issue of THE CATHOLIC LAWYER is devoted in part to a series of articles which highlight the problem and which offer certain solutions. One such article is a report from the New York State Council of Catholic School Superintendents. As a document, it summarizes the major findings and conclusions developed from an extraordinary session held by the group in 1969. The report centers on two major areas: the current state and trends of Catholic schools; and recommended causes of action in view of the situation.

The problems that face the world are social ones: war, hunger, population, civil rights, management-labor relationships, etc. If they are to have any ultimate solutions, these must be based upon values drawn from our Judaeo-Christian heritage. The church-related school can and must be enabled to equip its students to bring these values to the solution of the problems.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Edward Tegen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

EDITOR