

# The Church in Worldly Affairs: Tensions Between Laity and Clergy

*A new moment is upon us in which  
we must reflect on the best aspects of our American tradition  
and on the way the church should relate to the world.*

The church in the United States is passing through a new and critical phase with regard to two aspects of its life: 1) how its clergy—and especially its bishops—will relate as teachers to its highly intelligent and trained laity, and 2) how the church as a whole will enter into the debate in American society on political, social and economic issues. These two questions are intimately related. In both areas, the experience in Europe has been different from our own and has led to much bitterness and anticlericalism, especially in the last century. By examining some of that history and by reflecting more deeply on what is unique in our own experience, we can avoid some of that negative fallout and create the atmosphere for a more optimistic future. This present moment is a crucial one for such an analysis because the U.S. bishops through their recent pastoral letters, especially the one on war and peace and the one on economic justice, have raised these issues in a new and urgent way.

What I write here are reflections on my experience as a member of the bishops' committee preparing the pastoral letter on the economy. Underlying the process involved are many ecclesial questions that will demand a broader vision and should provoke a deeper response on our part as a church. The inevitable tensions that result particularly in these two areas—the relation of the teaching authority of the bishops to the laity, on the one hand, and the role of the same teaching authority in the discussion of political, social and economic issues, on the other—require a calmer

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and clearer analysis and a more profound and nuanced response for the future. A new functional model of the church is at stake.

## The Current Situation: A Formed Laity

One of the greatest assets of the church in the United States is its well-trained laity. No other group of Catholics in the world can boast of such a high degree of education. Undoubtedly this is the result of our school system on all levels and the emphasis that was put on education by the immigrant church. Getting ahead in the United States meant education. Our church insisted on this education for its people and sought to provide it.

One can debate about the quality of the education provided in some sectors, but the thrust and drive were always present and have reaped their rewards especially in the 40 years since World War II. At times we complained that the religious education of our laity did not keep pace with the level of their secular education, that our people were expected to take their place in society, business and academia with only grade-school religious training. They still had only childlike concepts that did not and could not cope with the questions raised on the adult level. I am certain this has been true in many cases, but the fact remains that our well-trained laity represents the finest asset we have in the American church today and is the source of its strength and vitality. I think, too, that we are only beginning to see the importance of this trained laity. The clergy and religious who brought American Catholics to the present point can be justly proud, as all teachers should be when their pupils begin to move out on their own and break loose from any infantile dependency on the teacher.

Nevertheless, in all honesty several negative factors

must also be mentioned, since they affect the present moment. I want to reflect on some of them.

First of all, sad to say, it must be stated that Catholic social teaching from Pope Leo XIII and his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), to Pope John Paul II and his encyclical, *Laborem Exercens* (1981), has not been assimilated by our Catholic population. The early papal documents were perhaps better known because they dealt with labor and the rights of labor, questions more at the heart of the immigrant American experience up till the middle of this century. But the teaching of our social tradition did not keep pace with the educational thrust of our institutions in secular fields. Sometimes this tradition was known and simply rejected; more often it seems that it was not a part of Catholic education on any level and, thus, was not formative of the thinking of a new and important generation of Catholics in the United States. Some of the causes may have been the abstract nature of these papal documents and their tendency to speak only out of a European experience and to be hesitant with regard to the American democratic experiment. It has also been customary in religious education to keep to catechetical formulas that did not touch social and political issues but reflected the American view of religion as a private affair.

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### *The role of the laity is to transform secular society from within.*

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If such a gap is evident in this particular field, one could assume it might also be present in others. One could ask, for example, if Catholic physicians and the administrators of our health facilities have sufficient background in medical ethics. On a more pragmatic level, one sometimes sees the absence of a clear concept of what the church is all about in the dynamics of parish councils, finance committees and the diocesan pastoral councils. How the laity are to live their life as church in the marketplace makes even more demands on their training. I do not feel we should blame the laity for these deficiencies—they are a part of the whole church—but rather attribute this lack to the all-absorbing concern of our forebears, as a minority group in a predominantly Protestant culture, to preserve the integrity of their faith. They did not foresee the need to prepare themselves for leadership in the larger societal structures.

At the same time, the church in the United States has had a tendency to assimilate the American political experience without critical judgment. The negative reactions of

the church in Europe to much of the philosophy of the Enlightenment with its concepts of freedom from all restraint, of democratization even in religion, of the glorification of the individual to the detriment of the common good and even the suppression of religious institutions, did not correspond to the American Catholic experience. In fact, curiously enough, Catholics in the United States defended the American political arrangement as good for the church and its growth. At the same time, the church criticized forcefully many of the materialistic and individualistic aspects of the American economic situation whose capitalistic roots were found in the same Enlightenment philosophy. (Perhaps these differences between the church in the United States and the church in Europe have still not been worked out.)

The American political experience has deeply affected the U.S. Catholic laity, especially in their attitude toward separation of church and state. Our lay people, regardless of the degree of sophistication of their education, have been touched by the view that separation of church and state means a separation of political, social and economic issues from religious and moral implications. "No politics from the pulpit" is the slogan one hears. Religion often becomes a private, personal affair. People say that the clergy should speak about "spirituality," which for them means an inspirational faith that does not challenge them to social involvement. They do not deny the need for virtuous lives, and they expect religious authorities to speak about personal virtuous living but not to make the next step into concrete social action for justice. The new biblical thrust of spirituality in the United States is beginning on its own to challenge that approach.

There are others who are not so naïve as to think such a separation of the political and social from the religious and the moral is feasible or desirable, but they fear that if the church speaks out on the morality of political and social issues, it will divide its members or deprive individuals of some of the valid options for action open to them. Intelligent lay Catholics rightly do not want to look like clerical puppets. In other words, the American church in the United States has yet to find a way of addressing political and social issues in an enlightened manner that respects the knowledge, competency and conscience of the individual Catholics who comprise it.

#### **Current Situation: The Church and Worldly Affairs**

The agenda for the church in the United States for the next decade must be set by Vatican II's 1965 "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." A sign that this agenda has not been completed is the confusion in the minds of so many about the relationship between the Gospel and worldly affairs. They ask about the meaning of papal statements that do not permit clergy and religious to be involved in politics but that, at the same time, speak out

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so forcefully and cogently against injustices of a political and social nature. How is the church to carry out that political agenda of denouncing injustices without seeming to be involved in politics? Is the priest, who from the pulpit makes statements similar to papal or curial pronouncements or practical applications of the same to a local condition, becoming involved in politics in a way that is out of keeping with his role as a religious leader? These and similar questions were frequently posed at conferences in the last few years on the drafts of the economic pastoral letter.

Let me list some of the ideas of Vatican II that require in-depth reflection today. The church's end or ultimate purpose cannot be reduced to a political agenda; nevertheless, the Gospel that the church proclaims and preaches will affect society here and now and not just a future world. How is that Gospel to be lived in political, social and economic life? The church has no social blueprint for the perfect society, but she does preach the practice of justice and love, virtues that should transform relationships in every society. What is a just society today? Science has its own autonomy; there is no Christian law of gravity or Christian multiplication table. But the way human beings make use of these objective laws within society does imply the seeking of definite goals and, thus, poses moral issues, not merely political or economic ones. The role of the laity is to transform secular society from within. They are to bring the Gospel message to that society. In doing so they are truly the church. But do they act alone or with others, with church members, with believers, with non-believers? If so, why? How does the faith community support them in their endeavor?

It seems evident that a new moment is upon us in which we must reflect on the best aspects of our American tradition and on the way the church should relate to the world. The problem is just as important for the Catholic laity as for the clergy: It is a question of how the church should function within our pluralistic democratic structures and be truly a leaven and a sacrament to the world.

#### **Pre-Vatican II European Models**

Vatican Council I (1869-70) took place at a moment of crisis for the church in its relationship to the new political structures of the 19th century. The new governments, in

addition to depriving the church of its material and political power, tended to deny it even its right to existence.

The first schema, or preliminary draft, on the church prepared for Vatican I had, therefore, three paragraphs and several canons, or decrees, on church-state relationships. These were never voted on nor even publicly discussed by the bishops because of the council's abrupt ending; but, since they were published as a part of the agenda, they were hotly debated in Catholic circles at the time. The intransigents defended Pope Boniface VIII's 14th-century theory of the two swords, which held that the church is supreme over the state and has the right to pass judgment on the latter's acts. The more realistic developed a new theory that distinguished a thesis from a hypothesis. The thesis postulated an ideal situation in which the church would be recognized as the state religion and the laws of the state would reflect church moral teaching. The hypothesis recognized that at times, by force of circumstances, the church would have to live under other regimes in which it would demand at least the liberty necessary for its own development. This second theory was only tolerated, however.

Vatican I's unfinished agenda continued to be debated into the period of modernism at the end of the century, when the more rigid view was labeled "integralism." Those Catholics who sought a complete or integral Catholicism in the political realm demanded the perfect coalescence of Christian morality with the legal realm of the state and, thus, the suppression of all error. No concept of separation of church and state was considered orthodox. Error has no rights, they said; and, since the Catholic Church was considered the source of all truth, its doctrine alone should dominate in political affairs. This position was slowly eroded by political developments but continued to exist in some theological textbooks until World War II. It certainly affected church-state attitudes in some areas of Europe and especially in Central and South America.

Although this theory was not sustained by Vatican Council II's document on religious liberty, it still colors much Catholic thought in our time. Today, when one reads some of the literature from the more aggressive anti-abortion groups or listens to some of the arguments for denying civil rights to homosexuals, one wishes that there

were more clarity with regard to legality, morality and compromise. Moreover, when one hears fundamentalist preachers talk on political issues, one senses that traces of integralism are still much a part of the whole American religious scene. Many non-Catholics still fear that if American Catholics were ever to become a majority in the United States, they would perforce put into effect, by edict of their bishops, the integralist positions of the last century and deny the rights of other positions to exist.

Integralism will always be a temptation for the Catholic Church—or for any group convinced of the rightness of its positions. It can only be checked by the attitude embodied in Vatican II's "Declaration on Religious Liberty," an attitude that sees the use of force—psychological or physical—as immoral, as an abuse against conscience, and calls instead for persuasion by rational arguments as the only way to obtain political consensus in the public forum. The church has a valid role to play in such a building of consensus as an equal partner with all others in a pluralistic society. But our heritage of integralism will still be a temptation because of its clarity and simplicity.

In the immediate period after World War II, since the thesis/hypothesis position was no longer practical, a new model of church-state relationships became more prevalent in Europe, although its origins go back to prewar discussion and reflection. As more and more European na-

tions abandoned monarchies and as Fascism and Nazism were suppressed by force, new and more democratic models of government arose. The church had to react to these models and find a way of playing its role in society—a society in which it had once held a dominant position. One could call the new model of the church that arose a kind of "Catholic Action" model. It prevails in Europe today.

In this new model, the role of the clergy, especially of

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the bishops, is one of teaching. The clergy are the teachers of tradition and of social justice. That teaching remains on a theoretical level and does not descend to concrete situations and cases. These are left to the laity whose task it is to put the theory into practice. This process of putting theory into practice can take place in two ways. The first is by individual action on the part of Catholics in the world (the Opus Dei model); the second and more visible way is by Catholic movements. Thus, in Europe there evolved Catholic political parties, Catholic labor unions, organizations of Catholic industrialists and so on. These groups are the lay arm or branch of the church. When one group seems to lose its impetus and drive and to grow sterile, a new one comes forth. Note, for example, the rise and rapid success of the movement *Comunione e Liberazione* in the last decade in Italy. As one can see, these movements are based on an ecclesial model and not just on pragmatic principles. They make a clear distinction between clergy and laity that corresponds to a teaching authority and its implementing force. This is called subsidiarity. Does it solve the tension between clergy and laity? Should this model be adopted by the church in the United States?

Let me list some of the advantages of this functional model of the church. It does get things done. It can accomplish much because of the clear structure for political and social activity that it offers lay Catholics. It preserves the teaching model of the church within a traditional framework and therefore postulates a clear identity for the clergy in political and social affairs. In many respects it is attractive because the bishops and priests keep their hands clean and do not get involved in the messy turmoil that political and social issues can bring with them.

The negative aspects are also numerous, however. Even though the impression of lay independence is given on the surface, it is generally assumed (at least by many in countries like Italy) that the clergy are still secretly pulling the strings. The laity can appear like the puppets of the clergy,

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## *Scenes from an Exercise*

*The lake was much as he remembered it  
from last week: yellow-headed blackbirds  
blossomed on rushes, kricking,  
and yellow-stamened water lilies preened.  
Mallards paddled to his left,  
and straight ahead the shore  
was at peace with the sky.*

*A dragonfly ferried on his arm  
while a loon, watching him, submerged  
leaving no ripples, only to reappear  
farther away, laughing...*

*He was unaware of time—  
and his wife called him twice  
for dinner before he opened his eyes  
in the next room, stepped off  
his deluxe rower with its adjustable  
hydraulic tension, its smooth flow,  
and out of his dream.*

ELAINE V. EMANS

especially of the bishops. Many still ask, for example, how strong the Vatican influence is on the Christian Democratic Party in Italy.

Moreover, this model does not solve the question of a legitimate pluralism of action on the part of the laity in implementing theory, for the positions of the lay movement can become very dogmatic. Leaders of these movements often question the orthodoxy of those other lay persons who operate by choice outside such approved structures or have other political persuasions. In other words, they do not face up to a decisive question: Is there only one lay arm of the church or can there be many? This model in practice seems to deny alternatives.

History also shows that this model has a tendency to return to the position of integralism. This accusation is frequently made, for example, against the *Comunione e Liberazione* movement in Italy. A zeal to Christianize the world can soon lead members to equate their movement and its aims with the divine plan for the Kingdom. That the Holy Spirit may be operating outside such organized movements through other forces in society is seldom considered. In addition to dividing the laity itself, these movements can also tend to divide the bishops. Their members often consider those bishops to be orthodox, and, thus, to be listened to, who agree with the group's convictions. Others who do not support their positions are labeled disloyal. The neat division between laity and clergy soon falls apart in practice and new tensions between clergy and laity arise.

One last important aspect of the relationship between the church and world is left unsolved by this model. Among the many practical concrete options open politically and socially at a given moment of history, it cannot

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be assumed that the choice of the morally most acceptable solution will be easy and self-evident, even if the theory is clear. In other words, the debate cannot cease at the transition point from theory to praxis. Such a neat deductive kind of moral process is idealistic and does not correspond to life's experiences. New circumstances can call into question aspects of existing theory. To understand what is going on, the "teachers" (the clergy) must be a part of the whole process, otherwise their positions will always be taken too late to be helpful. Hidden within this model is not only a concept of the church but also a concept of the methodology for moral decision-making, a methodology

that is foreign to the American inductive cultural and educational processes. Moreover, the church that employs this model often loses credibility, since it is too slow to condemn concrete and clear cases of injustice (Nazism in Germany or Fascism in Italy).

For all these reasons Catholics in the United States would be wise to take a critical stance toward this European phenomenon of lay church movements and accept the fact that they do not correspond to our historical experience and do not solve some of the crucial questions we are asking at this moment of history. It would be unfortunate if this European model were to emerge from the synod of bishops in 1987 as the recommended model for the whole church.

### **The Model Emerging in the United States: Clergy and Laity Cooperation**

It is not possible at this moment for the church in the United States to delineate an alternative that would be as clear and neat as the European model. Some of its characteristics, however, can be outlined, but with a certain hesitancy because its full development has not yet taken place.

It is becoming more and more evident that, in the process of reflecting on the political, social and economic issues that our society faces today, it is important to preserve a unity of clergy and laity. The present procedure for writing pastoral letters has been more effective than earlier ones because of the consultation process involved. Through that process the bishops have been able to hear from proponents of different points of view within our society. In writing all these recent documents, there came a point when someone had to decide what is and what is not consonant with Catholic teaching. In the case of the economic pastoral letter, the bishops exercised this role conscientiously. One thing, however, was clear: The concern for orthodoxy or truth was shared by all. The search for orthodoxy is not a clerical prerogative. The church has every reason to be concerned about the integrity of its doctrine as well as the consistency of its tradition. Ultimately this responsibility must lie with the teaching authority but not be separate from reliance on the knowledge and expertise of lay and clerical members alike.

Although the consultative process has functioned well, one might ask if there could yet be another process, more ongoing and less cumbersome, that would permit both clergy and laity to be active and involved in reflection on specific contemporary issues that face the church in our society. Perhaps the dialogue should be predominantly among the laity, with the role of the bishops that of asking the crucial questions of the protagonists, of clarifying the tradition and of creating the structures needed for fairness and comprehensiveness.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the clergy  
*(Continued on p.215).*

should be to keep clear the pastoral implications of the dialogue so that the whole church can profit from them but not be prematurely led into action when the religious and theoretical basis is not yet clearly articulated. Two major reasons suggest themselves for working out a new process. First of all, the subject matter of today's political, social and economic problems is so complex and difficult that no group of teachers could be expected to master all this diverse and intricate material. It is difficult to imagine any group—bishops certainly included—that would have, on the one hand, a developed knowledge of recent biblical exegesis, systematic theology and moral systems and, on the other, a refined knowledge of politics, business (on a world scale), nuclear armaments, medical procedures, genetic engineering—to name just a few of the areas where moral decisions must be made today. The second reason is that bishops should not be placed in a position of always reacting post factum to decisions made by others. This happened in the past, but the damage done was less because science was less developed. Now the possibilities of scientific experimentation seem relatively limitless and the decisions on which possibilities should be pursued are the urgent ones. Post factum would be too late and would place the whole church constantly in a reactive position and not in a leadership role.

Perhaps we should think out new processes that will permit bishops to function credibly as teachers in these complicated moral issues that range from MX missiles to leveraged buy-outs and decisions based on genetic analysis. If bishops are to be effective teachers, they cannot be separated from the debate, nor can they be constantly writing long and comprehensive documents that remain in the realm of pure theory. We need a more nuanced concept of a teaching church and a teaching authority that corresponds to the complex reality of the current situation. Perhaps short statements of encouragement as well as caution are all that is needed as bishops, priests and laity struggle over these complicated issues. I am convinced that our laity are intelligent enough to differentiate between those occasions when the bishops want to speak

with the full force of their moral authority—whether it be on a moral theory or on its practical application—and those occasions when the bishops are still as undecided as everyone else and are in the process of weighing conflicting values and trying to find the right direction. I am sure bishops would be relieved to know they do not have to have all the answers all the time. In this way, the delicate question of the degree of specificity with which bishops should speak could be seen as a false one, since the church—bishops as well as laity—lives in a very specific world where theory and application are in a living dialogical process.

#### **The Model Emerging in the United States: The Church in the World**

Since the Presidency of John F. Kennedy, the Catholic Church has found itself in a new position in American society. In all areas, political, social, economic and intellectual, it has assumed a significantly new role. Nevertheless, the new situation has brought with it new tensions. One does not solve these tensions simply by saying that individual Catholics, wherever they may be in society, must act according to their consciences, since that begs the question: How does the Catholic tradition form our consciences, and, when the laity act, how do they relate to the whole church as a community of believers who hold certain beliefs, values and practices?

Modern World" and the "Decree on the Laity" recognize that imperfect world, but never say exactly to what degree the ideal must be realized. In other words, they never touch on compromise.

The most difficult question posed to the church today by the American political processes is precisely that of compromise, a solution inevitable in a pluralistic society. The whole theory of integralism returns to haunt us at this point of the discussion. Vatican II rejected integralism, but it did not indicate where compromise must stop. I do not at all believe that the European division between clergy and laity solves this question. It does not "save" the church from compromising its positions by letting the laity do that. The laity are church as fully as the clergy. The laity do not have a different kind of conscience from the clergy's that permits them to make more compromises in a pluralistic society.

When does the church say that no compromise is permissible or that the ultimate degree of compromise has been reached and one can go no further? Thomas More was not the first, and will not be the last, to face this question. This issue was clearly raised recently when the Administrative Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops was willing to accept the Hatch Amendment as a compromise on the abortion issue while many of those actively involved in the pro-life effort called this compromise "treason." That same question surfaces again and again in

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One cannot talk about all those issues in the abstract, and so it is necessary to try to reduce the problem to the issue that becomes the touchstone of them all. For this reason it would help to reflect on one aspect that is true of the political sphere but also of the whole of life, whether it be economic or social. In a real world the ideal is never fully obtainable. "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the

the abortion debate when one asks what is expected of a Catholic politician. Are there issues on which the church will not compromise as it tries to bring its moral perspective to bear upon the political and social order? The laity ask: "Would the authorities please name these?" (Abortion under all circumstances?) Are there issues on which the church will compromise? (Divorce laws?) "Would the au-

thorities please name these?" If the authorities say, "No compromise," and demand this of all the faithful, what happens when a majority of Catholics are not convinced of the wisdom of a no-compromise position? (Birth control under all circumstances?) If the church is unsuccessful in obtaining by rational argumentation a consensus on her position regarding an issue facing society, what does she demand of her members who must live in that society and hold office there?

For me these are the real issues we face as a church today in the United States. They will not be solved by splitting us into a lay branch for the concrete and a clergy for theory. Neither are they solved by placing the burden for the solution on the conscience of the individual Catholic lay person, who is, in a way, thrown out into the world without support. Ultimately, moral questions must be resolved by the conscience of each one, but the role of the supporting church should be to help form conscience.

Given the state of the debate on these issues, I would suggest the following guideline: That we not fall into a new integralism in politics or in business, but that we accept the sincerity of those who differ with our point of view, as we work toward a consensus. This means that we

enter into the public debate to persuade others and arrive at a consensus. If that consensus is not in our favor, we should not demand "no compromise" on the part of all Catholics involved in the political arena or in the legal realm. If we did so, we would exclude all Catholics from politics and society, and confine ourselves again to a ghetto.

**I**n the economic field, we should not assume that everyone who disagrees with our solution is immoral, but rather continue to challenge others to examine the moral values inherent in each solution proposed, the compromises that must be accepted and the effectiveness of varying solutions. For example, those who espouse minimal government must be forced to face up to the question of who will provide the social services needed and how. Those who advocate government solutions must show how errors of the past are to be avoided, for instance, how a welfarism that creates pejorative dependency is to be avoided. Sustainers of both positions can be considered as searching adherents to the Gospel message.

Grappling with compromise, as dis-

tinct from an integralist position, is the unfinished agenda set by "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." I would suggest we move very carefully in declaring any position to be one that allows for no compromise (unless the individual conscience so declares it) as we work toward a consensus on any issue and before we have obtained such consensus in the wider political arena. In this way, we can respect fully the American social and political processes; we can respect in politics and business the integrity of our competent lay and clerical members, and we can move the debate further by reasoned arguments.

More than anything else, we need at this moment in the United States the time and freedom to evolve that functional model of the church in political, social and economic issues that corresponds to our tradition. Cardinal James Gibbons fought strongly to avoid Catholic separatism in social and political issues when he opposed the formation of "Catholic" unions. We would do well to keep his wisdom in mind today. The functional model of the church that would result would not be so neat and simple as older models, but it would correspond more clearly to the complicated world we live in today. ■

## Letters

### Praise for Living Language

Michael O. Garvey's article "The State of the Church in Summer 1986" (8/23) describes a reality often overlooked in periods of theological dispute and angst: namely, that the Gospel continues to thrive in ordinary people; that God is known and lived in the rituals of everydayness; that the experience of the divine occurs again and again beyond the halls of theological academia. Moreover, Mr. Garvey uses unambiguous, unencumbered language to do so, a language that conveys gratitude for our humanity and hope for the future. These linguistic qualities are desperately needed if talking about God is to have any relevance in the world where it really counts. This suggests that one unique contribution of the laity may be precisely this: a pathway out of the tangle of technical, bloodless, "warrior language" (to borrow from Freeman Dyson), into the

clear space of evocative, passionate, living theological language.

Thanks be to God for the *sensus fidelium* in all its dimensions.

Dolores R. Leckey  
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### Support for Public Schools

At least once a year we hear the cry for a voucher plan for private/parochial schools ("Doomsday School Days," 9/20). Usually there is the implication that these schools do a better job of educating the urban poor than the public schools do. Do we have statistics to show that this is true? We cannot compare results unless we started with the same ingredients.

How many urban poor are the private/parochial schools serving? How many handicapped, how many retarded, how many emotionally disturbed do these schools have enrolled? How many of these schools have accepted and set up programs for potential dropouts? In the last 20 years, how many Catholic schools in the inner cities have closed? Several elementary schools have closed in Mil-

waukee and one girls' high school just 12 blocks from downtown sold its building and merged with another school in a better neighborhood. It appears that the private/parochial schools are leaving the "dirty" work in the poor urban areas to the public schools. Would those closed schools reopen if they received voucher money? We cannot forget that vouchers are tax money and would have strings attached. I am sure vouchers could be used only at approved schools. And to be approved, the school would have to offer the full range of physical and special education that the public schools do.

Could we not work at improving the public schools in the poor urban areas so all the children in those areas could benefit, not just those who manage to run elsewhere? Taking funds away from the urban schools (in the form of vouchers) will not better educate those who are left there. What will we do when private schools refuse to accept voucher students? After all, they are private for a reason.

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