

The history of Catholic education in the United States

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS IN THE GROWING
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

- ▶ Radical increase in Catholic population:

1776: 24,000

1850: 1.7 million

1866: 2.5 million

1870: 3.55 million

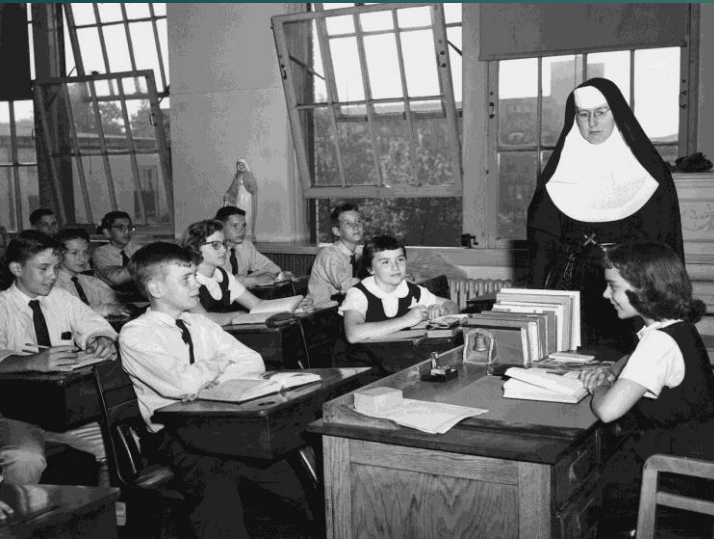
1890: 7.3 million

1920: 17 million

2015: 81.6 million

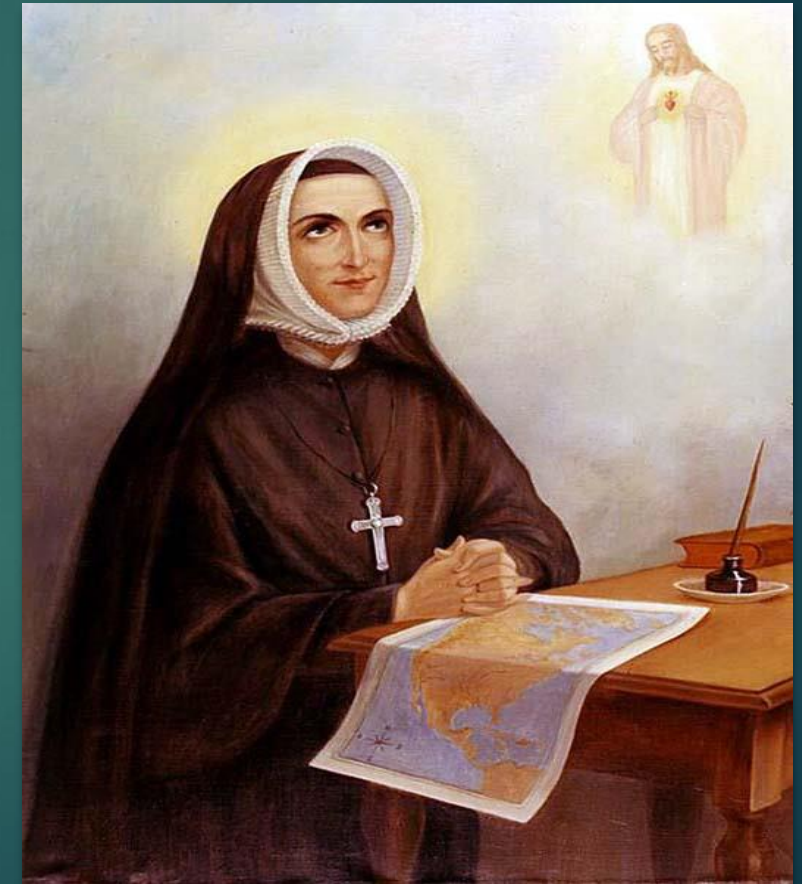
Major source of this presentation: Jacobs OSA R.M.: *U.S. Catholic Schools and the Religious Who Served in Them: Contributions in the 18th and 19th Centuries + first 6 centuries of the 20th century*

- ▶ Bringing Catholic schools to record enrollments: the hard work of religious sisters, brothers and priests as well as very dedicated lay people..



Brief look at the first communities of sisters who came to the US

- ▶ 1727: Ursulines found Ursuline Academy in New Orleans
- ▶ 1790: Dutch Carmelites go to Port Tobacco, MD to establish a school.
- ▶ 1792: Poor Clares come from France to Georgetown MD.
- ▶ 1792: Bishop John Carroll encourages native vocations but does not succeed; eventually bishops went to Europe to recruit.
- ▶ Early 1800s: Ursulines open a school in Boston.
- ▶ 1818: Religious of the Sacred Heart arrive to open a school in New Orleans: Mme. Rose Philippine Duchesne
- ▶ 1836: 6 Sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph (Le Puy, France) arrive in Carondelet (St. Louis).
- ▶ 1850: Some CSJs are recruited to the Diocese of Rochester by Bishop McQuaid; become SSJs



What is a religious community?

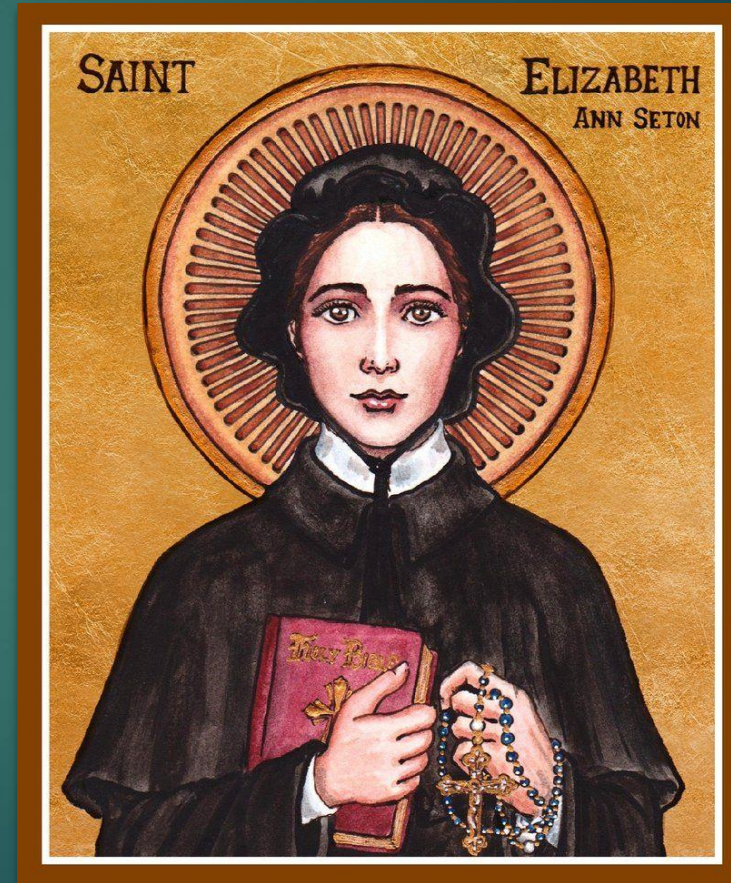
- ▶ Celibate women and men who love in community and take vows:
- ▶ POVERTY: everything is owned in common;
- ▶ CHASTITY: for religious, it means a life of celibacy in order to focus one's attention on the people they serve;
- ▶ OBEDIENCE: there is a local superior as well as the administration of the Community. One goes where one is appointed; one humbly obeys all that is asked of her/him.
- ▶ Some orders take a 4th vow, i.e. serving the poor, or a vow of hospitality
- ▶ Sisters, brothers and some priests
- ▶ Congregations, or Orders ("community")
- ▶ A religious order is guided by its charism: i.e. education, missions, hospitals, working among the poor...

Role of vowed Religious in a Diocese/Archdiocese

- ▶ Often, a bishop would invite a religious community to live and work in a diocese (schools, parishes, hospitals, orphanages, etc.)
- ▶ Religious report to the superiors of their congregation but work in a particular diocese with the permission of the Bishop.
- ▶ Any institution that claims to be Catholic must have permission from the local Ordinary – the Bishop. (The Bishop can remove the name Catholic and his approval for good reason, as he is responsible for all Catholic activity in his diocese.)
- ▶ If religious (usually sisters) work for a parish school, the pastor of the parish retains the ultimate authority of the school. “parochial”

Sisters in Catholic Schools in the US

- ▶ 1808: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton founded the Sisters of Charity.
- ▶ Thus the first native-born sisters begin to work in American Catholic schools.
- ▶ 1900: 170 congregations of religious women provided almost 50,000 sisters to work in American Catholic schools.
- ▶ Vocations began to grow quite rapidly until the mid-1960s.

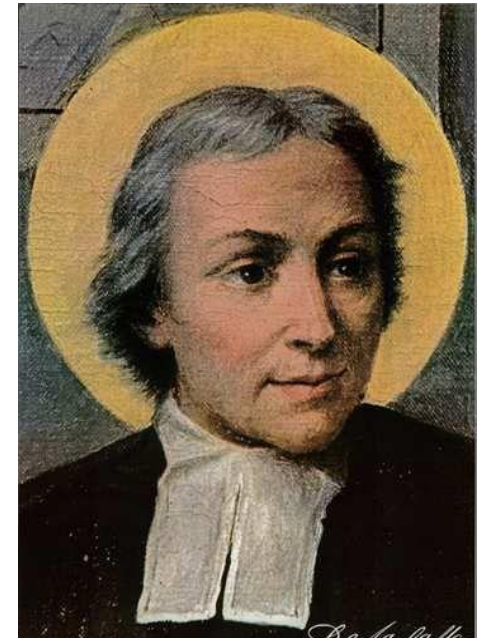


Numbers of Catholic Sisters in the United States

- ▶ 1840: 900 sisters in 15 communities in 1840;
- ▶ 1900: 50,000 in 170 congregations in 1900;
- ▶ 1930: 135,000 in 300 different congregations.
- ▶ 1965: 180,000
- ▶ 2010: 56,000
- ▶ Starting in 1820, the sisters always outnumbered the priests and brothers.

Male religious communities open schools in the US

- ▶ (Before their suppression in 1773), Jesuits had established schools in Maryland.
- ▶ 1800s: Dominicans and Trappists in Kentucky; DeLaSalle Christian Brothers arrived in New Orleans;
- ▶ Later that century: Holy Cross Brothers arrive and establish schools as well as Irish Christian Brothers (founded by Brother Edmund Rice); Augustinians likewise arrive;
- ▶ Note: 1852: 3 Basilian Fathers leave France and establish St. Michael's College in Toronto. They arrive in Houston in 1900.
- ▶ Important to point out: Diocesan priests also administered and taught in Catholic schools.



The role of Religious in American anti-Catholicism

- ▶ Anti-Catholic propaganda asserted that the religious were pawns in a “fiendish papal scheme” to indoctrinate Catholic youth and to destroy American freedoms. (in Europe, Catholics were allied with monarchs...)
- ▶ The vow of obedience “prevents nuns and brothers in being effective in teaching the democratic ideals associated with true American citizenship (The Converted Catholic, 1888: Crowley, 1905).
- ▶ Other detractors accused Catholic schools of being "popish seminaries," intended to stir up latent and overt anti-Catholic sentiment among the Protestant majority (Ray, 1936).
- ▶ Religious habits drew suspicion: are these really foreigners here to attack and destroy American democracy?

Advantages of religious working in Catholic schools

- ▶ The witness of vowed dedication to the missionary work of the Church: to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- ▶ Religious did not need nor receive the salaries that a lay person would receive.
- ▶ Many religious were intent on providing educational services to the underserved: those who lived in poverty, oppressed minorities, slaves and freed slaves.
- ▶ Ursulines in New Orleans: charge the wealthier Catholic enough tuition to pay for the poorer and underserved classes.
- ▶ Some bishops preferred teachers who were under a vow of obedience



Religious communities 1920-1965

- ▶ Contributions of religious include:
- ▶ providing the personnel needed to support the tremendous expansion of Catholic schooling;
- ▶ provided diocesan and national Catholic educational leadership;
- ▶ pushed Catholic pedagogical theory beyond its traditional European roots;
- ▶ designed new religion curricula;
- ▶ advanced equal education for females;
- ▶ upheld parental rights in educating their children;
- ▶ provided Catholic youth the moral and intellectual formation to lead the American Catholic community during the post- Vatican II decades.

Lay involvement in Catholic Schools

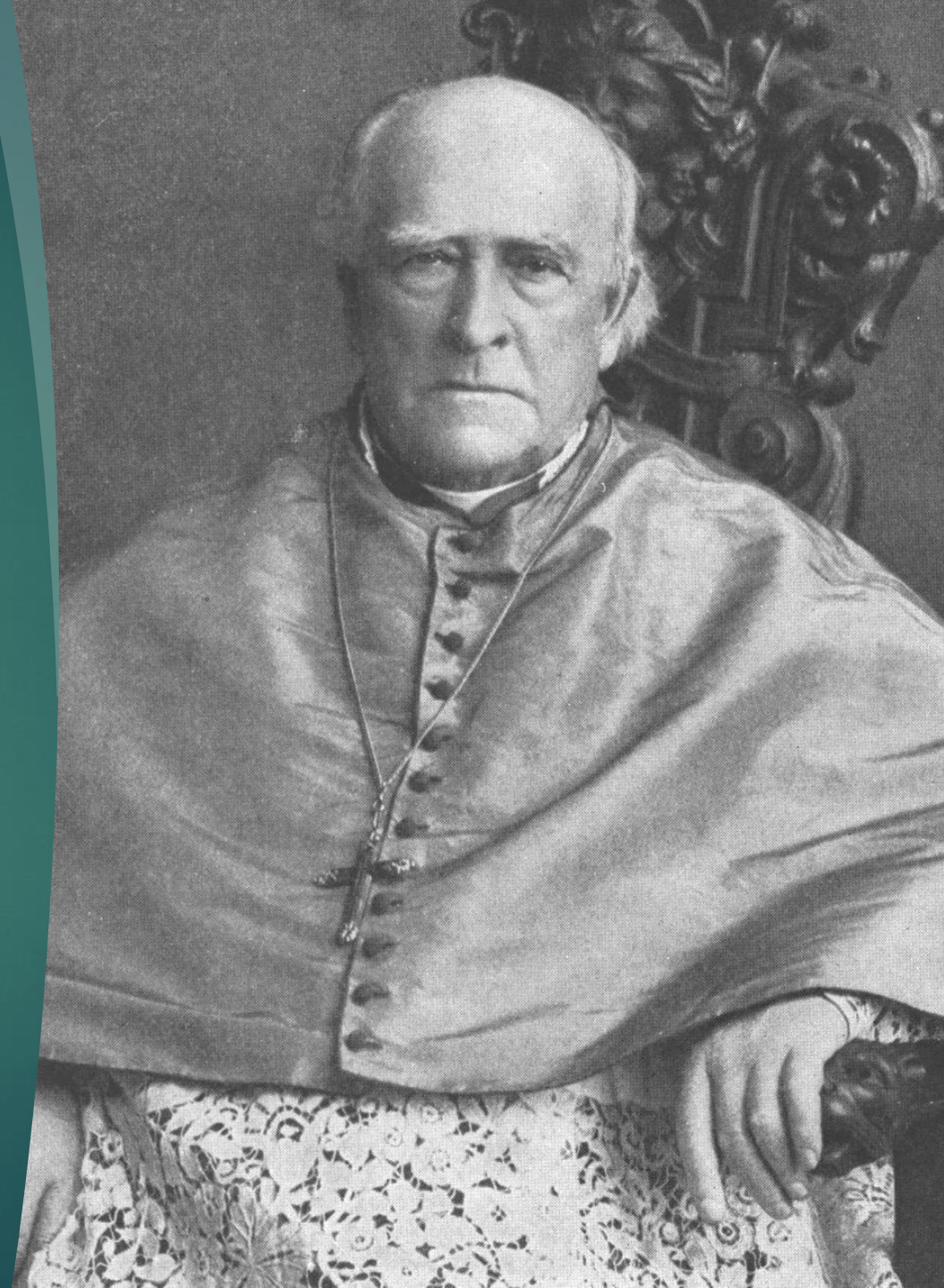
- ▶ From the establishment of Catholic schools in the USA, lay people taught alongside religious in many schools;
- ▶ ‘trusteeism’ grew as a governance model for Catholic schools: this was a very American way of helping to establish and run a school (especially in areas of fundraising)
- ▶ (Arch)dioceses and parishes establish school boards
- ▶ There has been some tension between pastors/religious orders and lay trustees;
- ▶ Catholic textbook companies: Christian Brothers, Sadlier, Benziger Brothers: emphasized Catholic contributions in American history rather than the bias in some original public school textbooks; encouraged values of Gospel, Church, Family and American citizenship.

Professional Training of Teachers

- ▶ Flaw in many early American Catholic schools: teachers, including many religious, were not as professionally prepared as their public school counterparts.
- ▶ Early US Catholic schools served poor immigrants and the school could not afford to train teachers properly.
- ▶ Rochester NY: Bishop McQuaid establishes Diocesan Sisters of Saint Joseph, has a program where he trains many on weekends; also sent sisters to Europe to become qualified to train sisters in Rochester schools.

Bishop McQuaid (Rochester)

- ▶ Have God in your school room, and whatever you teach, even if it be the dry subject of A, B, C, or the multiplication table, let it be done so purely and so well for Him that the youngest children will recognize His presence; that they will be so well instructed in their religion as to become thoroughly grounded in His knowledge and love. Use secular studies as the tools with which you may accomplish this end. (Annals of the Sisters of St. Joseph, 1889)
- ▶ For McQuaid, Catholic education first concerned the salvation of each student's soul; of secondary importance was the communication of knowledge, skills, and values each student would need to participate actively as a Catholic citizen in a pluralistic republic.



1920-1965: Greatest growth of American Catholic Schools

- ▶ 1920 – 1965: 5,189 new elementary and secondary schools
- ▶ This explosive 64% increase included a 66% increase in elementary schools and a 55% increase in secondary schools.
- ▶ 1965:
- ▶ 13,292 Catholic schools
- ▶ 5,574,000 students
- ▶ 177,223 religious and lay teachers —120,206 elementary schools (289% increase from 1920) 57,013 secondary schools (719% increase from 1920).

1920-1965

- ▶ SHIFT: from parochial control to diocesan and national organizations.
- ▶ Each (arch)diocese develops a Catholic Schools Office to oversee the Catholic schools in its (arch)diocese; superintendents are appointed by the Ordinary (Bishop) as well as school boards;
- ▶ NCEA: National Catholic Educational Association established in 1904 (1st meeting: Saint Louis); moved to Washington in 1929;
- ▶ NCEA today: focuses on: leadership development for superintendents, presidents, principals, pastors, and governing bodies; professional development for teachers; and serving as the voice for Catholic school education.

NCEA

National Catholic Educational Association

PARENTS AS PRIMARY EDUCATORS

- ▶ Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators.... Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. Here, too, they find their first experience of a wholesome human society and of the Church. Finally, it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God. Let parents, then, recognize the inestimable importance a truly Christian family has for the life and progress of God's own people. *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis)*, #3 (1965)

Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis), #6 Vatican Council II, 1965

- ▶ Parents who have the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children must enjoy true liberty in their choice of schools. Consequently, the public power, which has the obligation to protect and defend the rights of citizens, must see to it, in its concern for distributive justice, that public subsidies are paid out in such a way that parents are truly free to choose according to their conscience the schools they want for their children.

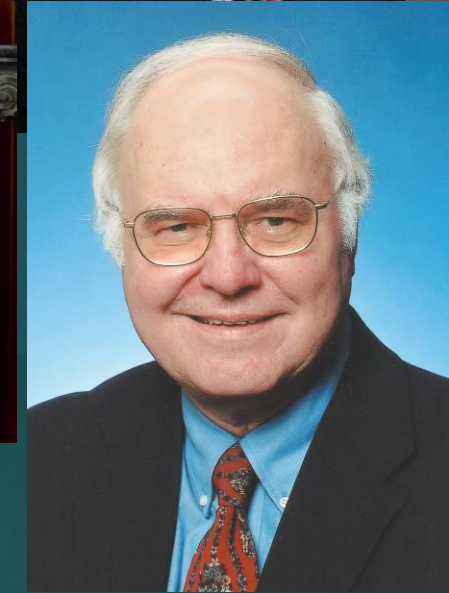


Influence of Catholic Education in the United States increases

- ▶ As the years go on, racism and anti-Catholicism weakens as Catholics are more and more integrated into American society.
- ▶ **Archbishop John Timothy McNicholas OP** (1877–1950) Bishop of Duluth (1918-1925) and Archbishop of Cincinnati (1925-1950) NCEA President (1946-1950):
- ▶ Traditional fonts of education = God, home. Church, and civil society
- ▶ moral training must permeate every phase of schooling so that "right" thinking and "moral" living would be inculcated into the student's every conscious thought and act

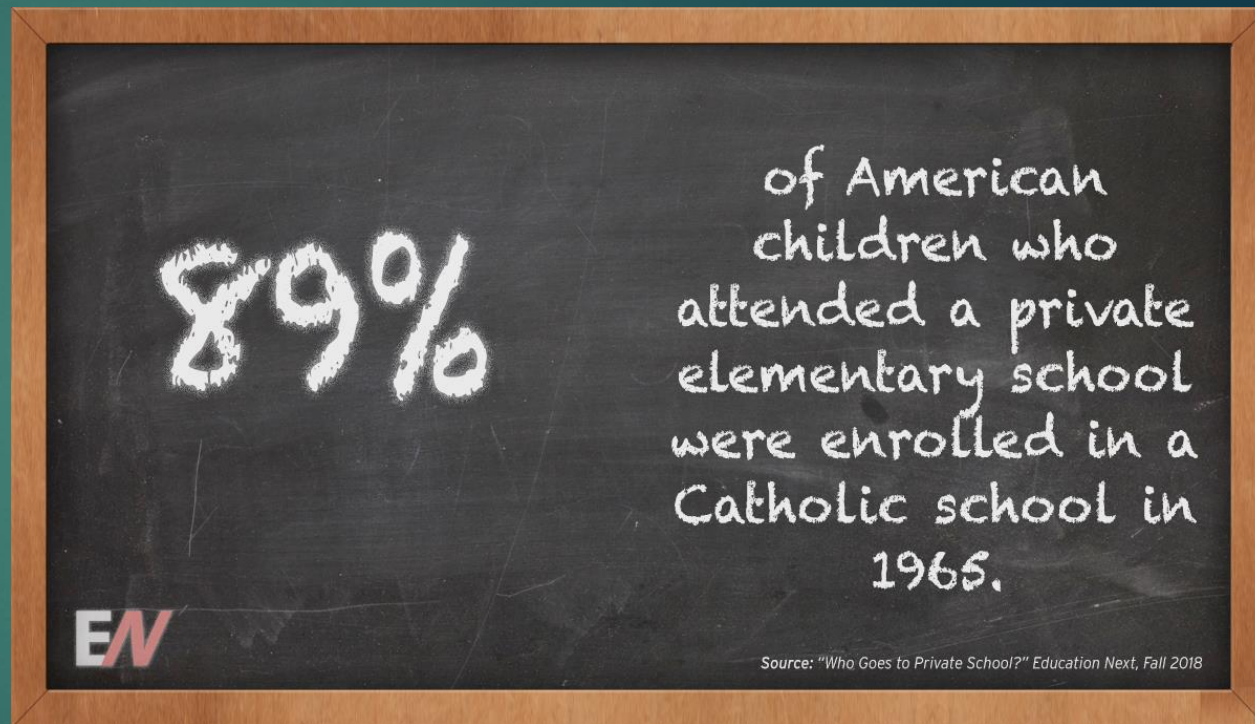
Archbishop John Timothy McNicholas, O.P.

- ▶ “moral training must permeate every phase of schooling so that "right" thinking and "moral" living would be inculcated into the student's every conscious thought and act”
- ▶ Catholic schools must provide what public schools do not, including the need/obligation to dissent from legitimate authority if it did not use "right" reason to arrive at arguable conclusions;
- ▶ One can be an American patriot, good citizen and object to immoralities in American society, i.e. poverty, the devaluation of human life in all of its forms, economic injustice, racism, inequality, etc.



Influential American Catholics & products of Catholic education

- ▶ Secretary of Education William J. Bennett,
- ▶ New York Governor Mario Cuomo,
- ▶ Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro,
- ▶ Congressman Henry Hyde,
- ▶ former United Nations representative Jeane Kirkpatrick,
- ▶ Michael Novak, George Weigel, and Garry Richard M. Jacobs, O.S.A.
- ▶ TV Journalists Christopher Matthews, Cokie Roberts, and Timothy Russert
- ▶ Supreme Court Justice Antonio Scalia



Thursday, May 7: American Catholic Schools after Vatican II: new challenges

- ▶ Steep decline in number of religious staffing schools;
- ▶ Challenge: lay people need to be properly trained in administrative positions beyond just being practicing Catholics;
- ▶ Increased tuition rates begin to make Catholic schools inaccessible to an increasing number of American Catholic families;
- ▶ Amalgamating and closing of many Catholic schools;
- ▶ Demographic shifts: American Catholics now have a higher average income than average Americans;
- ▶ Despite lower populations and fewer schools, Catholic schools remain the largest network of private schools in the United States