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Statues Stay As Officials Rule to Keep 'Free' Classrooms

By Floyd Anderson
PEQUANNOCK, N. J. — (NC) — The "storm over statues" has ended here — and really it turned out to be only a squall after all.

Last fall the township had an urgent school problem on its hands when a nearby school, which had been used by Pequannock students, no longer had room for them, and construction work on a new school was not yet complete.

At the same time, Holy Spirit Church here had a new school with some classrooms that were not being used. So, Father John Dericks, the pastor, offered the township the use of three classrooms—without charge.

The township was thankful for the offer and sent 95 public school children to attend public school classes in the three rooms in Holy Spirit school. The pupils were taught by regular public school teachers.

All went smoothly for a while and most of the township's citizens were grateful for the assistance given by the community's Catholics.

Several weeks later some few disgruntled Pequannock citizens submitted a complaint to the board of education. They felt that religious statues in the three Holy Spirit classrooms were an affront and asked that they be removed.

The statues, mostly of the Blessed Virgin and some hand-carved crucifixes from Oberammergau, stayed in the classrooms. Father Dericks commented that

"removing the statuary from the classrooms is like removing a window or the heating unit."

He pointed out that only a "minority group of discontents" had complained, while a number of Protestant parents had said they did not wish the statues removed.

A board of education sub-committee unanimously recommended that no action be taken.

"The facilities which have been made available to the board have been examined and approved by the New Jersey State Department of Education," they explained, "and in the opinion of the sub-committee meet the requirements of the board for facilities which provide suitable educational, health and safety requirements."

Two members of the sub-committee went beyond the official wording of the report to remark that the incident had caused embarrassment to most of the township's Protestants. They said the taxpayers should realize their obligation to Holy Spirit parish which lent its school facilities free of charge.

"We should thank God we have such men as Father Dericks," one member said. "We should be ashamed of ourselves. The whole thing should be eradicated from the minutes and forgotten."

As an aftermath of the incident, the Pequannock Township Committee voted to provide the services of a nurse for the parochial school children at Holy Spirit school.

The board of education had first considered such a gesture but a ruling from the county superintendent of schools said that the board could not spend funds on any but public school use, except for transportation. The board notified the township committee of this ruling.

After receiving this letter, the Township Committee voted to provide the nurse. Mayor Albert Arnold said: "We feel that all school children should have the benefit of nursing care. We feel that this is done in other townships."

Portsmouth KC Group Sets Activities

Council 741 Knights of Columbus, held its regular meeting at the clubrooms last week with Grand Knight Albert Lang in charge of the program.

Plans were mapped for the council's December activities which include commemorative services for deceased members of the Knights of Columbus on December 17, and a Saturday Night Christmas Passing party for members and their ladies on December 22.

Don E. Gilman, chairman of the Youth Activities Committee, announced that arrangements were being made for a Children's Christmas party at the clubrooms and that the date had been tentatively set for Sunday, December 23.

Plans for the future include an exemplification of the first degree for a new class of candidates on January 28.

Cloverleaf Sets Party For Aged At St. Anthony

The Cloverleaf Club of St. Anthony's Hospital will have their annual Christmas party for the aged and chronically ill of the hospital on Dec. 23, at 2 p.m.

Every member in the hospital will receive a gift. Mrs. Louisa D. Ranieri, 3309 McGuffey Rd., is chairman of gifts. Mrs. Sam Gallione, 385 S. Harding Rd. entertainment, and Mrs. Phillip Palumbo, 945 Heyl Ave. tree decorating.

Taking part in the festivities will be the Maennerchor Chorus a Girl Scout Troop from Christ the King School, and a chorus from St. Catharine's School. Anyone wishing to help with arrangements may contact Mrs. Ranieri AM. 8-6377.

Coshocton Men Become Third Degree Knights

The following from Coshocton were received into the third degree of Knights of Columbus at Newark, recently: Tom McNeely, E. Roland Skarke, Robert Gaither, Roger McCabe, Don Loos, James Baker, Richard Baker, Robert Unger, Jim Guenther, Bill McDaniel, Keith Hall, Don Unger, James Bradford, James Addy, Dick Morrison, John Weaver, Ray Miskimins, Leo White and Raymond DeCenzo.

MYERS, Louis, 74, Dec. 2, St. Mary Church, Chillicothe, St. Mary cemetery.

CUPPETT, Mrs. Julia Rosa 84, Dec. 2, Holy Redeemer church, Portsmouth.

HOLOCHER, John A., 56, Nov. 30, St. Mary Magdalene church, Columbus, St. Joseph cemetery.

FREEMAN, Patrick H., 84, Nov. 29, Holy Name church, Columbus, Mt. Calvary cemetery.

HOLTSCHULTE, Leo, 70, Dec. 4, Immaculate Conception church, Columbus, Mt. Calvary cemetery.

SCHONHARDT, Anthony E., 56, Dec. 4, Corpus Christi church, Columbus, St. Joseph cemetery.

CURRAN, Mrs. Beatrice, 53, Dec. 3, St. Joseph Cathedral, Columbus, St. Joseph cemetery.

GLEICH, Mrs. Miriam, 55, 55, Dec. 5, St. Leo church, Columbus, St. Joseph cemetery.

CLIFFORD, John A., 72, Dec. 6, Our Lady of Peace church, Columbus, St. Joseph cemetery.

WALSH, James A., 75, Dec. 6, St. Mary church, Marion.

McKINNEY, James A., 71, Dec. 6, Church of the Atonement, Crooksville.

McCORMICK, Mrs. Elizabeth, 79, Dec. 5, Sacred Heart church, Coshocton.

WEAVER, Mrs. Madeline, 54, Dec. 5, Sacred Heart church, Coshocton.

LAUDER, Mrs. Bertha Ann, 76, Dec. 5, St. Peter church, Wheelersburg, St. Peter cemetery.

SCHIRTZINGER, Mrs. Sophia Laurette, 62, Dec. 6, Immaculate Conception church, Columbus, Mt. Calvary cemetery.

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Central Deanery Women To Sponsor Pops Concert

Plans are being made by the Central Deanery of Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, for their annual project. This year the deanery will sponsor the Columbus Symphony Orchestra conducted by Evan Whallon in a Pops Concert, at 3 p.m. for children and 8:30 p.m. for adults, Feb. 15 at the Veterans' Memorial in Columbus. (Left, above) Mrs. John Dunkle, president, has named Mrs. Anton Keller III (right) to serve as general chairman and Mrs. George De Nucci (center) and Mrs. John Dunkle will be co-chairmen.

Others who will serve are Mrs. Franklin Eyerman, patron chairman; Mrs. C. J. McDonald, general admission, who will be assisted by Mrs. Thomas Bates and Mrs. Clarence Hauck; Mrs. James Charles, arrangement chairman; Mrs. John Kochensperger, usher; Mrs. Helene Sliter, children's concert; Mrs. Charles Lingo, program and printing; Mrs. Press Southworth, Jr., treasurer; Mrs. Thomas Murnane, Symphony membership, and Mrs. W. A. Spiers, publicity.

Springs Group Presents Amahl and the Night Visitors

Gian-Carlo Menotti's Christmas opera, Amahl and the Night Visitors, will be presented at 8:15 p.m. on December 14 and 16 and at 2:30 p.m. on December 15 by the Music Department of the College of Saint Mary of the Springs, in Erskine Hall's Little Theatre.

Music will be under the direction of Adalina Puccini Timofeyew, grandniece of the famous Giacomo Puccini, whose operatic compositions include La Boheme, Tosca, and Madame Butterfly.

The production will be staged under the direction of Sister M. Elizabeth Seton, O.P., head of the dramatics department at the college. Miss Mary Jo Peak, modern dance instructor, is the choreographer. The opera is open to the public and no admission will be charged.

The story revolves around Amahl (Robert Buchfield), a lame shepherd boy and mother (Gail Prudhomme), a poor widow. Three Wise Men, Kaspar (Patrick Walsh), Melchior (Peter Grassilli) and Balthazar (John McCormick), on their way to Bethlehem, ask for shelter for the night, and are welcomed.

The splendor and wealth of their robes and gifts amaze Amahl and his mother, who becomes embittered because a Newborn Babe should receive so much, while her son has nothing. She steals some of the Wise Men's gold, and is discovered, but forgiven when her motive is realized.

The three men explain the need of the Babe in Bethlehem for all human love, and the widow wishes to present a gift to Him—but has nothing. Amahl offers his wooden crutch, and is miraculously cured of his lameness. He too can now walk with the Kings to Bethlehem to adore and give thanks to the Christ Child.

A program of Christmas carols with authentic settings will precede the opera, which will be accompanied by a small orchestra ensemble including Sister Maris Stella, O.P., head of the Music Department, and Dorothy Watkeys, Sister Mary Lisa, Michael Winfield, Mary Ann Winfield, Martha Seidell and Ann Schlund.

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