Parochial schools

Quality education

The diocesan Office of Catholic Schools is headed by Gerald Dill as superintendent. Dill is also vicar of the diocesan Department of Education which includes the Office of Catholic Schools and the Office of Communications.

Dill explained that the Office of Catholic Schools "is to assist the bishop and the diocesan school board in the implementation of diocesan policies which promote quality Catholic education in Catholic schools of the Lafayette diocese."

"The other part of that function," Dill continued, "is to assist the local school boards and principals in their efforts to maintain their school at a quality level in all phases or aspects of running a Catholic school."

Catholic schools have been experiencing the effects of many changes over the past several years (for instance the effect of the vocation shortage). Dill explained the efforts now being made to combat the "biggest problem"—finances.

"We're all aware that Catholic schools have had to hire more and more lay teachers, and we're making every effort to compensate our lay teachers as much as we possibly can," said Dill. "One of the biggest assisters of Catholic school education has been the church parish. More and more parishes are unable to meet the demands of inflation and spiraling cost, and schools are having to look for other sources."

Although tuition has provided the main source of revenue for every school, without the past assistance of the church parishes, the rest would have to be obtained through various fund raising and development efforts.

Dill outlined specific efforts on the diocesan level in order to help assure future financial security for Catholic schools.

"We've been quite successful in being able to obtain the generosity of Msgr. Paul M. Fusilier a

(continued on page 3)
very generous school scholarship program that's available to any Catholic family who would like to attend Catholic school. They merely apply through their own church parish. Each church parish is entitled to two of these scholarships or grants.”

The office has also received some help in legislative efforts, that would assist parents in helping them with their overall cost in sending their children to Catholic school.

A third effort has been in the area of development. This is done by helping each school get into long range planning and development.

“This is the one area that might keep our schools above water,” said Dill. “It could be the one thing that we could use to take up some of the slack that the church parishes are not able to continue.”

Though these efforts are being made to combat future financial problems, programs are also being implemented to cushion the effects of such and other problems, on the quality of Catholic education in the schools.

One such program helps establish “Vision and Values” of the Catholic school with workshops for administration, faculty, and parents of each school. Another program concerns the establishment of a religious administrator who will be in charge of all religious affairs of a particular school’s community, i.e. show the overall results that our teachers, administrators, and principals are doing in our schools.

Dill is assisted by a staff faculty, students and parents.

During the week of February 1, (National Catholic Schools Week), the Office of Catholic Schools will release the testing results of the system. The results of each child will be sent to the parents, and the results of a particular school will be available from the office, said Dill.

“We feel that our people are doing an excellent job and we need to of four assistant superintendents: Sr. Myra Banquer, who assists in the administration of the entire office; Sr. Boniface Adams, whose primary concern is with the evaluation of our schools; Bobby Colbert, whose area is religious education; and Ronald Carrier, who takes care of school food services and acts as the office’s controller.

Dill is a veteran of the school system he heads. He was coach and principal at Notre Dame High School, Crowley, before being appointed first lay diocesan superintendent in 1974. He is a native of Thibodaux and has a bachelor’s degree from USL. and earned his master’s at Louisiana State University.

“How do you say it Sister?”