Unlike the Catholic activists of the immigrant period who sought to adapt religion to the American culture, Archbishops McNicholas and Alter along with other Catholic leaders from the 1920s through the 1960s attempted to develop a specific Catholic culture and hoped to influence American culture with their religion. The Cincinnati ordinaries were of the opinion that Catholics were a distinctive group with a distinctive view of the world. As McNicholas and Alter promoted Catholicism they had a great interest in education. They both had much to say about the roles of the church, the state, and the parents in education. They fought against increasing secularization of education from the primary to the university levels. Sharing rather standard Catholic views for their time, both archbishops saw an ongoing struggle between Catholic education and secular education, consistently arguing that the latter undermined the moral ends of education.

McNicholas’s leadership and activities in education were widely recognized and resulted in his election as chairman of the Department of Education of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) from 1930 to 1935, 1943 to 1945, and as president general of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). Keenly interested in the NCEA, which he headed five times beginning in 1946, he was reelected for the last time at a meeting in New Orleans just a week before he died in 1950. In this role he articulated a very definite philosophy of education. True to his Thomistic training, McNicholas advocated a thoroughly Catholic education, one that integrated the natural and supernatural. Revived in Catholic intellectual circles in the late nineteenth century, following Leo XIII’s 1879 encyclical Aeterni Patris,
neo-Thomists argued that the individualism, secularism, and relativism of the modern mind were incongruous to the Catholic ethic’s sense of tradition and community. No other American ordinary reflected as much the teachings of his thirteenth-century confrere, St. Thomas Aquinas, as did McNicholas.¹

When the Cincinnati ordinary broke ground for the new Notre Dame high school for girls in Dayton in 1926, he emphasized the importance of imparting “a specific moral discipline” that was “spiritualized.” Though pre-occupied by issues of war and peace in the 1940s, as episcopal chairman of the Department of Education of the NCWC McNicholas spoke often on the moral bankruptcy of state supported schools. He accused school boards of acting like “drunken sailors” in taxing the poor to support a public school system that drove religion from the curriculum and prevented both the development of the moral character of children and their spiritual formation. Examining the parameters of a postwar peace, he noted that a new world order would not necessarily mean less crime and more righteous living unless there were a revolution in education. To McNicholas, religious instruction in all schools was essential.²

Moreover, the Cincinnati ordinary recommended formal religious instruction to Catholic children attending public schools. McNicholas was inspired by the work of Bishop Edwin V. O’Hara of Crest Falls, Montana, the first chairman in 1934 of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), whose purpose was to provide religious education for individuals who had never had formal catechesis in a church-sponsored school. In 1938 McNicholas appointed a priest to organize a CCD program locally. But it was short-lived. Three years later, however, the first regular religious instruction during school hours for Catholics in public high schools in Cincinnati began at Woodward High School. The class was taught during the students’ free periods from other classes. Sister Agnes de Sales of the Sisters of Charity and four assistants taught the class of seventy-five Catholics.³

Under the auspices of the Bishops’ Committee of the CCD, O’Hara also launched in the mid-1930s a revision of the Catechism of Christian Doctrine, more commonly known as the Baltimore Catechism, inaugurated in 1884 as the official text for religious instruction in the Catholic schools. O’Hara conferred with a few of the American church leaders, including McNicholas, who readily agreed that the language of the catechism could be clearer as well as more succinct and contemporary. Forty theologians at the New York Catechetical Congress of 1936, presided by McNicholas and Archbishop Mooney of Detroit, studied the suggestions of more than one hundred theologians on the “archane theology” of the Baltimore Catechism. O’Hara asked
McNicholas, a trained theologian, to oversee the preparation of a draft to be sent to all the bishops of the United States. Thirty bishops worked on subsequent revisions, resulting in six subsequent printings of the revised text. After several years of research, the Baltimore Catechism for the primary grades was finally completed by 1942 and the high school version in 1949. Though McNicholas had found the work "slow and tedious," it had been, he wrote to the apostolic delegate, "a real relaxation from routine duties and from perplexing problems." Up until the 1960s, the revised Baltimore Catechism remained the primary text for religious instruction in the schools of the archdiocese from elementary to college.

The question that had occupied the minds of local church leaders, the clergy, religious, and the laity in the nineteenth century was whether Catholics should join a system of state schools without religion or build their own elementary schools. They chose the latter course. Education without religion became unthinkable. When Ohio in the 1920s extended compulsory education to the high school level, again archdiocesan priests, religious, and laity responded to the challenge. Catholics demanded that their children be given the same benefits of a religious education on the secondary level as in the elementary schools.

At the same time that he underscored the importance of religious instruction both at the primary and secondary levels, McNicholas thought that the time was ripe for closing most of the small, mostly two-year parish high schools and for revising Moeller's concept of a centralized school system. During the second quarter of the twentieth century Cincinnati Catholics became steadily better educated and more prosperous. This growth was reflected in the increasing number of suburban parishes and in the establishment of a widespread network of Catholic high schools. When McNicholas first arrived in the archdiocese he looked at Moeller's detailed plans for a very large high school on the eastern hills of Cincinnati. After several conferences with the area priests, McNicholas inaugurated a plan for citywide extension of Catholic high schools. Instead of two big high schools in Cincinnati, one on the western side and the other on the eastern side, providing for three thousand students each, it was decided to have smaller high schools that would each handle between five to eight hundred students. Each school was to serve a number of parishes and all students of a given parish were to be assigned to a given school. In this manner, parishes would have more identification with the respective high schools.

During McNicholas's first five years in office several Catholic high schools were either restructured or built. In Cincinnati Mount St. Vincent Academy, a high school founded in 1850 by the Sisters of Charity and moved to Glenway Avenue in 1857, was renamed Seton High School. It served the girls in
the Price Hill community. Notre Dame Academy on Sixth Street, under the
direction of the Sisters of Notre Dame, became a diocesan high school for
girls and was renamed Notre Dame High School. Mercy Academy on Free-
man Avenue, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, became Mercy High School.
In Norwood, Regina High School for girls was built and run by the Sisters
of the Precious Blood. The Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg, Indiana, oper-
ated Our Lady of Angels High School for Girls in St. Bernard. This was the
community where, fifty years earlier, the sisters had begun their work of
elementary education in the archdiocese. For boys, two new high schools were
built. The archdiocese erected Purcell High School on Victory Parkway. The
Society of Mary and diocesan priests of the neighboring parishes conducted
the school. The Franciscan Fathers built and conducted Roger Bacon High
School in St. Bernard. Another central high school for girls, formerly St.
Mary's Parish High School in Hyde Park, was also opened. The Sisters of
Charity conducted it as a diocesan high school. In 1928 St. Rita High School
for the deaf, established five years earlier and the first Catholic high school for
the deaf in the United States, had its first graduation exercises. In Springfield
St. Raphael parish built the Catholic Central High School, conducted by the
Sisters of Charity. Pupils of all parishes in the community could attend it. A
decade later there were Catholic high schools in Botkins, Celina, Chillicothe,
Glendale, Marion, Middletown, Piqua, and Sidney. In addition to the regular
high school subjects, each high school allotted a full scholastic period daily to
the study of religion and sponsored a yearly retreat for students.5

In Dayton McNicholas, like his predecessor, initially encountered some
difficulties. Convinced that Moeller had been “broken in spirit because of the
endless” disagreements over the proposed centralized school system, McNi-
cholas had about fifteen meetings with the priests of Dayton before a deci-
sion was finally reached. In 1927 two diocesan high schools opened. The
reorganization of the Catholic high school system resulted in the transfor-
mation of Notre Dame Academy, renamed Julienne High School, into a
diocesan central high school for girls. The new school inherited a rich tradi-
tion extending over eighty-seven years. Chaminade, a central high school for
boys, was opened and operated by the Brothers of Mary. In their first year the
two schools combined had more than one thousand students.6

Continuing a rich archdiocesan tradition of support for Catholic educa-
tion, many sacrifices and contributions were made by the religious and the
laity in the cause of Catholic secondary education. Millions of dollars were
expended in the building of the high schools. By conducting the various
schools, the religious orders relieved the archdiocese of a great financial obli-
gation. McNicholas acknowledged the “extraordinary outlay” made by reli-
gious communities. In his judgment, the women religious were “especially
desiring of the highest commendation," he wrote to Archbishop Joseph Rit-
ter of St. Louis, "because it is due to the life of sacrifice to which they are
habitually accustomed that we have been able to continue our schools." Com-
plementing the work of the religious, the parishes largely supported the sys-
tem of the new free high schools. Pastors established a monthly collection for
education in order to help meet the finances of the high schools. Each parish
paid a certain amount for each student from the parish attending one of the
high schools. The system for financing the regional Catholic high schools in
the Cincinnati archdiocese attracted national attention. It assured a high
school education to every capable boy and girl, regardless of the ability of the
individual family or parish to bear the financial burden. For more than half a
century, separate high schools for men and women became the pattern. This
was the ideal repeatedly expounded by papal encyclicals on education.
Women religious taught in the female academies and high schools, and reli-
gious brothers and clergy taught in the schools for boys. Initially opposed to
coeducation at the high school level, McNicholas helped establish separate
high schools, with the single exception of the establishment of Madonna High
School for black students of both sexes in 1927. Although private schools
operated by religious orders have continued to the present day, a number of
independent ventures either closed or became incorporated into the central
archdiocesan system. Consequently, religious of various orders often found
themselves on the same faculty with diocesan priests and lay teachers.7

By 1944 McNicholas, as chairman of the NCWC Department of Educa-
tion, pointed out that a reorganization of the Catholic secondary system of
education was "long overdue." He thought that Catholics had delayed too
long in coming to grips with the real purpose of the secondary school. McNi-
cholas argued that the church with its meager resources could not hope to
duplicate all the educational facilities that the state made available to public
schools. It would be unwise, he thought, for the church "to embark on any
large program of vocational education." As far as the archbishop was con-
cerned, 90 percent of the secondary school problem was pastoral and 10 per-
cent educational. Believing that most of the young people would make up the
"great bulk" of the future Catholic population, he contended the church had
a pastoral duty for the sanctification of their souls.8

As he attended to the pastoral needs of the students and provided some
vocational education, McNicholas did not want to sacrifice the minority of
Catholic students who had the capacity for an academic education. Since it
was impossible for the church to do everything "we can at least," he wrote,
"concentrate on what we know is most important. Academic [or] . . . lib-
eral arts education . . . should be made as excellent as possible." He was of
the opinion that the gifted young people should be given opportunities so
that they would become "the priests, the scientists, the lawyers, the doctors, the writers, and the artists who will command attention and respect." As a member of the NCWC administrative board in the 1940s, the Cincinnati ordinary consistently argued that the American church needed thinkers and scholars. Advocating an education that was primarily intellectual, McNicholas was critical of any curriculum that was "diluted and broadened so as to make it adaptable to those of a different intellectual competence." He further argued that the Catholic schools began their secondary education too late. The archbishop thought that students should begin learning Latin as early as twelve years of age. He was aware of the success of the two Latin schools in the diocese of Covington. McNicholas proposed that Catholics experiment "with the idea of taking boys and girls of superior talents at the end of the sixth grade and affording them the opportunity of beginning secondary work of an academic nature." By 1941 four Latin schools for boys were operating in the archdiocese, two in Cincinnati at St. Francis de Sales and St. Lawrence, a third at Sacred Heart in Dayton, and a fourth at St. Bernard in Springfield.9

When Karl Alter became archbishop in 1950, the archdiocese had twenty-six high schools for boys and girls. It had a larger proportion of its Catholic children attending diocesan and parochial high schools than any other of the larger dioceses in the United States. Only the dioceses of Nashville and Lansing, both considerably smaller than that of the Cincinnati archdiocese, had a larger proportion in the schools. A steady stream of students from the 150 Catholic elementary schools in the archdiocese maintained the comparatively large enrollment in Catholic high schools. At the time the parochial schools accommodated approximately one-fourth of all the children—Catholic and non-Catholic—in the nineteen counties of the archdiocese. In some areas 30 or 40 percent of the entire population of grade-schoolers were in the Catholic schools. More than four of every five children who graduated from a Catholic elementary school went on to a Catholic high school. In addition to the founding of Fenwick High School in Middletown and Holy Angels High School in Sidney in the 1950s, St. Joseph's Academy, founded in 1915 by the Sisters of St. Joseph, became McNicholas High School in 1951, then the only coeducational high school in the archdiocese. Shortly before he died, McNicholas had written to Archbishop Ritter that he had "lost all the inhibitions [he] had about high schools that are coeducational."10

A study made by the archdiocesan school office in the 1950s projected enrollments of Catholic high schools in the Cincinnati area to increase by about two-thirds by 1964. Speaking to an overflow crowd at the dedication of the new church-school building and convent of Our Lady of Good Hope parish at Miamisburg in the fall of 1956, Alter noted that the Catholic school
population was growing faster than the church could build and equip schools. "Today we no longer see the Bishops and clergy pleading with the people to build schools," he said. "Instead, the people are pleading with the clergy to build them." But, he cautioned, "there is a limit to how far we can go into debt." By the year 1955 the accumulation of parish reserves deposited with the chancery for investment in the parish building program had been exhausted. For several years new parish buildings had been constructed through this fund as well as from individual savings of certain parishes. Because the chancery could no longer help finance any new projects, each parish had to secure its own bank loans to meet the costs.11

In a confidential report to the pastors of Hamilton and Clermont Counties in January 1957, Alter emphasized the immediate need to expand Catholic high school facilities in their area. He proposed a fund drive to cover the costs of new construction. Two months later he appointed Harry J. Gilligan, a prominent Catholic layman, to head the Archbishop High School Fund Campaign. In a pastoral letter read in all the churches, the archbishop called upon the faithful to continue the rich tradition of support for education in the archdiocese. Although "Catholic educators have no bone to pick with the public schools," Gilligan said, "Catholic educators must, in conscience, make their own schools consistent with Catholic belief." Priests and laymen formed a general committee, and parish chairmen in each area enlisted thousands of laymen to carry the high school appeal into every Catholic home in the two counties. The goal of the campaign was to raise more than $6,000,000 in order to erect three new high schools—LaSalle, Moeller, and McAuley—in the northwest and northeast sectors of Hamilton County and to make substantial additions to Elder, Roger Bacon, and McNicholas High Schools. Even though St. Xavier High School for Boys on Sycamore Street had already made plans to campaign in 1956 to build a new school on sixty-one acres of land on North Bend Road, it agreed to postpone a separate drive in favor of a joint campaign.12

Though the building of Catholic elementary schools was the responsibility of the individual parishes, and more than 500 parochial elementary classrooms had been built in the period 1947 to 1956, building and maintaining high schools was the responsibility, Alter argued, "of the entire Catholic community." The Cincinnati ordinary reminded the parishes, as had Moeller and McNicholas before him, that no one parish had adequate resources "to operate a well-organized and departmentalized high school." Alter issued the unusual order for priests in the 121 parishes in Hamilton and Clermont Counties to exchange pulpits to show their solidarity for the project in their pleas for financial donations. The fund campaign topped its goal by more than two million dollars. "The resounding success of your
high school development campaign is almost incredible,” Bishop George Rehring of Toledo wrote to Alter. In the end Alter paid tribute to “the intense loyalty” of Catholics to their religious schools, calling it “one of the most consoling phenomena in our Catholic social life in America.” Catholics were making their presence known in the archdiocese not only religiously but socially as well. Because of the success of the campaign, a portion of the surplus was distributed among the girls’ high schools in the city.13

The Society of Mary, Sisters of Mercy, and the Brothers of the Christian Schools, newcomers to the archdiocese, agreed to staff the three new high schools in Cincinnati. In 1961 the Society of Mary, which operated the University of Dayton and Chaminade, Purcell, and Hamilton Catholic High Schools, staffed Moeller High School for Boys on Montgomery Road. The same year the Brothers of the Christian Schools took charge of La Salle High School for Boys on North Bend Road. McAuley High School for Girls was built and operated by the Sisters of Mercy on Oakwood Avenue in College Hill. The three high schools, each erected at a cost of about $1,250,000, were constructed to accommodate about one thousand students each. Outside of Cincinnati, Carroll High School in Dayton opened its doors in 1961. The following year Archbishop Alter High School in Kettering was founded. In 1963, St. Mary’s High School in Hyde Park in Cincinnati was moved to a new location on Madison Road and became Marian High School.14

In April 1959 the archdiocese launched the Archbishop’s Greater Dayton High School Campaign among thirty-one parishes in Montgomery County and three parishes in Greene County. More than six thousand laymen were organized in the various parishes to solicit every Catholic wage earner in the area. The main goal of the campaign was to build a new high school for one thousand pupils in the eastern section of Montgomery County and a new high school for eight hundred to one thousand students in the southern section. The campaign, moreover, sought to raise money to purchase land for a proposed high school in the northern section and make additions at Chaminade and Julienne High Schools. “Our obligation,” Auxiliary Bishop Leibold wrote, “extends to thousands now and to thousands yet to come.” Pointing out that he represented five generations of the Leibold family in Dayton, he warned that “for the first time in five generations they now hear the warning: ‘There is no room in the Catholic school for you.’ Are the children of today less dear to us than we were to our grandparents, when they did their fair share with no little sacrifice to educate us?” By December 1962 the archdiocese was pleased with the results of the campaign, “and not least the fact,” Alter wrote to Monsignor Edward A. Connaughton at the Parochial Schools Office in Dayton, because “we will be able to fulfill all the promises which we made to the people of Dayton.”15
In 1965 the archdiocese also took steps to consolidate and refinance the indebtedness of approximately $5 million of eight high schools in Cincinnati and Dayton. The borrowed money was paid off in accordance with a new plan of high school tuition payments. In addition to each student paying an annual tuition payment of $170 and the student’s parish $30, each parish paid $40 a year for each of its high school students into a common fund to be used for the reduction of the debt. In the mid-1960s a new addition was made to Mother of Mercy High School in Westwood and two new high schools were built, Stephen Badin in Hamilton and Mount Notre Dame in Reading. Mount Notre Dame Academy, which was founded in 1860, had become a centralized high school for girls in 1957. The new high schools now made the archdiocese only second to Philadelphia in the number of high school students in ratio to the Catholic population. Funds for the new buildings were paid out of the reserve from the high school debt fund. During Alter’s nineteen-year administration Catholics donated more than $13 million for seven new high schools in Cincinnati, Dayton, Middletown, and Springfield.16

GOVERNMENT AID

During his administration McNicholas foresaw the impossibility of long maintaining the growing Catholic school system without some form of aid from the state. During the depression of the 1930s local church officials became more vocal. Through its auxiliary bishop, Joseph H. Albers, the archdiocese participated in meetings and discussions with the legislators in the Ohio legislature. Catholic schools, which at the time were free to all students, were hurting financially as was true of many other institutions in society. Fearing that some of the schools might have to be closed, McNicholas called for a just and fair share of tax revenues. His main object was to gain for Catholic schools a share of the school fund.17

The archdiocese often pointed out that because of the Catholic parochial school system, local and state taxpayers realized an enormous financial saving. It was estimated in 1933 that each year the local church saved taxpayers in Hamilton County alone more than $4 million for education and about one million dollars for social service. One-sixth of the children of Ohio were educated in Catholic schools, providing the state not only a service but saving it approximately eighteen million dollars per year. It was further argued that if the Catholic schools were compelled to close because of the depression, the public schools would be responsible for educating those students. Surely, McNicholas thought, it was in the state’s interest to provide “some help” and enable the Catholic schools to continue in operation. Catholics requested aid for such basic educational necessities as textbooks, building maintenance,
and other general operating costs. When proposals for tax-based state aid failed, the archbishop in 1935 proposed a system in which parents would be given money in the form of vouchers that “they could give to the school of their choice for the education of their children.” What McNicholas asked for the Catholic Church, he also asked for all denominations.18

The Cincinnati ordinary argued for state-based aid in education to Catholics, which he also asked for all denominations, and he consistently fought also for the rights of all parents regardless of creed, color, or race in the education of their children. “Parents’ rights and duties,” McNicholas said, “are not surrendered to the State, nor can the State lawfully take them away when children are placed in school.” He often cautioned parents against transferring too much of the responsibility for their children onto the schools. Viewing parents as “co-creators and co-conservers with Almighty God, not in a temporary, but a life-long contract,” he urged them not to shirk their responsibility. The assumption that teachers and priests were better qualified than parents were “to develop the characters of their children,” he said, “is not true. The greatest character builders in the world are parents.” Emphasizing the sanctity of the family and parents’ responsibilities in rearing their children, the local church thought parents had no duty so important as that of caring for the spiritual, intellectual, and physical welfare of their children.19

In his “Official Column” in the Catholic Telegraph in August 1935, McNicholas, who had become by that time a national leader in the field of education, warned against the danger of too much state control in public education. Pressing for state money for Catholic and other denominational schools, he urged parents not to surrender their rightful authority on educational matters to the state. He insisted that the more authority in public education was centered in Columbus, parents would have that much less to say about the instruction and training of their children. He charged public officials, especially those at public colleges and universities, of being “usurpers of the rights of parents, ... kidnappers of the minds of children.” Fully aware that his language was strong, McNicholas had lost “all patience,” he wrote to Bishop James Hartley of Columbus, with those “professors who try to rob the youth of our day of their faith.” McNicholas also thought it was good political strategy to emphasize the rights of parents. “I think we Bishops,” he wrote in 1936, “should build up constructively a program that show parents’ rights. We have got to be realists in education. ... It seems to me that we have a chance to get a hearing in the country if we insist on the rights of parents.” The archbishop was convinced that by genuinely fighting for parents’ rights in education the church was building a strong political base of support.20

As resources became scarce during the depression, the archdiocese was forced to abandon the idea of free Catholic high schools. It required pupils
attending some of the Catholic high schools to pay part of the tuition. “We
now face,” McNicholas wrote in 1937, “the impossibility of conducting free
high schools.” The parents or guardians of each student now had to pay forty
dollars a year and the parish to which the pupil belonged paid an additional
forty dollars. Due to the sacrifices made by parents, parishioners, and various
teaching orders, the parochial schools were able to survive the economic cri-
is. But not all families could afford to pay tuition. Partly because of the new
regulations, about three-fifths of high school students in Holy Trinity parish
in Dayton attended public high schools.21

The strong possibility of federal aid to Catholic or religious education
arose during and after World War II. Though American bishops had
opposed federal aid to education consistently before and after World War I,
by 1944 they began to change their minds. Positive experience with govern-
ment relief programs in the 1930s and 1940s doubtless helped diminish
some concerns regarding federal assistance to education. Even though
McNicholas continued to express concern over governmental interference in
local issues, he anticipated a radical change in the educational status of the
country. “Federal aid to public schools,” he wrote to the apostolic delegate in
the fall of 1944, “is, I think, inevitable.” He now thought Catholics “should
not express further opposition, but should cooperate” as far as they could “in
framing a measure in Congress which would be fair to all schools.”22

In February 1945 McNicholas sent a telegram to Ohio Senator Robert
Taft, who was a sponsor of a federal education bill that came to be associat-
ed with his name. The archbishop adamantly opposed certain provisions of
the bill that excluded children from Catholic and other denominational
schools. McNicholas feared that Taft’s proposal would create a system of
“secularist” schools and “would indirectly abolish freedom of education for
the poor and religious-minded parents.” Touting parents’ rights over the
education of their children, he argued that any federal aid for education
should be based “on the proved need of the educable child.” He contended
that the aid should be equitable to all children of a community, regardless of
color, origin, or creed. Hurling lightning bolts at Taft’s education bill, McNi-
cholas maintained that more than 200,000 children in the nonpublic schools
of Ohio would be “treated unjustly.” Wanting to avoid the entanglement of
church and state, which many Catholic and non-Catholic critics objected to,
he was convinced that Catholics should not ask for direct aid for their
schools. There was, in his judgment, “too much propaganda about union of
Church and State,” he wrote to Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York.
Protestants and other Americans united for separation of church and state
were nevertheless critical of McNicholas’s outspokenness. They accused the
Catholic Church of “playing with fire” by violating the principle of separation
of church and state. McNicholas and his episcopal colleagues consistently denied the charge. In one instance the chancery had full-page ads published in daily newspapers throughout the archdiocese, denying any interest on the part of the Catholic Church for union of church and state.24

Believing that private schools were “needlessly duplicating the needs of the public school,” Senator Taft thought the Catholic Church was “making a tremendous mistake in seeking government money” for its schools. Admiring some of Taft’s capabilities, McNicholas regretted that he should “have a closed mind in the field of education.” Those who knew Taft spoke of him “as a man with a most unfortunate personality,” he wrote to Bishop Michael Ready of Columbus in May 1946. “He has exceptional gifts, but also the most extraordinary limitations. He has no patience in listening to the arguments of others . . . He apparently has nothing of scholarly patience, which is so necessary to get an objective view of things. If you think as he does, you are right; if you differ with him, you are wrong. Does it not seem tragic that a man of this mental calibre should aspire to the Presidency?” McNicholas became convinced that the senator’s “twisted reasoning” would make him “a very dangerous man . . . in the office of the President.” Although McNicholas was “deeply saddened and puzzled” by Taft’s stand on the question of federal aid to education, it did not stop him two years later from recommending to Roman authorities that he be granted a private audience with the pope. “The Senator,” he wrote, “is a man whose integrity and love of America command the highest respect of our citizens. His family life is an edification to the country.”25

During the remainder of the decade McNicholas, as head of the NCWC, waged a powerful campaign for public aid to parochial schools. In his lobbying efforts he had several visits with President Harry Truman, whose “friendship he valued highly.” McNicholas consistently argued that it was the duty of the federal, state, and local governments to safeguard the rights of all parents to educate their children in the schools of their “conscientious choice.” In a radio address in the summer of 1946, he pointed out that the public school system was not the only American system of education. That system “included,” he said, “public schools, private schools, and schools under the auspices of religion.” McNicholas cited the post–World War II GI Bill and the National School Lunch Act as examples of fair legislation. The GI Bill, which provided a college education to those who had served in the military, allowed individuals to attend either public or private universities, and the federally funded School Lunch Program applied to children in all schools. McNicholas called on both state and national governments to pass school aid legislation to cover all schools.26

Debate over the issue of government aid to nonpublic schools continued during the tenure of Karl Alter. The archbishop carried on McNicholas’s
fight for Catholic students in much the same terms, though he added his own insights and arguments. Alter had long argued that Catholics were not opposed to public schools, but readily supported them by their taxes. What they objected to was discrimination. "If there were no public schools," he wrote, "we would have to create them." In full agreement with McNicholas's July 1947 pastoral that the "Catholic and public schools are partners in American education," Alter added in 1957 that the public and private schools were "parallel and not opposed to each other."26

Like his predecessor Alter left his footprints on church-state relations. He believed that federal aid to education should "be free from control by the Federal Government and free from discrimination against any group of school children." He, too, thought that the best way to secure justice and fair play for all without violating the First Amendment was not to subsidize the school, "but to provide instead a subsidy for all school children and their parents" by means of scholarships or vouchers. Believing that the state had the same responsibility toward Catholics that it had toward those who were not Catholic, Alter advocated a public-supported private school system wherein parents would be able to choose the education they desired for their children and at the same time pay for it. Catholics should not be "penalized by being forced to bear a double burden of taxation," he wrote. Catholics contended that such social services as bus transportation, health services, lunches, textbooks, and vouchers should be regarded as "civic benefits" and be made available to all children. Echoing the sentiments of most Catholics, Alter thought it was a matter of justice and equity. By this time it was estimated that Catholics of the Cincinnati archdiocese provided an annual savings to the public of more than thirty-one million dollars.27

In 1964 the Citizens for Educational Freedom (CEF), a grassroots organization of mostly Catholic parents interested in the fair and equal treatment of all schoolchildren, held a meeting of priests and lay people in each deanery of the archdiocese. It promoted passage of the Fair School Bus legislation in Ohio to provide bus transportation for religious or private school pupils. The CEF had 320 chapters spread throughout Ohio's eighty-eight counties. The archdiocesan chapters joined those in other dioceses to help defray the expenses of the CEF program. The chancery encouraged pastors to make appropriate pulpit announcements and to get parishioners to circulate petitions and obtain signatures at the church doors in support of the Fair School Bus Bill. This was "a matter of principle," Cincinnati's Chancellor Henry Vogelpohl wrote, "that involves the common good." In the summer of 1965 archdiocesan Catholics wrote to Governor James Rhodes in support of the Fair School Bus Bill. Later that year the legislation was passed. Two years later Ohio also allotted funds for supplemental services and materials.28
GROWTH OF EDUCATION

In the second quarter of the twentieth century Catholic educators in the
archdiocese and in other big dioceses encouraged greater centralization,
standardization, professionalization, and state certification of teachers in
order to improve education. In the process, the measures helped American-
ize Catholic schools. In 1925 Father Urban Vebr became the superintendent
of schools. He served until 1929 when Father Francis J. Bredestege replaced
him. During Bredestege’s tenure, the school system experienced substantial
reorganization of its high schools and the founding of the Athenaeum and
the Teachers’ College. In 1932 Father Carl J. Ryan succeeded Bredestege,
serving as superintendent of schools until 1969. Under his leadership,
Catholic schools realized unprecedented growth and consolidation. The
archdiocese fully implemented the certification of all teachers, introduced
diocesan supervisors, and organized the School Lunch Program. In compli-
ance with the standards of the Ohio Department of Education, each bishop
in the state maintained a central teacher-training institution to prepare
teachers for all schools of his diocese. Each diocese, furthermore, had a dioce-
san Board of Examiners. The pastor, who had direct charge of the parochial
school in his parish, could not permit a teacher who did not hold a certificate
from the Board of Examiners to teach in the school. It was the pastor’s
responsibility to maintain and staff the school with qualified teachers.
Though the majority of the courses conformed in general to those of the pub-
lic schools, the study of religion received an all-important place in the cur-
riculum of the parochial schools. Students attended Mass each morning
during the school year and recited prayers at intervals throughout the day.29

When Ohio in 1927 imposed more rigid requirements in teacher training
and preparation, McNicholas in the spring of that year called a meeting of
the various teaching orders in the archdiocese to discuss the establishment of
a Teachers’ College. “I have not sought to do this,” he wrote, “but it rather
been forced upon me by the State” because of its more stringent standards.
Until then the various religious communities and the local Catholic colleges
largely undertook the training of teachers in the Catholic schools of the arch-
dioce. But the idea of a Teachers’ College had been introduced earlier.
Besides the unsuccessful effort of Archbishop Purcell in 1863 to form an
archdiocesan normal school, the Jesuits in 1920 had also proposed to establish
a Teachers’ College. Because Moeller at the time wanted to retain the own-
ership of the proposed buildings as well as control of the faculty and cur-
riculum, the Jesuit Superior General in Rome disapproved of the project.
Though by 1927 the Jesuits at St. Xavier College finally conducted a normal
school for the various religious teaching communities in the archdiocese,
McNicholas eventually thought it was necessary for the archdiocese to take it over. In March 1928 he organized the Teachers' College, with Bredestege as dean. Housed in the building formerly occupied by St. George parochial school on Calhoun Street in Cincinnati, the college provided a complete teacher training program for the teaching communities of sisters, lay teachers, priests, and seminarians. It also helped prepare organists and music teachers for the archdiocese. In its first year the college had an enrollment of thirty-three full-time students and 116 part-time. As the archdiocese reorganized and expanded the high school system, the Teachers' College helped enhance the education and preparation of teachers in the schools.  

In the summer of 1947 the Teachers' College vacated the old quarters on Calhoun Street and moved into the newly remodeled archbishop's former residence on Moeller Avenue next to Mount St. Mary’s of the West Seminary. Earlier that year Louis Richter, a local Catholic, had bought the twenty-acre Peter G. Thomson estate on Belmont Avenue in College Hill for the archdiocese. McNicholas then made the estate his new residence. Contrary to his relatively ascetic life, the archbishop's new home had eight bedrooms, a swimming pool, and a greenhouse. Though not as large as his Norwood residence, McNicholas found it “more homey.” Moreover, it became clear that the conversion of the former residence to the archdiocesan Teachers' College would represent a considerable saving over the cost of erecting a new structure. The college operated at this location until 1953 when it was discontinued. Area Catholic colleges and universities now assumed the responsibility of preparing the teachers.  

One of McNicholas’s early goals was the consolidation of Cincinnati's Catholic institutions of higher education under the corporate umbrella called the Athenaeum of Ohio. Legally incorporated in 1928, it was initially designed as a governing body to direct and supervise the colleges, seminaries, academies, and institutions for training priests, sisters, and lay persons in the archdiocese. It was called the Athenaeum of Ohio after the Athenaeum, founded by Fenwick as the first institution of higher learning in the archdiocese. The archdiocesan seminaries were the first two units of the Athenaeum at the time of its incorporation. St. Gregory Seminary, which comprised the high school and college programs, was empowered by the state to confer the bachelor’s degree, and Mount St. Mary's of the West Seminary conferred the master’s degree in scholastic philosophy. In 1950 the Athenaeum of Ohio was reorganized and all affiliates were dropped, except the two seminaries and the Teachers' College.  

Catholic higher education experienced continued growth during McNicholas's episcopate. On August 4, 1930, by an act of the state of Ohio, St.
Xavier College, with approximately one hundred lay faculty and Jesuits and more than one thousand students, became known as Xavier University. In 1935 Our Lady of Cincinnati College in Cincinnati, a new college for women, was opened with the Sisters of Mercy in charge. During McNicholas’s tenure the archdiocese also thought it had a responsibility for Catholic students attending secular colleges. “The safeguarding of the faith of our Catholic students attending secular universities,” McNicholas wrote, “is a pastoral anxiety that weighs heavily upon us.” Archdiocesan officials approved of the Newman Club and the establishment of the Newman Foundation of Cincinnati, composed chiefly of Catholic men and women of the archdiocese who were interested in the welfare of Catholic students attending the University of Cincinnati. In Oxford, Ohio, the Newman Club at St. Mary Church attended to Catholic students at Miami University.11

Appointed chairman in 1934 of a Roman-appointed visiting committee for the ecclesiastical faculties of The Catholic University of America, a pontifical university founded in 1887 in Washington, D.C., McNicholas emphasized the importance of teaching and educating people in theology. The Cincinnati ordinary insisted that the university ought to confine itself to its “real work,” by which he meant graduate education and theological training. Convinced that the university was “a mess” in its overemphasis on research, he and his episcopal colleagues wanted a group of priests who had “a thorough knowledge of theology, even though they never produce a thing for publication.” McNicholas, who had also presided over a committee to investigate the differences between the rector and the faculty of theology, was instrumental in the eventual removal of Father James Hugh Ryan as rector and the selection of his successor, Father Joseph Moran Corrigan.11

An educational project dear to Archbishop McNicholas was the Institutum Divi Thomae, founded in 1935 at St. Gregory Seminary to train students in postgraduate science work under the direction of Dr. George Sperti, formerly a professor at the University of Cincinnati. McNicholas, who served as president for its first seven years, saw in the scientific work at the Institutum great promise for the unity of science and philosophy, the natural and supernatural. In his address on “The Present Opportunity of Scholastic Philosophy” at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in 1938, McNicholas argued that “a closer and stronger bond should exist between philosophy and the positive sciences.” The archbishop had high expectations and often praised the work of the new scientific institute, which sought not only to reconcile differences between science and philosophy but also to search for cures for various diseases. “The whole project may seem like a dream,” he wrote, “but God help the world if there were not Celtic dreamers in it.” A year after its founding he sent some of the Sperti
therapeutic sun lamps to Archbishop Michael Curley of Baltimore. “It is perfectly safe,” he wrote, “to sleep under it for several hours at a time or all night if you wish to do so.” McNicholas kept one of the lamps at his bedside and used it for reading purposes. He also found it very helpful for colds and sinus trouble. In addition to sending vitamin tablets and cleansing cream, known as “Sperti Cream,” to episcopal colleagues, shipments of vitamin tablets were sent to foreign mission fields. A million tablets were sent to the Vatican to be distributed under the direction of the Holy See. McNicholas was also hopeful that Sperti would find a cure for cancer. Revenues derived from the sale of Sperti’s inventions funded educational programs and helped support a number of priests and sisters in graduate school. The Institutum remained under diocesan control until 1950, shortly after McNicholas’s death. At that time it fell in disfavor with Archbishop Alter and the local church officials, and it eventually went its separate way.

McNicholas died of a heart attack at his College Hill home a little after 7 P.M. on April 22, 1950. About an hour earlier he had complained of being ill and lapsed into a coma. His nephew, Father Timothy McNicholas at Mount St. Mary’s of the West Seminary, gave the last rites. The silver-haired prelate was seventy-two. McNicholas had been in ill health for two years, several times confined to bed. The fourteen priests comprising the archdiocesan board of consultors met on April 23 and elected Auxiliary Bishop George J. Rehring administrator of the archdiocese. He served in that capacity until Pius XII named Karl Alter the new archbishop of Cincinnati.

One of the early decisions of Alter’s administration was the establishment in 1954 of the Archbishop Choir School, headed by John J. Fehring, archdiocesan music director. Boys enrolled in grades five through eight at the school received training in music as well as a regular educational curriculum. The school, originally located in Holy Angels school, occupied part of St. Francis de Sales school in 1965. The boys’ choir sang at Sunday Mass and other services at the cathedral with the Cathedral Men’s Choir. Difficulty in recruiting students and finding a suitable location for the school led to its closing and the disbanding of the Cathedral Boys’ Choir in 1970.

By the middle of the 1950s Alter decided to establish a thirteen-member archdiocesan Board of Education to help determine matters of policy for the parish elementary and diocesan high schools. Until 1959 all members of the school board were clergy. At that time the board was reorganized and eight lay persons were added to it. By the 1950s, moreover, lay teaching in Catholic schools became the norm rather than the exception. In the fall of 1957 alone there was an increase of only four religious in the parochial elementary school system of the archdiocese. In contrast there was an increase of more than eighty lay teachers. Like many parochial school systems in the country
at the time, the archdiocesan system was growing every year. In 1958 there were more than 93,000 students in attendance in the Catholic schools of the archdiocese, from kindergarten to the post-graduate level. There were more than 2,900 teachers and of these almost one-fourth were lay teachers. In the fall of 1959, despite the expected increase of approximately 3,500 pupils in the parochial schools, there were fifteen fewer sisters available to staff the classrooms. The continued increase in enrollment, felt mostly in the suburban districts, dramatically reflected the shortage of religious vocations. Moreover, the 139 lay teachers in the diocesan high schools represented approximately one-fifth of all the high school teachers. “How long,” Alter argued, “can we continue to operate our Catholic school system under such conditions?” It was evident “to any thoughtful person,” he said in his fall 1959 pastoral, “that a voluntary and self-supporting system of education cannot continue to exist without the donated services of religious men and women.” He went on to point out that the financial burden on a parish of the employment of one lay teacher was equivalent to “the services of four sisters. When the number of lay teachers reaches a fifty per cent ratio and more, as it does in some parishes, then a Catholic parish school system ceases to be a possibility.” There was need, he argued, for more vocations. Because of the shortage of religious teachers and the sharp decline in enrollment in certain schools, in 1959 three basin area schools in Cincinnati, St. Ann’s on John Street, St. John’s on Green Street, and St. Michael’s in Price Hill, were closed. Each school had fewer than ninety pupils.  

In 1962 there were 152 parish elementary schools, twelve private and institutional elementary schools, twenty-nine central high schools, and seven private and institutional high schools, for a total enrollment of 94,589 students. Fifty-four of the schools were within the Cincinnati city limits and another thirty-four lay within Hamilton County. Among the teaching staff in the archdiocese, 695 were sisters and members of religious societies; 446 were lay teachers. The enrollment in the fourteen interparochial high schools in Hamilton County was 13,238, with a teaching staff of 595. Among the teachers were 159 laymen. Over a five-year period, the elementary school enrollment had increased by 14,000, a 23 percent increase. Thirty-five percent of all teachers were lay teachers. In the fall of 1961 the Chancery Office, upon the recommendation of the archdiocesan school board, set a maximum limit of 50 children to a classroom in parochial elementary schools. The average class size in 1962 was forty-one pupils per class. The following year the total enrollment in the elementary and high schools of the archdiocese went over 100,000 students. This represented a growth since Alter’s arrival in 1950 of more than 100 percent. It had required about 130 years to provide for the first 50,000 students, and only twelve years for the second 50,000. “Obvious-
ly," Alter wrote to Monsignor Ryan, "we have strained all our resources, and a similar effort cannot be expected within the next decade. In consequence, any further growth will have to depend upon some new sources of revenue as well as some new sources of staff recruitment."\(^9\)

In the face of mounting school expenses, the archdiocese was in need of more revenue. For the first time since the diocesan high school system was set up in the late 1920s, Alter in the early 1960s attempted to get any kind of figures on the cost of operating the high schools. Part of the problem was the lack of uniformity among the various high schools in keeping financial books. On assuming office in 1950, Alter had found hundreds of thousands of dollars of unpaid tuition. He ordered an assessment of the parishes and instructed each school to secure a bank loan to pay its arrears. It took more than a decade before the parishes paid all the loans to the banks. In 1961 the tuition fee in archdiocesan high schools was raised from $120 to $160 a year. The parishes continued to pay the high schools $60 a year for each of their students attending the schools. The parents paid $100. Before that the parents had paid half the cost of tuition and the respective parishes the other half. The parishes' share was not increased because of the growing burden of maintaining parish elementary schools. The growing proportion of lay teachers on the high school staffs and other factors continued to push the costs upward.\(^10\)

On March 5, 1964, the members of the archdiocesan school board, with Alter's approval, instituted a new program designed to strengthen the school system. They dropped the first grade of parish elementary schools, increased lay teachers' salaries by an annual increment of $100, raised sisters' salaries from $1,000 to $1,500, increased high school tuition to $200 a year, and proceeded to reduce class size. The elimination of the first grade, which involved twelve thousand children, underscored "the burden we've been carrying all these years," Alter said, "in operating our schools without outside help." Though unhappy with the dropping of the first grade, the archbishop asked the parishes to keep a correct perspective by taking into consideration the facts that the archdiocese was raising sisters' salaries, proceeding with four new high schools, and decreasing the number of pupils per classroom. In order to reduce to forty the maximum number of children in a class, a drop of ten, the school board had retained most of the teachers. Total enrollment in the elementary schools of the archdiocese in 1964 was 68,332 or 8,644 less than in 1963, which was the peak enrollment in the history of the archdiocese. By the spring of 1966 the pupil-teacher ratio in the elementary schools had gone down from 40:1 to 36.4:1.\(^11\)

Whereas in 1964 the national average of Catholic children in parish schools was approximately 50 percent, the ratio in the archdiocese was nearer
75 percent. The percentage in the Catholic high schools was higher than in any other diocese of the country except one. Notwithstanding the high ratio, by the mid-1950s the number of Catholic children in the archdiocese attending public schools had increased. In October 1956 Alter had appointed Father James Shappelle as an assistant to the superintendent of schools to help organize a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) program for Catholic students in the public schools.42

By the mid-1960s more than 50,000 Catholic boys and girls in the archdiocese were enrolled in public schools, twice as many as five years earlier. This meant that about a third of the Catholics of school age in the archdiocese were not attending Catholic schools. What contributed to the sharp increase were the dropping of grade one by parochial schools, the difficulty of transportation, especially in rural areas, and the fact that about one hundred parishes were without a parochial school. One-fifth of the children of school age lived in these parishes. What also contributed to the problem was the flight from established city parishes to suburbia, where a number of the schools were overcrowded. Shappelle, as director of the Catechetical Office, urged the establishment of a strong CCD program in every parish. “[T]he vigor of the faith in the archdiocese,” he insisted, “depends upon a concentrated parish effort. . . . The strength of the Church in America in 15 years will depend largely on the strength of the CCD now.” In 1964 alone more than five hundred of the Catholic laity took courses in catechetics in order to prepare themselves to teach religion to the children. By the end of his term Alter nevertheless surmised that the CCD program had not been “truly effective,” primarily because there were few staff teachers who could give continuity to the program and insufficient time to instruct the children.43

In 1965 the archdiocese consolidated four parochial schools in the Cincinnati area. Pupils from St. Andrew in Avondale, Holy Angels in Walnut Hills, Holy Name in Mount Auburn, and St. Aloysius in Elmwood were reassigned to neighboring parochial schools. When Alter gave permission to close St. Aloysius elementary parish school, he did so because it seemed “to be somewhat of a waste of effort,” he wrote, “to utilize the services of three Sisters” for seventy-five children. The children were subsequently cared for in the neighboring St. Charles parish at Carthage. The following year the Sisters of Christian Charity, because of the shortage of sisters, relinquished their convent in St. Boniface parish in Piqua, thus terminating eighty-five years of service in the archdiocese. They turned their teaching duties over to the Sisters of Mercy, who at the time staffed Piqua Catholic High and St. Mary’s grade school in the city.44

The financial problems confronting Catholic schools in the 1960s represented the chief pastoral concern of the archdiocese. At the time parishes
expended 70 percent of all their revenues for education. What made the problem particularly acute was the high ratio of eligible children attending archdiocesan schools, the rising costs of salaries and operation expenses, and the rapid turnover of lay teachers. Since 1950, the ratio of lay teachers had continued to increase. By 1967 lay teachers outnumbered religious in the elementary schools of the Cincinnati archdiocese for the first time. Of the 2,044 full time elementary teachers, 1,004 were religious and 1,040 were lay teachers. In the high schools there were 629 priests and other religious and 465 lay teachers, with the latter comprising 42.5 percent of the total. Though lay teachers were still in a minority in the high schools, there were forty-nine more in 1967 than the previous year, and thirty-nine fewer religious. Ten years earlier lay teachers in the elementary schools represented about one-fourth of the total number of teachers. In the 1950–51 school year they comprised less than 12 percent of the total.⁴⁵

In his talk at the Ohio Catholic Educational Association’s convention in the fall of 1967, Alter acknowledged that he was concerned over the future of Catholic education in the archdiocese. Even though there was more government aid to Catholic schools, the future was still a matter of “growing anxiety.” He was troubled by the continuing decline in the number of religious vocations, the rising costs of operating schools, and the limitations of financial resources. “Only an extraordinarily optimistic person,” he said, “would assume that we can grow in the future as we have in the past and solve the problems of meeting the educational needs and demands of our Catholic population. If we must curtail our efforts,” he added, “shall it be in the early years of our elementary program or shall it be on the secondary level?” Wanting to keep schools opened to the extent that the resources of the archdiocese permitted, he was certain that “extensive collegiate and university ventures [were] a thing of the past.”⁴⁶

In the fall of 1968 Catholic schools in the Cincinnati archdiocese recorded an enrollment loss of 1.6 percent as compared to the previous year. The local figures reflected a national trend. Part of the loss stemmed from the closing of three more elementary schools, namely St. Peter in New Richmond, St. Denis in Versailles, and St. Patrick in Bellefontaine. What again contributed to the closing of the schools was the withdrawal of religious orders. A survey of fifty-nine elementary schools in 1968 revealed that there were three factors that weighed heavily in the determination of the economics of a parish school: rate of growth, proportion of religious to lay faculty members, and the contributions of the parishioners. The survey showed that more than two-thirds of their total expense was on salaries. Because of the increasing proportion of lay teachers, which was 52 percent in 1968, and the “constant escalation of salaries,” Alter wrote, “I don’t see how we’re going to make it.”⁴⁷
In January 1969 the archdiocese endorsed a “Master Plan for a State-Wide Focus on Catholic Education.” Proposed by the Catholic Conference of Ohio, the plan listed several financial objectives, including a drive for greater governmental assistance in the operation of Catholic schools. Theodore Staudt, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Ohio pointed out that the enrollment in Catholic schools in Ohio had decreased by more than twenty thousand students, adding a tax burden of approximately $12,250,000 to Ohio citizens for 1969 alone. Overall the archdiocese saved taxpayers of southwestern Ohio more than $50,000,000 a year. It was in the best interest of Catholics in Ohio to lay “the red figures of deficit financing before [their] own people and the general public,” Staudt argued. Otherwise, they would “wake up one morning without a Catholic school system and with a public school system unable to take [their] children.”

In the spring of 1969 Governor James Rhodes and public school leaders in Cincinnati promised their support to help obtain a share of education tax benefits for Catholic schools. Dr. Paul A. Miller, superintendent of Cincinnati public schools, acknowledged the “major contribution to this community” made by parochial schools and pledged to work jointly with the archdiocese for state aid to nonpublic as well as public school students. Consistent with the Catholic practice since the mid-nineteenth century of backing taxation for the support of public schools, Alter and the Citizens for Educational Freedom reciprocated by strongly endorsing the Cincinnati public schools tax levy. Despite the “desperate financial situation” of parochial schools, Alter wrote, “no one possibly can gain by curtailing the educational services to children in the public schools.” In June the Archdiocesan Board of Education published a booklet entitled “Why,” which contained a letter by the archbishop. In June Alter again cautioned Ohioans that if the nonpublic schools closed, it would be a disaster for public schools as well. “Self-interest alone,” he wrote, “would urge every citizen to keep the nonpublic schools alive.”

In August 1969 Governor Rhodes signed the education bill that provided $50 a year for each child in nonpublic schools. It helped ease the financial crisis facing Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Though pleased with the bill, Father Lawrence R. Strittmatter, coordinator for the Cincinnati archdiocese of the Statewide Focus on Catholic Education program, pointed out that in “no way can these benefits . . . be thought to solve the financial problems of the parochial schools.” But, he added, “they may keep the wolf from the door for a while.”