

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



This week, Jan. 16 thru 22, is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, widely ignored by most Catholics and Protestants.

Jesus prayed the night before he died that his disciples might "all be one."

His disciples today aren't much interested in either being one or even praying that they might be.

And there seems to be a consistent correlation between those who blew out the ecumenical candles lighted by Pope John ten years ago and those "prophets of doom" who think the Church has been wrecked and the world is forever wicked.

Certainly no Catholic today — clergyman or laity — can deny that the Church is sailing through troubled waters. But Protestants aren't having very smooth sailing either.

Presbyterian theologian David H. E. Read recently said, "We are living through a period of upheaval perhaps more critical than the church has ever before known and we shall live through it as Christians, not as Presbyterians, Anglicans, Roman Catholics or Baptists. For the one great question before us has little to do with our denominational squabbles. It concerns the life and death

of the Christian church as a recognizable community in the world ahead of us."

Back in the days of Pope John, it was said that Catholics and Protestants "should do everything together we can possibly do together and do only those things separately which we must necessarily do separately." Yet we still go on relentlessly sending separate Catholic and Protestant food and clothing to starving Hindus in India or war-ravaged Buddhists in Vietnam; we still operate separate Catholic and Protestant health clinics for the poor in Latin America or in our own American inner-city ghettos.

Valiant hopes to bridge over such separateness have been kept alive through such young agencies as the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries (GEM) or the Livingston County Coalition of Churches, but how feeble thus far is the response of either clergy or lay people, Catholic or Protestant.

Before this Week is finished, we ought to ask ourselves how Jesus would want us to do the church thing today.

The answer might be quite different from the way we are doing it.

FR. PAUL J. CUDDY
**On The
Right Side**



From a doctor in our diocese . . .

"One of my New Year resolutions was to write to thank you for being the last string that keeps me attached to the Catholic Church . . . I say a prayer for you each night that God will continue to give you the strength to speak out in the Courier.

"I also want to thank you for the information on the Arch Books. My children have enjoyed them tremendously. I bought the complete set of 48 and received a personal letter from the publisher of Concordia Press asking me what a good Irish Catholic wanted with these books! May God bless you and keep you around at least as long as I am, so I will remain in the Church I have loved so much up to this time . . ."

Dear Doctor X,

"I suspect that your New Year resolution got an impetus from your boiling blood! I read your clipping about the Memphis priest who forbade the Boy Scouts carrying the American flag in the procession before Mass, because to him 'it is a symbol of war.' Can't you just envision that cheerless prophet glowering at the open-mouthed Boy Scouts in self-righteous indignation. I am grateful for your letter, but honestly it left me a bit dejected. To think that an intelligent and faithful doctor who comes from generations of faithful forebears should find the Church a source of unhappiness and uneasiness is a sorrow.

"In a few days expect a book from me by Frank Sheed. It is entitled: Is it the Same Church? and comments on the dismay of Catholics like yourself. Sheed wrote: 'Whichever way he (a Catholic) looks, the Catholic world he knew seems to have turned upside down — and so quickly. He hears of priests getting married, with other priests performing the ceremony. He reads of nuns in picket-lines, of seminarians picketing cardinals, refusing daily Mass, declaring the Pope unfitted for his primacy . . . There is hardly a doctrine or practice of the Church I

have not heard attacked by a priest.' God knows how deeply I sympathize with our hurt people; hurt in their love and loyalty to the Church, hurt in the weakened or destroyed faith of their children.

"However, I do think there is a slight swing to normalcy. To understand how we got into this chaos, do read Decline and Fall of Radical Catholicism by James Hitchcock. To revive sagging spirits, do read Muggidge's Beautiful Thing for God, a manifestation of the Spirit of God in bringing forth Mother Teresa's community, rooted in the Gospel and tradition as many older communities go down the drain or convert to secular institutes.

"Some seminarians give hope. Last year I met a seminarian from Darlington Seminary at Mt. Saviour, Elmira. I asked him: 'If you are ordained what do you want to do?' He replied: 'Parish work. I've always wanted to celebrate Mass, teach the kids, administer the sacraments, visit the sick. Just ordinary parish work.' Then he paused and added with simplicity: 'But first of all I want to do whatever my bishop wants me to do! After all, he knows best the needs of the diocese and I want to do what is needed for the Church and the People.'

"That your children like the Arch Books delights my soul. I gave 15 to a nurse and her husband who work at our hospital for their children. A letter came back written in large second grade print: 'DEAR FATHER, THAT WAS THE BEST GIFT THAT I'VE EVER HAD. I'VE BEEN HAPPY WITH THOSE BOOKS ABOUT GOD. I LIKE TO READ ABOUT GOD. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.'

"So thank you for your letter. And while we'll have to put up with the Yahoos who will keep sniping at the Church, we do have Christ's Vicar, the whole tradition of the Church, and the faithful who know that loyalty to the Church is fidelity to Our Lord and His Mother."



"CAN HE CALL YOU BACK? HE'S WRITING HIS SERMON!"

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