

FR. HENRY ATWELL

Toward Tomorrow

Congresswoman Shirley A. Chisholm, in her first speech after announcing she intends to be a candidate for the presidency of our country, told a group of clergymen, including Bishop Lawrence B. Casey of Paterson, that "the churches in this country have not been assertive as they could have been in ending this war."

She told the clerics they should lead the nation in demanding "no more young lives be snuffed out."

None of the clergy started marching, nor did she act surprised that they didn't.

Most reformers now and in the past have usually found "the churches" to be a handy scapegoat for the ills that afflict the world, and the bishops are invariably a convenient target for tongue lashing. Like Shylock, long-suffering must be one of a bishop's badges too.

And hardly anyone would claim, least of all the bishops themselves, that a miter on a head makes one automatically an Isaiah, a Jeremiah or an Ezekiel to thunder God's commands to a wayward nation.

But it isn't quite fair to expect the bishops alone to extricate us from the moral mess we're in, not just from the Vietnam war but from so many other muddles too — the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the dehumanizing effects of our penal system, the grinding injustice in ghetto housing and education.

An unexpected confession by another culprit comes from a scientist, Dr. Bernard M. Oliver, in a speech he gave to radio and electronic engineers at their convention last summer in Australia. His speech was reported in a recent issue of their magazine named "Spectrum."

He admits that science with all its emphasis on facts rather than on faith has destroyed, in the minds of literally millions of young people, the traditional religious basis for morality.

"Can you then go to science, the new master, for moral guidance?" he asks. "Unfortunately . . . scientists have conspicuously avoided discus-



sions of moral issues; so youth finds us unprepared to give any answers and they turn to — what? Marx? Exotic religious? Drugs?"

This scientific divorce from morality has resulted in an attitude that you make whatever can possibly be made, you do anything that can possibly be done, you go to the moon "because it is there," and you make fission and fusion and napalm bombs quite simply because it is possible to make them — without ever asking should these things be made, should these things be done.

Most scientists tell us we are only at the dawn of incredibly greater achievements — no doubt that means journeys farther into space, machines to do all our work for us, drugs to make us think or feel as we or someone else wants us to, the likely achievements are beyond our present imaginings — and so are the possible horrors.

Dr. Oliver further comments that "to the modern mind, morals should be something more than a set of ground rules whereby one qualifies for participation in a sort of cosmic retirement plan." I would agree that the old sanctions of heaven or hell have little impact on young people today but I think God's ancient commandments did envisage a better earth and not just "pie in the sky when you die."

Dr. Oliver proposes, "If we, as moral scientists and engineers, can proclaim those things 'good' that ensure the survival, growth, and evolution of mankind, and the protection of the environment that man shares with other life on this planet; and if, conversely, we can proclaim those things 'bad' that diminish in any way man's chance of survival, or his continued development, or his ability to preserve other life; then I think we will find young people on our side one more."

That makes much sense. I just think Jesus himself said it even better and, for our own sake, it's time we listened to him or there won't be scientists or bishops or congresswomen or anybody else left to blame for our worsening ailments.



FR. PAUL J. CUDDY

On The Right Side

Father Vincent Collins is the pastor of St. John of Rochester parish, Perinton, a suburb of Rochester. There is an honest, candid, albeit abrasive quality about him which makes him the Man of the Year to some, and a carbuncle on the Human Race to others. In his regard there are few in-betweeners. He's either great; or he is awful.

Even those who love him less do grant the great good he has accomplished among many troubled people: people who are afflicted with alcoholism, and their families and friends who suffer from them; people who were at their wits' end from frustrations and emotional knots. And the hundreds who are today living in sobriety, productivity and tranquility, are testimony to his worth. "By their fruits you shall know them."

Probably even more far reaching for good, even than his personal care and counsel for hundreds of souls, comes from his typewriter. Of two products I wish to write. One is a 24 page booklet called Acceptance. It has passed the half million mark in printing. The other is a 124-page paperback entitled Me, Myself and You. It rolls out about a thousand copies each month — and that's a lot of people to contact.

Two years ago a friend who has had a thousand more heart aches and crosses than a dozen ordinary people, met me in the hospital. I had a half dozen copies of Acceptance in my hand. She glanced at the two-shaded blue cover and said: "That little book has been a greater help to me than any other thing. It has tided me over many rough spots. I read and re-read it; and I give it to friends who have troubles." Actually the booklet simply reiterates what all men know, from their own experiences, observations; from the scriptures and literature. But the booklet penetrates beyond the intelligence, pervading the whole being. Here is an example. "Acceptance: Various 'home remedies' — blaming everybody, self-pity and the rest — have but one result. They

make everyone, including ourselves, more miserable and add to our difficulties without solving them. Luckily for us the perfect formula for acceptance, simple and practical as a can opener, is ready at hand, waiting for us to use it as hundreds of thousands before us have. Written by Reinhold Niebuhr, it is known as The Serenity Prayer. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference."

The paperback, Me, Myself and You is a simple book. It translates the technical language of Reality Therapy into ordinary English. People troubled by tensions and hostilities, dejected by disappointments and failures, can profit from this book. And no one exists who doesn't suffer from tensions, frustrations, resentments, hostilities and disappointments. At the end of each brief chapter is a capsule of the contents. Thus: "Who's you? . . . Control your feelings or they will control you." "The fanatic . . . Live your own life. Let others live theirs!" "Discouragement . . . Setbacks are part of life. Don't let them throw you." One Rochester psychiatrist gives a copy of this book to each of his patients.

On Feb. 2 I learned that Father Collins had written a Stations of the Cross booklet which is for today. He successfully experimented with it at St. John's parish. He consulted with other priests and some Sisters. The booklet comes off Abbey Press, St. Meinard, Indiana 47577 on Feb. 19. Priests, Sisters, CCD teachers, other religion teachers who still teach "Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2) may want to order a quantity.

These books can be bought at many church book racks, in bookstores, or from Abbey Press. If you wish, you can order through me at St. James Mercy Hospital Hornell, 14943. Six copies of Acceptance for \$1. Me, Myself and You, \$1 each. As the book says: "Comfortable living takes some doing."

CONSIDINE RETURNS TO CHINA IN THE COMPANY OF PRESIDENT NIXON

WATCH FOR HIS FIRST-HAND REPORT IN NEXT WEEK'S COURIER



Regular Courier-Journal columnist Bob Considine will accompany President Nixon Thursday, Feb. 17th on the President's trip to Peking. Considine had been to China as a foreign correspondent during World War II.

FIRST HAND REPORTS FROM RED CHINA IN NEXT WEEK'S

COURIER-JOURNAL