

FR. HENRY ATWELL

Toward Tomorrow



Thirty pieces of silver, that was the price for the Man on this Wednesday of the first Holy Week long ago.

What's his price today in Holy Week of 1972?

Some people think they pay enough if they give an hour a week to attend church. Some won't give even that much. Others will give both time and money as long as Jesus and his message are kept within the church's walls.

I remember a ditty from the brave but short-lived Integrity magazine:

Mr. Catholic went to Mass,
Never missed a Sunday.
Mr. Catholic went to hell
For what he did on Monday.

Judas had a similar difficulty. He enjoyed the Last Supper all right. His problem came in what he did afterwards.

St. Paul, before his conversion, also resented the intrusion of Jesus into his otherwise pious and peaceful life.

Judas ended his problem with Jesus by hanging himself.

Paul took time to think the matter over and the insight or the vision he came to can save us from any attempt to escape that ever-haunting question Jesus himself once asked, "Who do men say that I am . . . who do you say that I am?"

The way we respond will ultimately shape our whole life.

If we say he's just a nice guy, too bad there aren't more like him, but he had

his day and it's over and we respect his memory every Sunday, or at least every Easter, then we'll probably be quite like the man in the ditty just quoted.

Paul, however, saw that Jesus wasn't just an itinerant corpse that wandered around a bit pointlessly for a few weeks after he'd been nailed to a cross. Paul saw that Jesus rose to an all new kind of life on Easter, a life not sitting on a cloud but living on in the people who really believed in him and wanted to live Sunday through Saturday, every day of every year, the way he lived

This vision took such a firm hold on St. Paul that he hiked and sailed hundreds of miles to the major cities of his time to tell other people what was so clear to him, that Jesus lives in people! When we hurt people, we slap at God. When we do a decent thing for somebody, we worship God. Jesus himself had said, "Whoever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do unto me."

With that viewpoint, we begin to get an idea of the price-tag we write today.

What are we willing to pay in time and talent and patience for the people we live with and say we love?

What are we willing to pay in time and talent to provide homes and jobs for people who don't look like us?

What are we willing to pay in attention and understanding for people who don't worship the way we do?

The price we are willing to pay in all these cases is the price-tag we put on Jesus. In some cases, it probably won't even come up to thirty pieces of silver.



FR. PAUL J. CUDDY

On The Right Side

From a one-time seminarian, now in middle age, studying at a secular college:

"I haven't attached myself to any parish here in X City. Instead I've been attending Mass at the Newman Center at the state college near by. The congregation of young people is no more inspiring than a regular congregation. You would hardly believe they had received the gift of the Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation but I guess we have to believe it, not withstanding all the evidence to the contrary. The reason I'm attending is the priest, who gives excellent talks. He takes far more liberties with the Liturgy than I would and some day when I get to know him better I'll have to talk to him about that and get his point of view . . ."

Observation: Father Joseph Champlin of the diocese of Syracuse is a graduate of Old St. Bernard's Seminary, and presently a pastor in Fulton, N.Y. For many years he was with the U.S. Bishops' Bureau on Liturgy in Washington. Last October he addressed the National Catholic Chaplains Institute at Bethesda, Md. on the Liturgy.

Speaking on the Mass he rejoiced at the variety of Scripture readings; and at the many choices ("options") for various occasions. He also spoke of the value of a new latitude which the rubrics of the new Mass permits. With a kindly intended humor he recalled the rigid directions for celebrating the Tridentine Mass, given in the rubrics (ritual rules): hands held just so, and so many inches apart; eyes directed toward the Host, the crucifix, the people during specified actions; the difference between a simple bow and a profound bow, etc. He praised the new relatively loose ritual directions. At his own Mass he demonstrated personally with ease and piety, the uniting of priest and congregation by eyes, hands, arms to indicate encompassing and uniting priest and people in a holy unity.

During the lecture I kept thinking: "Well, if all priests had the simplicity and Christian graciousness as well

as the natural charm of Father Champlin, fine! And if all priests were so Christ-centered in celebrating Mass, this would be beautiful. But not all are Father Joe Champlins."

As Father Champlin was gently deriding the rigor of the rubrics of the Tridentine Mass I kept remembering the late Msgr. Craugh who was rector of Old St. Bernard's Seminary. Laity and seminarians admired the devotion with which he celebrated Mass, and his meticulous observance of the rubrics. Hands, arms, eyes, head, knees: all responded in the same way at the holiest of Holy Worship. The effect was to attend to the Mass rather than attend to the celebrant, who decreased unobtrusively behind the manifest Christ offering Himself. Good rubrics restrain a priest from intruding his personal oddities into the Mass; or to put it bluntly, they save the worshipping people from a celebrant's temptation to cuteness.

In justice to Fr. C he was perfectly clear that there are rubrical directions which we priests must observe. He illustrated how a disciplined relaxedness in rubrics should bring better community to worshippers. For example, at the "Let us pray" the priest could enfold the congregation with embracing eyes. This makes sense. He could extend his hands invitingly at the "Orate, fratres." The Sign of Peace could be informal and warm. All this I like.

What seems a great pity is this: that what do come out of free-wheeling rubrics are fool things which outrage some worshippers, nauseate others, and discourage more. For example, the celebrant who danced a jig as he raised the Host at the Consecration made some ill. The celebrant who hugged the people as his Sign of Peace delighted a few silly women, but disgusted most, although he remained oblivious of the latter. Observing the rubrics safeguards the rights of The People. In the Mass the presence to be projected is not that of the celebrant but the Presence of Him who said: "Before Abraham was I am."

Wouldn't it be a shame

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