

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



One of the most recent and most thoroughly American translations of the gospels is titled "Good News for Modern Man."

That actually is what the old English word meant — gospel — good news.

These days, however, we seem to be inundated with bad news. Our newspapers, radio and television tell us of escalated war, increased crime, sky-jacking and busjackings, stabbings, shootings, muggings, quarrels and name-calling, protest marches and campus demonstrations, the litany is endless and sad.

Despite the gloom, nonetheless, there is still hope in even seemingly hopeless situations. An old proverb says, "The darker the night, the brighter the stars shine." And there are pin-points of light and cheer on most every horizon.

One dark and dismal area today is the scene of rural poverty.

We hear so much about urban ghettos, about the poverty and grime in our big cities, that we are liable to overlook the just-as-bitter poverty hidden in the hills and along country roads.

Ben H. Bagdikian in his 1964 book "In the Midst of Plenty" describes the plight of our nation's rural poor this way: "They live in the worst squalor, the most hopeless family chaos, and the most ignored poverty of the American poor. They are almost outside the normal workings of American society — except that their hands pick the nation's lettuce, tomatoes, beans, strawberries, onions, potatoes . . ." and a special U.S. census in 1959 showed that as many as half a million of these farm workers are children as young as ten years of age, kept from school to earn a few pennies more for their family.

All this, of course, must be off in some far-away state like Louisiana or Mississippi? The surprising fact in that these migrant workers, and those who are sometimes too poor even to move on and therefore stay after harvest season is over, are here

in the very counties which make up our diocese — and the largest number of rural poor in all of New York State are in Wayne County, and at least 1,000 people are in this rural poverty condition in Monroe County.

Another old proverb, this one from China, says, "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."

Last week I attended a meeting of people who want to do more to ease the grinding agony of rural poverty in the area of our diocese. The meeting was held at Father Charles Mulligan's Office for Human Development in old St. Monica's School on Genesee St. in Rochester. (Even his office looks like a bit of a poverty area.) Attending the meeting were Rev. George Wyant and Rev. Ivory Simmons from Wayne County, Rev. Allan Weaver who was chaplain for migrants in Monroe County last summer and will soon become pastor of the Second Baptist Church in Mumfordsville where nearby are pockets of some of the most pitiful rural poverty, also Sister Alice McLaughlin who works in the three-county area of Seneca, Yates and Ontario; Mrs. James Tobin, a young and very knowledgeable volunteer worker in Wayne County; Mrs. J. Craig Telford, one of the pioneers in ministry to migrants, who with others from Church Women United once provided an extensive program of assistance, day-care centers, health clinics and other services, and the meeting was set up and conducted by Sister Frances Sweeney of the Human Development Staff.

They concluded there is a need for educating the public, including priests and people in all our parishes, about this festering sore of rural poverty so close to us and a need for year round, not just harvest-time, ministry of faith and mercy for these people.

They plan to ask the nine Catholic and Protestant denominations of the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries to accept this added responsibility to be, together, the "Good Samaritan" to the rural poor of this area.

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



On May 3 our hospital telephone operator dialed my quarters: "A lady wants to speak to you."

The lady said: "What's happened? The hospital Gift Shop used to have copies of the Rosary Novena. Now they have none. Do you have any?"

Well the reason the shop is out of them is because people have bought them. Yes. I have dozens of them. How many do you want?" "Half a dozen. How much are they?"

"Stores sell them for \$1.50. You can have them for a dollar. This is an apostolate."

Over the phone I could feel the silent clicking in her mind. "Are you talking about the Rosary Novena or the Scriptural Rosary?"

Oh! You're right! I was talking about the Scriptural Rosary. Yes, but I have only one copy of the novena booklet. Stay put and I'll pick you up for lunch."

So armed with the only copy I promanaged to the foyer, exchanged the booklet for 50 cents, and we went to lunch of Harvard beets, cottage cheese and a small hamburger.

"What brought about your interest in the Rosary Novena?"

"That little devotion was a turning point in my religious life." The lady is a college graduate of a couple decades ago, a convert, a successful wife and mother, and a working professional woman. "You know, I was a Catholic for about 10 years but the reality of the Faith never sank in. I was having religious problems. A friend of mine knew I was having difficulties so she gave me the Rosary Novena to pray. At the time I didn't even know how to say the rosary! I kept putting it off, but my friend, gentle but persistent, would call me every few days to ask: 'Have you started the novena yet?' So finally I got out my unused beads, and began. And I can say gratefully that my whole spiritual life changed. In fact, the rosary novena devotion, and a book by Father Albert Shamon — First Steps in the Spiritual Life — I think it was called, changed my whole religious life."

I commented: "For a long time I've intended to write about novenas and their value. It's pathetic how many

helpful devotions have been buried in the name of Vatican II. Novenas and litanies are buried. What's in their place? Benediction is buried. Bible vigils were supposed to supplant that beautiful service but have proved pretty arid for most people. Not only is benediction buried, but a subtle hostility toward the Blessed Sacrament has developed in the strangest places, thanks to good parents and grandparents, and to a few religious education teachers.

(That reminds me of a joke Father Heisel told me 30 years ago. "A man took Carter's Little Liver Pills for 40 years, and when he died, the undertaker had to take out his liver and club it to death")

The Catholic Encyclopedia reads:

"Novena: nine successive days of prayer, private or public, to obtain special graces or favors. Novenas have been attacked as superstitious. No doubt the possibility of superstitious abuse exists, and should be guarded against. However it is a practice that can be most serviceable to true devotion and piety. Persistence and constancy are qualities of all good prayer; and it is well that some devotional practices should give special emphasis to them by requiring repetition on successive days. This manifests and stimulates the worshiper's earnestness and fervor."

Our Lord enjoins confidence as we pray. Self-discipline of regular prayerfulness is a safeguard against sloth. Even those who do not find any profit in such devotions can rejoice at the quiet peace which comes to those for whom novena prayers are spiritually profitable.

Rosary Novena Booklets are found in some church pamphlet racks. Most religious stores stock them. If you cannot find any, send me a dollar at St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell, N. Y. 14843, and you will be sent two copies. To spread devotion to Our Lord's Blessed Mother is a joyful privilege.



Father Paul J. Cuddy

Father Cuddy is Chaplain of St. James Mercy Hospital and author of the Weekly Courier-Journal Column ON THE RIGHT SIDE.

See Fatima, the ornate Cathedral at Seville, the Cathedral at Toledo, the great monastery at Seville.

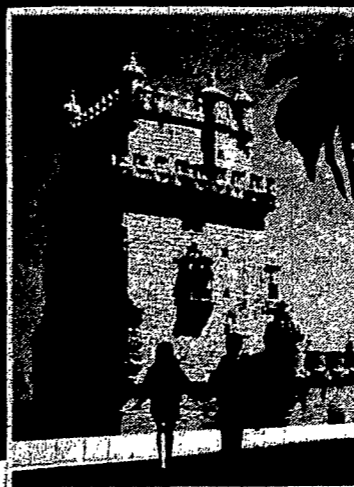
See Lisbon, the water color city on the banks of the Tagus — the resorts of Estoril and Cascais — Spain, a world in itself with Andalusia's fascinating Seville, Moorish Cordoba and Grenada — the bright and sunny Costa del Sol, Madrid with its famous Prado Museum.

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