

FR. HENRY ATWELL

Toward Tomorrow



The recent flood revealed not just the generosity and resilience of so many people, it also has exposed the stupidity and selfishness of many others.

President Nixon said the flood was the "worst natural disaster in the whole of American history."

The President had previously promised he would do everything he possibly could to preserve the parochial schools of this nation. Now is his chance to put the money where his mouth is.

Scores of Catholic schools, just like public schools, have been severely damaged and ravaged by the flood waters.

But both federal and state officials have announced there are millions of dollars available to repair and refurbish the public schools without one cent available for the Catholic schools. And to add insult to injury, a three man federal court has blocked payment of \$35 million voted by the State Legislature for Catholic schools of this state for doing a job the state law requires them to do.

What I'm utterly amazed at is the power and the powerlessness of the President.

He can open the door for American industry to ship multi-million dollar jets to Communist China, and \$720 million of American grain to Communist Russia, he can send diplomats on costly round-the-world tours, but he can't muster the strength to give a nickel to a Catholic school.

Bishop Hogan made a trip to Washington to see what were the possibili-

ties for peace in Indo-China. Maybe he ought to try another trip to Washington, or even to San Clemente, and see what the President intends to do now about keeping the promises he made about Catholic schools.

And if nobody else seems to think Catholic schools are worth a government nickel, then I think we should ask ourselves if the schools are really worth the increasing costs Catholics must pay even if we did get a few federal or state dollars.

We have always prided ourselves that our schools are built to train youngsters to be both good citizens and good Catholics. If the federal, state and local governments won't invest a cent in their future citizens, I think we could save a considerable amount of money not trying to do that thankless job and concentrate instead, as the Jews do in their schools, solely on religious formation and heritage. That, after all, is our principal product and by concentrating on this a bit more we might just possibly even improve it.

The overwhelming concern we must continue to have for the victims of the flood should not deflect us from another diocesan priority—the upcoming Year of Renewal leading toward a Synod and Pastoral Council (like a diocesan parliament). The study paper on the "Mission of the Church in the Diocese of Rochester" is "must reading" for every Catholic willing to fulfill his or her vocation as a responsible member of the Church in this area of God's kingdom. It would be a great pity if one urgent concern made us overlook other, also very important needs of the Church.

FR. PAUL J. CUDDY

On The Right Side



Father Joseph Egan is the pastor of St. Patrick's parish, Elmira. He received his doctorate in Theology in Rome and taught dogmatic theology at Old St. Bernard's for a dozen years or more. After the sudden death of Father Edward Waters he was appointed pastor of St. Patrick's. Like the shoeman who stuck to his last, he has stuck faithfully to serving his parishioners with zeal and intelligence and the grace of a devoted pastor.

In a way I have regretted this. Father Egan possesses extraordinary gifts of intelligence and scholarship as well as practical judgment, and he should have been a clarion sounding his learning and orthodoxy far beyond his parish to instruct the diocese and the nation. This he could have done without lessening his care for his parishioners.

Less than a dozen years ago many erratic and aggressive men and women seized the tools of influence within the Church: the press, the catechetics, the lecture platform. They flaunted the historic Catholic Church and the Pope, trumpeting doctrines which recall St. Paul who wrote: "For the time is coming when men will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own liking, and will turn away from listening to the truth." (2 Tim. 4) Fr. E. and many gifted men like him, would have done great service had they aggressively reacted to preserve the Church from the vandals.

He has a sure pen which thrusts through the banalities of some popular catechetics and theology. His pen has instructed his own parishioners well. My regret is that his wisdom and doctrine have not been in the weekly Courier-Journal rather than just in the parish bulletin, The Patrician; and that his articles have not been syndicated by the national press.

An article which well illustrates his neat balance was published in the May 21 Patrician. It was occasioned by his sensing that many anti-abortion people could defeat their own purpose by an emotional all-out attempt to vote out

every legislator who voted for legalized abortion in Albany. Consider his thoughtful prudence and good sense evident from the article which is entitled:

PREPARTUM POSTMORTEM

"Governor Rockefeller greeted Mother's Day by aborting the Donovan-Crawford Bill. The measure passed both houses of the State Legislature, and would have restored legal sanctions against the thousands of abortions now going on in our state. . . . The politically minded among us will no doubt call for a lengthy and stubborn campaign to unseat legislators and executives who frustrated us on this (abortion) issue. Perhaps it could be done. In most elections, the margin between victor and loser is small enough that a quiet but determined and united group can tilt the balance in the direction it prefers. If we wanted to start an electoral feud, I'm sure we could get 'em for this."

"I have my doubts that it is what Christ wants us to do. We hope that, as moral insights develop, all men may come to see that all abortions are immoral, and that the legal machinery of the state should be used to safeguard the rights of the unborn. But as of now, not even among the enlightened editors and jurists of the state is this the majority view.

"Perhaps Divine Providence is nudging us away from punishing the abortionist and toward helping his victims. The times call for an eighth corporal work of mercy, helping the pathetic women who feel that abortion is the only way out. We have to do more than tell them severely that abortion is a sin, or than threaten them with the severe penalties that a tough human law could impose."

Such is the prudence of Father Egan which recalls the expression of Theodore Westow: "Prudence aims primarily at achieving an end, and not at standing about in paralyzing timidity."

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