

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



Last Friday noon, a wreath was placed at the grave of Susan B. Anthony in Mt. Hope Cemetery, Rochester. Probably not many Rochesterians recall the stir she caused in the early decades of this century as she campaigned for women to have the right to vote.

And fewer still will recall that the nation's first Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls, N.Y., in 1848.

The women at that convention issued a "Declaration of Sentiments" which was patterned on our nation's Declaration of Independence.

Many of their sentiments then, over a century ago, sound remarkably similar to women's lib statements today.

Perhaps one reason why the Seneca Falls convention failed to achieve its extensive goals of equality for women is because the movement during the latter part of the last century focused more and more on simply the political aspect of voting and by-passed other aspects of the original Declaration of Sentiments.

When women at last attained their right to vote in 1920 the movement went into hibernation for about forty years. Betty Frieden published her book "The Feminine Mystique" in 1956—a manifesto of the frustration and wasted potential which characterized so many middle-class American women.

President Kennedy, in 1963, established a special commission to study women's status in American society. Its report, "American Women" provided statistical evidence of discrimination against women in almost every sphere of American life.

The women's liberation movement is still surrounded by much myth and misunderstanding. For many Americans, including many women, the movement is a somewhat laughable grab-bag of malcontents or, at best, a passing fad. Some perceptive Americans believe the movement is an idea whose time has now come. "Grapevine," monthly newsletter of the Joint Strategy and Action Committee

(JSAC), an ecumenical agency, devoted a recent issue to this subject, to report the "positive things that are happening as women come alive to their potential."

What is particularly informative is Grapevine's statement that "much ferment is going on in Catholic circles, if not in the official structures." The article says, "Spurred by Vatican II, nuns as well as lay women are bringing pressure to bear on the Catholic church to open ordination to women and to give them a greater role in decision making places in the institution."

Two organizations are listed as specifically oriented for women's lib within Catholicism: St. Joan's Alliance, an international organization with an American office at 435 West 119th St., New York City. The Alliance has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, and testified in U. S. Senate hearings on behalf of the recently passed Equal Rights Amendment and before committees of the U.S. Catholic bishops on behalf of ordaining women to the priesthood.

Another organization, the Cleveland Conference of Laity, whose office is at 3038 Yorkshire Rd., Cleveland Heights, Ohio, recently sponsored a conference attended by delegates from five states and they also plan, among other things, to petition the U.S. bishops to authorize ordination for women, and to consider "new forms of marriage and family life."

Last September, just before the international Synod of Bishops in Rome, I heard an eminent Cardinal admit, "Can women be ordained priests—I'd say it's still an open question, I think there are good theological reasons both for and against the idea."

For years we had nuns with men's names—Sister John, Sister Michael, Sister Joseph. Maybe we'd better get used to a new possibility—Father Kathleen, Father Janice, Father Marjory!

Susan B. Anthony probably never even suspected such a possibility as that.

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



Sunday night, Aug. 13, I watched the TV panel show, Forum, from Rochester. The subject was: "Detecting a Heart Attack." The panelists were two Rochester doctors: one from Strong Memorial, substituting for Dr. Paul Yu but whose name I missed; the other was Dr. Ralph Napadano of St. Mary's Hospital. With them was Mr. Harlan Beckwith who is executive director of Genesee Valley Heart Association. A wholesome looking Jim Riley moderated the program with good direction.

The panelists pointed out the ordinary symptoms of a possible heart attack: pain in the mid-chest, especially if it radiates into the right arm; shortness of breath, nausea, etc.

Then Jim Riley asked: "How is it that very intelligent people who do know the symptoms won't call a doctor or a hospital?" One doctor replied: "That's true even of doctors who know the symptoms, yet sometimes even they won't act on them for themselves" (A nurse told me that this is also true of nurses.)

The next day I described the panel to Dr. A and expressed my wonder that a doctor would not act on his own symptoms. The doctor has a good sense of humor and said: "There's a story of a doctor who had all the symptoms. He checked his pressure, studied the pain, and as a final test walked up two flights of stairs and dropped dead on the top step, thus proving it was a heart attack." Then he added seriously: "There's often a big gap between a man's intellect and his emotions. What a man knows and how he reacts to his knowledge can be in strange contradiction. But it's frequently there."

As hospital chaplain I frequently am dismayed that sincere Catholics rarely grasp the opportunity to be anointed. Confession they take for granted. Holy Communion they receive gladly. But the Sacrament of the Sick, even to this day, is not equally appreciated

or desired. And this applies even more to relatives of the sick who should want every possible aid for their loved ones.

A few months ago I was preparing a very sick woman for anointing, and as I was setting up the stand with the linen towel, the candles, holy water and crucifix, her room-mate spoke up: "Father, is there any reason I can't be anointed, too?" Now Cordelia really wasn't very sick but she was at least 70 years old. Sacramental theology teaches that when this chassis of ours has had a lot of mileage, we are entitled to the Sacrament of the Sick. We do not say "Last Rites" because usually they are neither last nor even second last.

So I said: "Well, Cordelia, I can't think of any reason why you can't. It is the Sacrament of the Sick; and it frequently gives a new zing to a person. And it surely gives grace to the soul." So Cordelia and her roommate were anointed together. Both are quite alive. One is frail. But Cordelia is like a colt.

If even some doctors and nurses react so irrationally to the evident signs of a heart attack, I don't suppose we can expect a quick change-over from the ingrained idea of Last Rites to the Sacrament of the Sick. But we keep trying.

And what of myself? For years I have sizzled that Catholics do not appreciate the Sacrament of the Sick; nor do they ask for it as they do the other sacraments. Now, when I myself shall become decently sick, will I ask to be anointed? As the doctor commented, there frequently is a great gap between knowledge and our emotions. It may be that I too, shall retreat into that irrational shell which the psychologists call "denial." But as things stand now, I do hope that I will have sense enough to send for Father Haffey and say: "Please hear my confession. Give me Holy Communion. And anoint me. I want everything that Our Lord has to give us." And if Father H. isn't around, any priest will do.

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