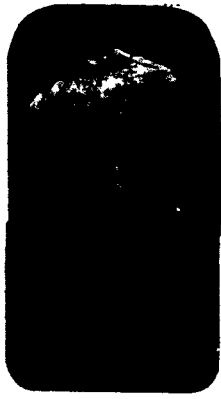


# Lest We Forget— Attica Revisited

One of the most blessed of our God-given faculties is our memory — that holy sanctuary of our spirit wherein we store the records of our experiences. Some are like precious gems — treasured moments we cherish, which we love to re-examine under the light of conscious recall. They reflect the brightness of days without luster — moments which haunt us with the temptation to bury them forever in the grave of oblivion beyond all recall.



Such is our temptation on this first anniversary of the tragedy of Attica — days we would love to forget but days we must remember despite the pain of recall. The days that have followed the darkness of last September have only served to confirm me in my initial analysis of the fateful events — an evaluation labeled by some as the vision of a blind man.

I find myself on this first anniversary as a man still searching for a way to end the cycle of injustice and violence which seems to hold a death grip upon our present age. Anger, injustice, long-term suffering, brutal oppression of the weak, cynicism and destructive violence continue with the regularity of night following day. Munich, North Ireland, Vietnam, Attica — all form a litany of inhumanity born of a common root. All the while, we who feel justified as the good people of our society rejoicing in our immunity from oppression are horrified by its inevitable senselessness and cruel consequences.

I am terrified by violence and its special

power to destroy the spirit of man. It allows no opportunity for prayer, reflection, mutual sharing and understanding. It offers no solution to injustice.

I am equally alarmed at all the neglect, the cold and calculated and repeated acts of injustice that lead to the desperate attempt of men to make their voices heard in a cry for liberation from the forces in our society that enslave them.

Our Christian vocation calls all of us to a special concern for the imprisoned — to reverence for their basic rights and dignity as children of God. The prophet Jeremiah thundered a challenge to all of us who might easily succumb to apathy and indifference to Attica and to the disturbing and important questions it has raised and about which we dare not remain silent:

“When all the prisoners in a country are crushed and trampled underfoot  
When a man’s rights are overridden in defiance  
of the Most High  
When a man is deprived of justice  
does not the Lord see it?”

The memory of Attica — may it remain with us always as a haunting challenge to take an honest look at our prisons — and having heard the truth, act as the Lord would have us act.

I offer this meditation as a basis for a renewed mission to our human family imprisoned:

- There must be open cooperation and communication between the community from which the imprisoned comes and the institution of his confinement. In darkness and secrecy institutions tend to become oppressive. Many small injustices

and indignities add up to a crushing and intolerable burden for the human spirit. The painful struggle to maintain hope and self-respect, the severance of ties of love of family and friends, the frustration of expectation of decent work — these are problems often ignored as we send a man to prison and quickly forget him.

- We need an ombudsman commission in each prison before whom grievances can be promptly aired and acted upon.

- We need more legislators endowed with honesty, men of principle with a sense of compassion in the laws they enact, men who will manifest this concern by visiting the imprisoned.

- We need, above all, a return to an age of reverence. If there is no respect for the man in prison, we cannot expect him to grow as a person. If there is no respect for guards, how can we expect them to be anything but inhuman?

- We need to remember that all of us are persons with a unique God-given dignity despite the mysterious combination of goodness and evil which is our common personal experience. I am confident that there is sufficient good will in all of us to resolve that our goodness will prevail and we will unite to end hatred and revenge in our society.

- Let us never forget that our lack of resolve to defend by word and deed the dignity of any man, is an endorsement of the inevitable consequences — the spread of violence.

May the Memory of Attica offer all of us the grace of conversion. And seeing the harsh reality of its tragedy — “Harden not your hearts.”

## The Slot Man

Reprisal is an ugly word. It ranks with words such as gluttony, betrayal, sordid, that immediately strike an unpleasant chord in a listener.

In addition to the prime horror of violence such as at Attica and in Munich there seems always to be the subsidiary inanity of a compulsion to reprisal. McKay Commission report tells of beatings of inmates that took place after the insurrection.

Besides being intrinsically wrong such reprisal serves no purpose — it, in fact, probably adds to the possibility of future trouble.

# Must We Always 'Get Even'?

By Carmen Viglucci

The senseless murders at Munich are followed by equally senseless retaliatory attacks as the vicious cycle of hate, revenge, retaliation, reprisal continues to whip away chances for peace in the Middle East.

Reprisal is an integral part of the madness that keeps the Vietnam War going. The fear of retaliation by North Vietnamese when and if the South is unable to defend itself is a prime reason given for continuation of the war.

We should dwell on a biblical lesson in

the story of Gethsemani:

“And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached out his hand, drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put back thy sword into its place; for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword.’”

With a touch Jesus replaced the ear of one who was playing a role in His eventual execution.

A lesson for all of us. Now.

## Editorial

# Southern Tier Shivers at Thought of Winter

The time of the year has arrived when normally it would be appropriate and refreshing to pay heed to the splendor of high blue skies, crisp days and the vivid hues of changing foliage.

But this is an abnormal year for many in our diocese, particularly for those who live in the Southern Tier where the June flood has swept aside the usual pursuits and casual enjoyments of life. For those people the advent of chill weather is a dire sign — many homes are no longer prepared to withstand normal cold not to mention the onslaught of New York State winters.

The critical time for getting homes “winterized” is listed as from Oct. 5 to Oct. 15. Gas and electric companies are alert to the problem, with at least one, Corning Natural Gas, scheduling extra shifts to meet the crisis.

Small Business Administration loans are available to homeowners, the Army Corps of Engineers will repair or replace furnaces, fix doors, look over electrical work.

Other public agencies are trying — the Chamber of Commerce in Corning, for instance, is providing heating and plumbing contractors to meet the needs.

The crisis, however, is even greater than such combined efforts and both Frank Patterson in Elmira and Father Peter Bayer in Corning, the diocesan coordinators for flood recovery, point to Operation Rebuild as a prime necessity.

This is a program whereby organizations in other parts of the diocese, parish or otherwise, may adopt a particular family and its home in the flood belt and

see to their needs.

Financial resource is not a prerequisite for this kind of help but the willingness to give time and effort is. Contact the Office of Human Development if your organization can help. Telephone 328-6400.

Another major need is for volunteer professional help from electricians, plumbers, carpenters, those capable of working on dry wall, of repairing warped doors. A crying, human need exists for such help. Again the Office of Human Development should be contacted. Telephone 328-6400.

The time is now. For many, the usually welcome cool and colorful respite of autumn will mean only discomfort and the dread realization that a possibly deadly winter is close at hand.