

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



Many older people, including clergy, complain about young people drifting away from the church these days.

I marvel that so many of them stay, considering the way they're treated.

One couple told me recently of a series of rebuffs, any one of which might have discouraged me from trying to persevere had I been in their shoes.

The couple wanted to be married. Both bride and groom were Catholics and of an age legally to marry.

The bride-to-be had an apartment convenient to her work but "home" was still where her parents lived, where she spent most every weekend and whose parish church she continued to attend. She was told there, "You don't live in this parish, you'll have to see the priest of the parish where you live." There she was told, "You're not registered here, you better go back to your 'home' parish."

She went in her quandy to a priest formerly at her 'home' parish but since transferred to another parish. Kindly but firmly he told her he "couldn't do anything" for them except to try to work it out with one or the other of the priests already contacted.

And to complicate the whole matter, the couple, horror of horrors, wanted their wedding in a garden.

Present church regulations require a wedding "in a religious setting" which includes, of course, any Catholic church, and with dispensation, a Protestant church or Jewish synagogue, and even a parish rectory (and that's a religious setting?) but not in any chapel built by God himself, a cathedral under the canopy of a blue sky or arched with trees — which, according to the poem, only God can make!

I can understand that church officials fear that weddings in gardens might soon lead to weddings dangling from helicopters but I think that clergy

and couples should somehow be trusted to work out a mutually agreeable arrangement rather than be chained by the present arbitrary and limiting regulations.

And weddings in gardens are, after all, quite Scriptural.

The wedding at Cana where Jesus worked his first miracle was quite likely in the garden of a home, certainly it wasn't in the rabbi's parlor. And if Jesus could institute marriage as a sacrament there, I can't see why the officials of his church forbid it to be celebrated in such a setting today.

The church, in my opinion, has a task today far more important and far more urgent than determining the geography of weddings.

The church, like its Lord, has a mission to comfort, encourage, strengthen and heal the puzzled and broken hearts of people, certainly not to add to the anguish of our time. The church, above all else, must stand before the world clearly, without any cloud or veil to obscure the fact, as that one unique community of love in a world so torn by so many hatreds and suspicions.

Many young people, just as many middle age and older people, may reject it for having a heart big enough to embrace all different kinds of people, but the church must love all whom its Lord loved and he excluded none — and for that he was rejected and deserted and betrayed by those he even called his friends.

The church which bears his name must hazard the same destiny by fulfilling its duty to be truly catholic — open, universal, unlimited.

Once this is done again, as has been done so many times through the past twenty centuries, then the people who know down deep in their hearts that this is the way the church should be will come thronging back to it, people of all ages and tribes and races, and there shall be at last that "New Pentecost" which our Bishop hopes will be the fruit of our diocesan Year of Renewal.



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

Recently over the radio a New York legislator said that he was voting in favor of methadone centers, but with great reluctance. The reason he gave was this. "Methadone treatments may be less self-destructive than heroin, but methadone is still a drug, and I'm against drugs. I think we should get at the root of our troubles. The fault is society."

Now, no one would deny that "society," which vague term may mean many things, influences individual behavior. No one denies that environment and heredity do affect the behavior of individuals.

But, in blaming society, environment and genes, there is a danger of a false writing off of individual free will and consequent individual responsibility. For example, take an alcoholic. There are an estimated 9,000,000 alcoholics in the U.S.A., plus millions more of "heavy drinkers." Most men believe today that an alcoholic has a chronic disease, namely alcoholism. However, the hundreds of thousands of "dry alcoholics" testify to freedom of choice — that alcoholism can be controlled by not taking the first drink, even as diabetes can be controlled by proper diet. An alcoholic who stubbornly persists in drinking, saying: "I can take it or leave it alone," cannot fault society. He has a choice: either not to take that first drink — and he may well need help of the AAs or other therapy; or to continue to drink as he freely chooses. Every dry alcoholic I've ever known says the same thing: "If a man just refuses to be helped, you cannot do anything about it." But, dry alcoholics do attest to the fact that each man or woman has freedom of choice.

One night I watched a TV program on heroin control. The commentator made this observation. In Japan, 1954, the use of opium had become so bad that the government decided to take strong measures to eradicate it, and thus safeguard the nation. Anyone caught in possession of opium was

sentenced to three years imprisonment. There was absolutely no exception for class or vocation or position. There was no commutation or lessening of sentence. It was a flat three years — and during that time rehabilitation was also encouraged.

In 1955 over 55,000 opium users were imprisoned for three years. These persons were so detrimental to the Japanese society that they were withdrawn. In 1971, there were only 236 imprisoned. Today opium is no great problem in Japan.

Communist China has been even more drastic. When the Communists took over in 1949, the regime gave one warning to dope pushers, and a second offense meant beheading. Within six months there were neither pushers nor users. Today Communist China is free of opium, and other such drugs, as well as of prostitution and idleness. The irony of it is that politically freedomless Chinese are free from opium and pot of any kind; while our free Americans are destroying our society through loopholes in law and law enforcement.

The recent murders at Munich of the Israeli athletes and the robbery murders of 8 golfers at St. Croix Island cannot reasonably be sloughed off as the "guilt of society."

No. To blame society, our ancestors, our environment for the choices of free men is a glib way to excuse ourselves or malefactors of personal responsibility. Modern psychology has revealed many marvelous and mysterious workings on the human body and spirit; and many influences on the will: physical conditions, chemistry of the body, milieu of a person. But the conclusion is always the same: excepting for the mentally unbalanced, men are free to choose. Otherwise, there is neither praise nor blame due, nor reward nor punishment. Free will may be a mystery, but, as Pascal wrote: "Free will is a self-evident fact."

Churchman Reflects:

'Attica Can Happen Again'

By BARBARA MOYNEHAN

Discussing the feeling of alienation from the government that Attica prisoners demonstrated a year ago, the Rev. Marvin Chandler called last year's rebellion there, "as American as apple pie."

"There is in this country now a despair among oppressed people who feel they are not a part of this country," said the Associate Director of Genesee Ecumenical Ministries and head of Black Church Ministries: "What this feeling of alienation says to me is that Attica can happen again."

Speaking Sept. 13 at the first of a series of luncheons sponsored by GEM's judicial process commission, Mr. Chandler told what he saw while acting as an observer inside Attica State Correctional Facility on Sept. 13, 1971.

He called the issue of renunciation, "the problem of alienation of the prisoners from their government," the central issue and said it had not been taken seriously enough in considerations of the rebellion.

Prisoners' insistence that they were aliens and not treated as citizens of this country, coupled with his view that neither state nor federal government takes cognizance of this point, brought a warning from the minister of more prison rebellions.

Mr. Chandler also feels there is "no doubt that in the current

political administration and campaign there is a new racism being imposed on this nation." He cited what he called President Nixon's "irresponsible" comment against quotas made on Labor Day and benign neglect of the busing issue and called them "fuels for fires of renunciation."

Recalling the State Police assault in Attica's courtyard D, Chandler said he had "the terrible feeling that it was not a rescue so much as regaining territory."

In taking hostages the prisoners had assumed the government would value human life more than property, he said. "They gambled and lost, which says a lot about the machinery of our government."

But, Mr. Chandler does not see the prisoners as saints in the rebellion. "To say they had no responsibility for what happened is to rob them of their manhood. Those men weren't saints, they weren't trying to be heroes. They were trying to secure demands."

The men in Attica were aware of the consequences of their actions, he said. "They knew it was a challenge to the whole justice system. I haven't seen concomitant seriousness in the response of the American public."

"The public cannot dodge the responsibility for the disaster," said Mr. Chandler, as long as

suburbs remain white fortresses of racism."

"I'm talking about a responsibility that heals."

Governor Rockefeller should have gone to Attica, Mr. Chandler continued. "his presence would have lent some hope to the situation."

"There was no need to make the Monday morning assault on courtyard D, he said. "The prisoners weren't going anywhere, the hostages were still safe, and I believe the leaders were willing to negotiate some modified form of amnesty."

Personnel Board Election Reported

The priests of the diocese have reelected Father Lawrence Murphy to a second three-year term on their personnel board and named Father Daniel Brent to succeed Father John Hempel, whose second term has expired.

The election results were announced by Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, executive secretary to the six-man board.

PADRE PIO

The Padre Pio Prayer Group will pray for the sick and suffering tonight, Sept. 20, at St. Philip Neri Church at 8 p.m.

BISHOP'S SOUTHERN TIER FLOOD RELIEF FUND

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