

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



"Don't carry any more money than you're willing to lose," says the sign in a bank.

Not so many years ago, you carried your money in your pocket or hid it under the mattress and ordinarily it was safe in either place.

These days any cash on hand is simply an invitation to get mugged and robbed.

There is today an accelerating trend against cash. Evidence of this is the way we get paid.

Our grandfather got full cash pay for what he earned, usually on a week to week basis.

The average American worker today gets a pay check that totals only about 47% of what he's really earned. The other 53% has been taken out for taxes, social security, Community Chest, insurance, union dues and sundry other items.

Experts estimate that by 1980 we'll probably be down to a mere 5% take-home pay to spend on incidental trivial things and the remaining 95% will all be appropriately deducted for the major expenses of life.

This trend to avoid cash is already evident in many other aspects of daily life. Bus drivers no longer carry a cash box, you have to have "exact fare." Gas stations won't make change late at night, you have to have "exact amount" after 11 p.m.

Personal checks eliminate the need to carry sizeable sums when we go shopping.

And now we're told we're on the brink of a new era — plastic money.

Some people pride themselves on their varied credit cards but within the next ten years we'll probably witness not an increase in the number of cards available but rather very likely a uni-card for all our purchasing needs.

Dr. Raymond B. Knudsen of the National Council of Churches was in Rochester recently to discuss these trends with local church officers responsible for the financial health of their various religious organizations.

Dr. Knudsen has written an article on this trend against cash and titled it, "Pennyless Churches in a Cashless Society."

Some churches, he says, already have members who make their church contribution through a credit card arrangement. That way the church gets its support even if the parishioner is away on a business or vacation trip. When pay checks get down to 5% of earnings, churches that aren't ready for the plastic money system will find little more than small change in their collection baskets.

Dr. Knudsen also recommended churches investigate annuity plans as means of needed support.

Many people still have the naive idea that the church should be not just poor but also pauper, that the church deserves only what's left over after all other aspects of life are paid for, including their bingo, butts and beer.

John Vonglis, president of the St. Agnes Parish School Board in Avon, commented recently on the continuing efforts the Catholic Church is making to gain tax-paid state and federal funds: "How can we expect other people to help us pay for our schools when a lot of Catholics aren't themselves making a significant contribution?"

Ultimately, our contribution, whether made in cash, by check or by credit card, must go far beyond the merely financial.

Churches could have bank accounts worth millions, projects staffed with the most competent professionals doing all sorts of wonderful things for all kinds of people in need, buildings filled with happy congregations, but if that's the limit of the contributions, then it would all be a mere chimera.

A living symbol of this giving beyond the merely financial is the man who arranged for Dr. Knudsen to come to Rochester— Rev. Dr. Leland Foster Wood, a venerable gentleman who embodies both the graciousness of a bygone era and the foresight and openness we all need to cope with the on-rushing future.



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

Are the priests happy in their vocations? Evidently some have not been, because they have left. But what about those who continue to serve The People and Christ in His Church? I suppose there are some who are disgruntled. Every profession has some. But most of the priests I know would not exchange the priesthood for anything else in the world. Why would they? There is no vocation more holy or greater or more gracious. There is no vocation so ultimately satisfying.

Father X is a young priest, about 30 years old: cheerful, prayerful, enthusiastic, and scholarly beyond most priests. (He reads philosopher Bernard Lonergan with understanding.) I think this priest typifies the normal faithful American young priest.

In response to my request that he fill in for me over a weekend, he wrote this: "I have decided not to ask the pastor for the time off. First, I was committed to give a retreat shortly after my transfer here; but I don't think he was happy about it (though he praised me for it at the meeting of the Mothers Club). He is really tremendous.

"Secondly I feel a real obligation to try to keep myself at home in such a large parish where there is such responsibility. Sunday, above all, is the greatest day of the week for me at the parish. If I might add some of my own pastoral thoughts, I have always ENJOYED Sunday. Even after a week which may have been tough or tense or even discouraging, I have always felt re-invigorated after preaching and celebrating Mass and greeting the people. So I am sure that you will agree with my reasons — a definite case of mixed emotions.

"Enjoyed your letter, I always open them not quite knowing what I will

find, but they always have something stimulating. Am anxious to hear your story about Lulu. I'm convinced that a good story is what makes a homily sink in. Unfortunately I don't have the fertile imagination to concoct stories, and don't have enough of a folksy background to call upon. A friend of mine, a priest of about 45 years, comes from fine Sicilian stock and his father was a great story teller. How I envy him.

"For me, life has been great! The retreat from Father Bernard Haring was fine, and gave me a good sense of the Church which can so easily be lost in the busy work that we can get involved in all too often. I had the good fortune to give a retreat to 32 ladies in one of the retreat houses of the diocese. That too reaffirmed what Fr. Haring tried to communicate. It was a fortification for my own retreat.

"You may not believe it, but you'll be glad to hear it. I have subscribed to L'Osservatore Romano, the same English edition that you get. I think the Pope has good things to say to the age.

"So, I am well and hope that you are the same. I am sure you start the Sisters and the patients out on the right foot each morning."

So when you watch TV shows of disgruntled clerics, or experience the sadness of knowing some who leave the priesthood, instead of resenting them say a prayer for these men who dropped the greatest vocation in the world. It is not always easy for them. But add a prayer of thanksgiving for those who continue to serve you with the Mass and the Sacraments, instruction and visitation with fidelity to the call of Our Lord: "Come, follow Me. You have not chosen Me. I have chosen you."

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