

FR. HENRY ATWELL

## Toward Tomorrow



I'm told not many Catholics know what GEM is. It means Genesee Ecumenical Ministries and it is the coordinating agency for nine major religious groups including our own diocese. It is a way Christians can be the Good Samaritan together to our neighbors in need.

GEM soon will be two years old but it really got its start almost ten years ago soon after the days of the Vatican Council.

Bishop (then Monsignor) John McCafferty and Monsignor Charles Boyle were participants in exploratory discussions about Catholics joining the former Rochester Area Council of Churches. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen favored diocesan membership but no specific arrangements were completed.

One of the first things Bishop Hogan did as Bishop Sheen's successor was to meet with executives of other Christian denominations and he told them it was his emphatic wish to have the diocese be an active participant in either the then existing Council of Churches or in an all-new agency.

A task force was then set up with representatives from the different churches and these people recommended that the area of concern be widened from the "Rochester Area" to the whole "Genesee" region because national and state programs for health, transportation, housing, education, welfare were more and more being considered on a regional level and not just at an urban or even metropolitan level.

In January, 1971, nine groups adopted the GEM covenant and constitution and they were: the Monroe Baptist Association, the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley, the Rochester Classis of the Reformed Church in America, the Rochester Area (Black) Ministers Conference, the Rochester District of the Lutheran Church in America, the Genesee Valley Association of the United Church of Christ, the Rochester District of the United Methodist Church, and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester. The Orthodox churches participate in some of the GEM programs but are not actual members. Other Christian churches and the Jewish community

are kept informed of GEM activities and also participate in some of the programs but, like the Orthodox, are not members as such.

The first work of the newly organized Genesee Ecumenical Ministries was the formation of several task forces to research what should be the priorities and programs for GEM. These task forces looked into the needs and possible cooperative programs for housing, public education, welfare and employment conditions, the situation in jails and courts, youth, peace, social services, chaplaincies in hospitals and other institutions, a resource center, and other possibilities.

Three of the proposed programs were eventually adopted: Urban Education, Judicial Process and "Hanover Houses."

Since then the GEM Team on Urban Education helped bring together the various groups — teachers, parents, pupils, concerned citizens — to work out a "consensus" to preserve some kind of reasonable peace in the schools so the youngsters can get the education they go to school for.

The GEM Judicial Process Commission has provided an extensive array of services — informative talks by judges, lawyers, court officials; several workshops and seminars, and has worked out a cooperative research-action program with the new School of Criminal Justice at Rochester Institute of Technology.

The GEM ministry at "Hanover Houses" provides for a young Black minister, Rev. Joseph Cromartie, at that congested seven-building complex of 400 families in Rochester's inner city. Most of his time is taken in person-to-person work with individuals and families to provide them an on-the-spot evidence of Christian concern.

GEM, at two years of age, is still in its growing stages. Like any youngster it still has much to learn. But it has at least started to do a job that very much needs to be done — the job of getting Christians to plan and work together.

FR. PAUL J. CUDDY

## On The Right Side



After the November elections, political observers remarked on the impact of the right to life people in electing pro-life candidates; and eliminating some pro-abortion candidates. This is more remarkable because the pro-life people are less organized, less skilled, and have little funds. The abortion mob are skilled parliamentarians, well organized, with lots of money.

In the N.Y. Times of Aug. 20, an article by Fred Shapiro commented: "There seems to be this fundamental difference in tactics between the two factions: the antiabortionists send campaign workers and canvassers; the proabortionists send money..."

Since the elections, the pro-life people have continued their campaign of education, and the analogy below is one of their best pieces.

### SLAVERY, 1857

Although he may have a heart and a brain, and he may be a human life biologically, an unborn baby is not a son. The Dred Scott decision by the U.S. Supreme Court has made that clear.

A black man only becomes a legal person when he is set free. Before that time, we should not concern ourselves about him because he has no legal rights.

If you think that slavery is wrong, then nobody is forcing you to be a slave-owner. But don't impose your morality on somebody else!

A man has a right to do what he wants with his own property.

### ABORTION 1972

Although he may have a heart and a brain, and he may be a human life biologically, an unborn baby is not a legal person. Our courts will soon make that clear.

A baby only becomes a legal person when he is born. Before that time we should not concern ourselves about him because he has no legal rights.

If you think abortion is wrong, then nobody is forcing you to have one. But don't empose your morality on somebody else!

A woman has a right to do what she wants with her own body.

### ABORTION ANALOGY

Isn't slavery really something merciful? After all, every black man has a right to be protected. Isn't it better never to be set free than to be sent unprepared, and ill-equipped, into a cruel world? (Spoken by someone already free.)

Isn't abortion really something merciful? After all, every baby has a right to be wanted. Isn't it better never to be born than to be sent alone and unloved into a cruel world? (Spoken by someone already born.)

The callousness of American reaction to the killing of the unborn hit a new peak as comedy in a recent show, MAUDE. In 1945 I was stationed in Germany, near the Dachau concentration camp. American minds were heavy with "The only good German is a dead German," mostly because of the killings in Dachau, Auschwitz, etc. I thought, and still do, that most Germans never believed the rumors about the concentration camps; and if they had they were helpless to do anything about them. But just 27 years later, the destruction of the unborn child becomes comedy in the United States!

Two good books about abortion are recommended for those concerned about the unborn: Abortion Handbook by Dr. and Mrs. Willke; and Respectable Killing... The New Abortion Imperative, by K. D. Whitehead. Abortionists are organized to increase the slaughter, and to make it acceptable. The Pro Life people are working to keep men sane and civilized, through their presentation of abortion or what it is. Do get the books, and spread them.

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