

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



We begin the new year in somewhat of an ideological shambles. Neither the liberals nor the conservatives seem to have clear ideas or articulate spokesmen.

This holds true both in the political as well as in the ecclesiastical spheres of interest.

Mr. Nixon undoubtedly will be inaugurated for his second term with the same precision as he was nominated, but I'll bet a dollar to a dime that his inaugural speech will be a bland blend of both arch-conservative and cautious liberal sentiments.

And the statements these days by Pope Paul and most prelates, both Catholic and of other churches, both in America and abroad, follow this same pattern.

There just aren't people like the staunch conservative Cardinal Ottaviani or the progressive Cardinal Suenens, the outspoken anti-Communist Father Charles Coughlin or the war-critic Father Daniel Berrigan who have strong ideas and clear words these days.

The nation, the world, and the church all seem slumped into a lukewarm mush.

Progress ordinarily entails risk. In the past the liberals were willing to chance the risk to attain their goal — and the conservatives invariably warned that the goal wasn't worth the risk.

In the recent past, however, some 'liberals' resorted to shouting epithets — "Fascist" at every patriot, "pig" at every police officer, "imperialist" at every GI, and a string of obscenities at anybody in earshot — and conservatives replied with clubs, tear gas and one more vote for Mr. Nixon.

Within the church a parallel tendency can also be noted.

The flush of freedom after the Vatican Council of ten years ago produced a bizarre crop of "underground Masses" and banners in place of statues. Now we're back to Latin Masses and Gregorian chant.

But in both the secular and in the sacred spheres, goals seem to be forgotten.

Ten years ago President Kennedy said we wanted to go to the moon, and we went there.

Ten years ago Pope John wanted to open some windows, and entire walls came tumbling down.

But now we have neither clear goals nor clear directions — for either church or state.

One of the great possibilities in our present diocesan Year of Renewal, in my opinion, can be to extricate ourselves, at least in this twelve county area, from this dead-center situation. There is also, as Bishop Hogan indicates in his Pastoral Perspectives column, an international, interdenominational possibility for a similar breakthrough in the Key '73 program.

President Nixon acknowledged four years ago that our greatest problem as a nation is at root a spiritual problem — and he proposed a spiritual remedy. Accurate as he was in his diagnosis, he should have had the wisdom to recognize that no statesman, no matter how qualified or sincere, can provide the spiritual resources by government decision.

The spiritual strength we need can come, as Jesus once taught us, only from within us.

Only when there is a renewal of that strength in us as individuals can we hope to see a renewal of vitality in both church and state.

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



One of the joys of old friendships is the mutual remembrance of the days of yore. The remembering has to be discreet because recalling old times before younger people frequently irritates them.

However old friends, among themselves, enjoy an almost sensuous savor of the humor of the past. This is true among ex-service men as they meet. It is frequently true of schoolmates. It is doubly true among older priests who served together in sundry parishes.

In the days of yore, pastors were Lords as well as Shepherds. Their assistants were limited adjutants, and far from our present day co-equals. There were weaknesses in the system, but there were strengths and joys and efficiencies which few of the young today would be capable of enjoying.

In 1938, Father Kress and I succeeded Fathers John Brill and Gerald Kelly at the church in Ithaca. The late Father Don Cleary was chaplain at Cornell, but lived with us at the rectory. The Pastor was Father William Byrne, who would sign memoranda with a firm "W.B." It was both a signature and a declaration of suzerainty.

Father W.B. was an interesting combination of many qualities. He was as precise as a diamond cutter in his thoughts and in his diction. He spoke in syllogisms with a nuance of expression so perfect that when he finished his never longer than seven minutes sermon, one could almost quote him verbatim. His passion for order and exactness gave the impression of a human IBM machine. Yet though his manner was austere and meticulous, through some grace he was remarkably gentle and soothing to the sick and the troubled.

Father Byrne had an expression: "DO IT NOW! THERE IS DANGER IN DELAY." And he lived it to the ultimate. If he wrote a letter at 8:45 in the evening, he trotted to the post office at 9:00 to mail it immediately.

The "DO IT NOW" theory has many good points. For example, Pat Costa had a fine article in the Dec. 6 Courier Journal on that dreadful abortion pitch which was the core of the Maude

TV program of the previous week. And with great practicality, Pat listed the stations and the advertisers' names and addresses so we could write expressing our dismay. I intended to write once to the sponsors. And probably so did many of the readers. "DO IT NOW!" came as an echo from Fr. Byrne. "DO IT LATER" whispered Old Adam, who knows that "later" usually becomes "never." The fact is I never did write to the sponsors until Christmas day, and what impelled the writing was the adage from the Purducat-Trumptet: "Do yourself what you ask the other fellow to do."

1973 is just beginning. Here are a few "DO IT NOWS" to help many of us. 1) Go to confession. 2) Visit some sick or neglected person. 3) Pay those delayed bills. 4) Bring your will up to date. (People who don't make a will often have their precious goods squandered by the most unlikely people. If you are a male retreatant, why not include Notre Dame Retreat House, where so much good is done?) 5) Write those post-Christmas thank-you notes. 6) Write a letter to the Editor, eg. of the Courier or the Catholic Digest or your local paper, or even to me; or to the broadcasters. Give thanks where thanks are due, eg. for the Walton Family; and blame, eg. for Maude. 7) Express your thanks to one who has been kind or helpful. (About a dozen years ago I remembered a little Miss Louise Elder, who was a perennial librarian at the public library in Auburn. I decided to write my thanks, recalling her kindness to so many of us children who had haunted the library. At the writing, she was an invalid, so I followed up the letter with a personal visit to her in a nursing home. Her happiness was so great I was a little ashamed I had delayed expressing my thanks for so many years.)

A few months ago a friend wrote to me on the occasion of the death of a mutual friend: "As I grow older, I find I have delayed too long seeing the friends I keep intending to see; and doing the things I keep intending to do. Until it is too late."

So as we enter 1973, it is good to ponder on Fr. Byrne's adage: "DO IT NOW. THERE IS DANGER IN DELAY!"

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