

FR. HENRY ATWELL

## Toward Tomorrow



A recent newspaper cartoon showed customs officers waiting at their stations — one station was marked for POWs and the other for "Draft Dodgers" but that gate was closed.

President Nixon has stated his emphatic opposition to amnesty, against any welcome home for those young Americans who chose exile rather than killing in the Vietnam war.

Newsweek magazine begins its report on the subject: "The debate is as old as the Republic itself, and the searing moral dilemma that lies at its core has always set those who have served their conscience in wartime against those who have served both their conscience and their flag."

I don't think that states the case correctly.

Those who followed their conscience against the war were convinced that by resisting that war they were actually serving their flag and our nation far better than by subservience.

The debate is really not about two different groups — one that betrayed the nation and another that served it, but rather about two groups who chose to serve our nation in different ways.

We who boast that our America is "one nation, under God" must never slip into the notion that government decree is the final decision.

Our whole process of the Nuremberg trials after World War II is lasting evidence that we as Americans officially insist that the final decision is in the individual's conscience and not in blind obedience to national policy.

True loyalty to our nation is when we serve its best interests even when the

nation either does not know what is for its best interests or has even chosen to act contrary to those interests.

As Christians we have responsibilities even beyond our duties as citizens. Certainly one of these duties is that of reconciliation. I can think of no duty more urgent than that at this present time. Our nation has probably never been so divided and polarized on so many different topics than as at this present time. Rather than widening the gap and deepening the wounds, we Christian people must do all we can both individually and together to provide opportunities for people of divergent viewpoints to speak to each other and to listen to each other.

The amnesty issue is especially sensitive at this time because so many people are involved — estimates vary but Newsweek lists 70,000 young Americans in exile, 10,000 in jail, 100,000 who failed to register at all and as many as 200,000 people of all ages who have been arrested for their anti-war activity and their cases are in many instances still pending. So the grand total is close to 400,000 and there's hardly a family that isn't in one way or another affected by the ultimate resolution of this vexing question.

President Nixon, in announcing the ceasefire in Vietnam, spoke several times about his achieving a "peace with honor."

I think it would be a great tragedy to change that into a "peace with dishonor" if we simply dismissed the sincere and strong convictions of 400,000 Americans by presidential say-so. If we can dispatch Dr. Kissinger to Peking and Hanoi and offer multi-millions of dollars in reparations to those we called our enemies, I think we must do something significant in reparation and reconciliation for those who are, by birth and in their hearts, Americans.

FR. PAUL J. CUDDY

## On The Right Side



The late Father Byrne of Ithaca had a slogan: "Do it now. There is danger in delay!" A reader in Mt. Morris evidently "does it now," for she wrote: "When I read your column in the COURIER this morning (Jan. 17) I note that you credit Mary, Queen of Scots, with the beautiful prayer that ended your column. This prayer I have always believed was written by Mother Janet Stuart of the Society of the Sacred Heart. . . . If I am wrong, forgive me. If you were misled, I know you would want to know the truth. . . . Keep up the good work in the COURIER. It reaches such a wide segment of people who look to it for comfort and stability in these years so full of confusion and questioning. . . ."

I was grateful for the letter, and both erred if there was a factual inaccuracy. While I am meticulous about qualifying my opinions so they are obviously personal opinions, I try to be scrupulously accurate when making a statement of fact.

Now, the column of Jan. 17 did state as a fact that the Prayer of Mary Stuart was written by the Scottish Queen. The doubt was presented from Mt. Morris on Jan. 17. So began the research. A few years ago I addressed the local branch of the International Business Women's Club, and recalled that the prayer was said at the opening of the meeting. I asked Mrs. Olive McIntyre, an active member, if she knew the history of the prayer. She said that she thought it was written by a Mary Stewart of Colorado. So with Mary Stuart the Queen out, and Mother Stuart the Religious out, and an unknown Mary of Colorado in the lead, I was delighted to receive a letter from Mrs. Neil C. Hickey on Feb. 3, with further information.

Many Rochesterians will remember kindly the late Neil Hickey and his

wife Noreen Callahan who were active in Catholic circles some years back. Since the address she gave is RR 2, Combermere, Ont., Canada, and her brother is Father John Callahan, I presume she is with the Secular Institute of the Baroness De Hueck (now Mrs. Eddie Doherty) where her brother is the spiritual director. Mrs. Hickey wrote from Canada on Jan. 28:

Knowing you are a man who likes facts, thought you would be interested in the origin of the "Mary Stewart Collect," which you included in your Jan. 17 column. This is from Ontario Women's Institute Story, and has been adopted by the Women's Institutes as their opening prayer at meetings, etc. . . .

"Miss Stewart was born in 1876 in Ohio, and moved with her parents to Georgetown, Colo. when quite young. After graduation from the U. of Colorado she became principal of the high school at Longmont, Colo. Here she joined a Women's Club.

"Miss Stewart wrote the Collect as a prayer for the day, and called it a 'Collect for Club Women' because she felt that women working together in an organization was something new, and that perhaps they had need for special petition and meditation of their own. It was offered for publication in 1904 and has been adopted throughout the world by English-speaking women."

I am grateful to all who showed interest in accuracy, and rejoice in the information sent by Noreen C. Hickey.

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