

FR. HENRY ATWELL
**Toward
Tomorrow**



Ash Wednesday—one of the few days we have to fast and abstain now. Old-style Lent meant egg sandwich every noon, no nibbling between meals and no late-evening snack.

Some will grumble that the Church has let us get soft, the Church is "too permissive," they say.

The reverse is actually the fact.

If penance really meant nothing more than restrictions on diet, then that was a soft religion.

The Church in our time, as it really has tried to do in all past times too, summons us to break down the idols, the false gods in which we find our security and plunge out toward a God who demands justice and mercy.

Most of the rhetoric spouted out these days against amnesty proposals reveals that the United States is as steeped in national idol worship as were the ancient Canaanites or Babylonians.

This opinion is not just the musing of an old country pastor.

Senator Mark Hatfield (and he's a Republican) spoke at the National Prayer Breakfast at the nation's Capitol on February 1.

What he said deserves more than passing notice:

"As we gather at this prayer breakfast, let us beware of the real danger of misplaced allegiance, if not outright idolatry, to the extent we fail to distinguish between the god of an American civil religion and the God who reveals Himself in the Holy Scriptures and in Jesus Christ.

"If we as leaders appeal to the god of civil religion, our faith is in a small and exclusive deity, a loyal spiritual Advisor to power and prestige, a Defender of only the American nation, the object of a national folk religion devoid of moral content. But if we pray to the Biblical God of justice and righteousness, we fall under God's judgment for calling upon His name but failing to obey His commands.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ confronts

false petitioners who disobey the Word of God: Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things I say? (Luke 6:46)

"God tells us that acceptable worship and obedience are expressed by specific acts of love and justice: 'Is not this what I require of you . . . to loose the fetters of injustice . . . to snap every yoke and set free those who have been crushed? . . . Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house, clothing the naked when you meet them . . . ? (Isaiah 58:6-7)

"We sit here today as the wealthy and the powerful. But let us not forget that those who follow Christ will more often find themselves not with the comfortable majorities but with miserable minorities.

"Today our prayers must begin with repentance. Individually we must seek forgiveness for the exile of love from our hearts. And corporately, as a people, we must turn in repentance from the sin that has scarred our national soul. If my people . . . shall humble themselves; and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways . . . then I will forgive their sins and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

"We need a 'confessing church' — a body of people who confess Jesus as Lord and are prepared to live by their confession. Lives lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ at this point in our history may well put us at odds with values of our society, abuses of political power, and cultural conformity of our church. We need those who seek to honor the claims of their discipleship — those who live in active obedience to the call: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds. (Romans 12:2) We must continually be transformed by Jesus Christ and take his commands seriously.

Those are the words of Senator Hatfield to the nation's leaders — Cabinet members, Senators, Representatives, Court officials. What he told them we need to hear too and, in his message, he points to the kind of prayer and penance it will take a lifetime of Lents to fulfill.

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



On Saturday, Feb. 17, Father Lane phoned: "Did you know Father Barney Newcomb's brother, Gordon, died? Funeral is Monday." Now, I almost never go to funerals or wakes outside Hornell. I wish I could, but it is impossible to do all we wish and to do our duty too. However, I had intended to take Monday off, so decided to visit the Newcombs, and to go to the funeral.

Like my patron, Saint Paul, I make a point to visit confreres en route anywhere. So I stopped at Penn Yan at 5:30 p.m., Sunday. Father William Cosgrove invited me for supper. I had intended to stay anyway, but it was nice to be invited. And supper with Father C. is always a dialectic delight. Which simply means he throws out outrageous sociological or theological bait to try to jerk me from my sound stance for Catholic fidelity.

Left Penn Yan about 7:30 and was thrilled to find the FM radio band in the car had a glorious polyphonic Kyrie Eleison floating through the car. It was from Ithaca. I thought, "This must be a High Church Episcopalian service, since cultured Episcopalians along with the Lutherans are preserving the finest Church music." After the Kyrie, a section from Corinthians was read; and I was almost sure it was Episcopalian because the preacher kept using the term, "Saint"; e.g. Saint Paul, Saint John, Saint Augustine. After Corinthians came a beautiful hymn in English. It was soul stirring music. And I congealed, recalling the Camp Fire music inflicted by God knows whom upon a helpless Catholic people, in their liturgy.

About 8:30 I met all the Newcomb clan at the funeral home, said a prayer for Gordon, renewed friendships; and left at 9 to spend the night in Montezuma, which is 12 miles away and has the second best mattress in the diocese, old but so comforting. The pastor, Father Kress, was expecting me, so I asked, "Are you up to a half hour's walk in the fresh air?" He was, and we returned just in time to catch the 10 p.m. TV brain teaser, Firing Line.

Now, Monday was a school holiday, and Father K. was anxious to unwind.

So after the funeral we met at Holy Family, Auburn, to go to Syracuse for a movie. Funerals are always a mixture of faith, hope, charity and sadness. And there was something beautiful to see in this close-knit family, with a brother, Father Bernard, and a nephew, Father Casper; concelebrating the Mass, and the musical brother, Frank playing the organ and singing from the choir loft as the whole family united in the Mass of the Resurrection.

Finding a satisfactory matinee movie is not easy. We settled on Sounder, a slow-moving but touching movie about a black family which was treated shamefully in 1933 Louisiana.

After Sounder it was only 3:30, and Father K. had said: "I want this a completely relaxing day", so I suggested we go to St. Stephen's, Geneva, for supper. The household, Fathers Lane and Endres and Deacon Paul Ryan (Fr. Tormey was visiting his missionary brother in South America) is especially congenial. And I would be 25 miles nearer Hornell, for my return.

En route to Geneva, via Auburn from Syracuse, we approached Weedsport. I said: "Eileen Chichello is all fired up about CEDAR. Let's stop in." Mrs. C. and husband, architect Sam, have been friends to me for years. Mrs. C. frequently agrees with my thinking; and in her less logical moments, doggedly disagrees. The problem about CEDAR, a kind of umbrella organization of CCD groups: seems to be a shortage of money. The program has two co-ordinators: Barbara Schmucker and Sister Ellen Ward. Their two salaries total: \$18,000 to \$20,000.

I cautiously suggested to Mrs. C. "Why don't the co-ordinators cut down on their salaries?" After all, this is a work of religion.

She retorted with asperity: "These are professional women! And they work 14 and 16 hours a day. Wonderfully dedicated." I replied, "I wonder if that isn't one weakness in our CCD programs. The emphasis on 'professionalism' I consider the Church a family rather than an ecclesiastical General Motors."

Saint Mary, Elmira, Notes Centenary

By CHARLES RANDISI and JOHN DASH

Elmira — The 100th anniversary of St. Mary's Church, Elmira was acknowledged on Sunday, March 4. Bishop Joseph L. Hogan was principal celebrant of the centenary Mass, with Fathers John J. Leary, pastor, and Thomas Corbett, associate pastor, among the concelebrants.

No big celebration is planned this year, said Father Leary. However, informal get-togethers were held in the parish, and parish retreats will be held this year.

A centenary book commemorating St. Mary's history is also in the works.

The parish, however, really dates back 101 years, to a time when the area was under the jurisdiction of Bishop Steven V. Ryan, CM, the second Bishop of Buffalo.

In February of 1872, Bishop Ryan assigned Father James McManus to build the parish and be its pastor. Less than three months later the first church building was opened and blessed by the Buffalo prelate.

Father McManus served the community for eight years, was reassigned to a pastorate in Batavia, and was succeeded by Father Michael O'Dwyer in 1880.

Father O'Dwyer held the pastorate during a time of great growth and turbulence, not only within the official Church but in

the nation itself.

A curious note in Father Robert McNamara's book, The Diocese of Rochester, states that during the Spanish-American War "Even that old soldier of fortune Father Michael O'Dwyer . . . praised but did not positively encourage the men who volunteered from his parish."

The years 1896-1897 saw the Diocese of Rochester wrest the four Southern Tier Counties from the Diocese of Buffalo. St. Mary's now came under the jurisdiction of Bishop Bernard McQuaid.

In 1898 the parish welcomed the Sisters of St. Joseph and built both a school and a convent.

Earlier, in 1875, the community had built a second church which stands today.

In 1908, Father O'Dwyer was succeeded by Father Jeremiah Moriarty, whose pastorate spanned two world wars.

Father Moriarty, who had been Father O'Dwyer's assistant, was responsible for the installation of a church organ and a thorough redecoration of the church. He was an active promoter of lay groups and started the parish Holy Name Society, one of the first Catholic Boy Scout groups in the diocese, a men's and women's choir and a vested boys' choir.

Father Moriarty died in 1943 and was succeeded by Father Thomas J. Toole.

Almost immediately after he



St. Mary's, Elmira

became pastor, Father Toole surprised the diocese by appointing a director of physical education and social recreation for the children of the parish.

In 1950 he constructed an auditorium-gymnasium and at the time of his death in 1958, was completing plans for a new rectory.

The following year Father Thomas J. Manley was appointed Wednesday, March 7, 1973.

ed to head the parish. During WWII he had taken part in the invasion of Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, southern France, the Rhineland and central Europe.

For his chaplaincy he was awarded the Bronze Star, the American Defense Ribbon, the European Theater Ribbon and seven battle stars.

Later, however, a close friend recalled the priest "saw no

glory in war and literally threw away the badges of honor to help him forget the agony of that era."

Father Manley's tenure was brief: five years. But during that time he renovated and enlarged the parish school, improved the auditorium, renovated a convent for the Atonement nuns who teach religion to children of the parish who attend public schools and built a new rectory.

He died in 1965, and was succeeded by the parish's present pastor.

Father Leary was born Oct. 8, 1910; the son of John J. and Mary Sweeney Leary in Geneva.

He attended St. Stephen School and DeSales High School, both in Geneva, and received his seminary training at St. Andrew and St. Bernard's Seminaries.

Ordained by then Archbishop Edward Mooney, in old St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1937, Father Leary's first assignment was to an assistant pastorate at St. John the Evangelist Church in Rochester.

In 1948 he was appointed spiritual director of St. Bernard Seminary. Bishop James E. Kearney appointed him pastor of St. John the Baptist Church, Elmira in 1961.

In 1965 he became pastor of St. Mary's.

Among his other accomplishments, Father Leary has opened a catechetical center.