

FR. HENRY ATWELL

## Toward Tomorrow



We are so jaded by brutality and violence that we tend to be surprised if we don't hear about it. One high school lad told me recently, "People have always fought each other, they always will."

We had been told there would be a "peace dividend" when the Vietnam war ended and now that we are, to all practical purposes, out of there, we find that we increasingly scratch at each other here at home. Old prejudices and animosities surface quickly.

We are still so much in the habit of searching for scapegoats to blame for our frustrations and failures that we blame the Communists, the welfare "chiselers," the President, the draft evaders, black people — always it's "them" we blame but certainly not ourselves.

The new president of the National Council of Churches commented soon after his recent election, "If we ever reach the point where we think of ourselves as not accountable for our actions, then we're on our way to our own graveyard."

The reporter who interviewed him for the New York Post said you had to strain to hear him say that last word.

Mr. Carey, the reporter explained, is not the fire and brimstone, doomsday preacher. He speaks clearly but not emotionally. He looks beyond the present moment and he's not very happy about the distant vision. Mr. Carey is the first black man to be elected president of the NCC but he is not noted as a black militant.

He told the Post reporter that he thinks black-white relations in this country have gone "downhill."

"I see it with my own four children. When I was coming up, I had friends across racial lines. My children, some of whom go to school with whites, do not. They are in school together, but they are not really together." He emphasizes the final "together."

Why have things worsened?

Mr. Carey said, "During the heyday of the civil rights movement we were pressuring for fringe benefits. Give me a cup of coffee, let me ride in a bus. But as much as I respect Martin Luther King, the whole emphasis of the non-violent movement was to change the

white man's heart, then he would part with some of his goodies.

"But for me the issue has never been violence or non-violence. It's justice. And power. What we're talking now is a real sharing of the pie. Now it's jobs and suburban property values, and that's where you get the uptightness."

And those are the thoughts of a quiet, soft-spoken man — who says "God is not dead but very much alive in all those people, black and white, who seek justice."

As children we were taught to add the pledge to our flag immediately after our prayers and we committed ourselves to "liberty and justice for all."

In recent years many of us have either forgotten the pledge or soured on it — we have too many of us become vindictive, harsh, unforgiving people. We have clutched at our baubles, the idols of our affluence and thought thereby the American dream had come true. But all the evidence around us points out how tentative our achievements are. All that we possess, all that provided us our security, all this now seems so fragile.

God, as in the past, is again at work guiding his Church to face up to this newest situation. A whole spate of authors now speak about "liberation ethics" as the moral imperative of our present era. Even the so-called "new morality" of a decade ago is already inadequate, obsolete, because it focused chiefly on individual moral questions whereas so much of life today is determined, whether we choose to admit it or not, not so much by the right decisions of individuals but by massive, anonymous, impersonal structures and systems, political, industrial and sometimes even ecclesiastical.

St. Paul long ago referred to the "principalities and powers" and just recently Pope Paul spoke about the reality of a Devil and many demons. What they see, which we do not see, is a monstrous force which cannot be held in check by mere individual good behavior, necessary as that is. Our task today is to work patiently and persistently to achieve at last a whole new way of life that recognizes the rights of everyone, everywhere, always.

FR. PAUL J. CUDDY

## On The Right Side



I have just finished the COURIER-JOURNAL for March 7. Father William Byrne used to say: "Do it now. There is danger in delay." Frequently I read an article and intend to write a comment to an interested person or party. But delay dissipates the good intention. So here goes . . .

To Father Leonard Kelly of Fairport:

I have just finished your homily To The Editor, regarding the Marriage Encounter Program, after your Canandaigua Notre Dame Retreat House experience. Coming from you who have manned the bastion against the brash, the wily and the insidious enemies of the Church, it is reassuring to have such a good report about encounter.

Of your observations this strikes me most: "The 44 hours involved an experience which no one can adequately describe or believe without being part of it." Your testimony is the finest advertisement for the program. I am glad it is in the Letters column, because more people read Letters than any other part of a paper. Greetings to Father Win Kellner.

To Miss Carol Welcher, Geneva:

Recently I read in the Courier-Journal that your DeSales High School in Geneva is using the C-J as part of their religion course. So I am interested in the questionnaire which you sent, and thank you for the opportunity to explain many things.

Regarding Question 5: "Do you think your column will benefit high school kids?" I reply: "Candidly, I think if they read it regularly they will get a wealth of knowledge, inspiration and some entertainment. For example, with so many arbitrary changes in religious life styles, our H.S. kids are sometimes puzzled, and some I find resentful. When OTRSide column recommends Muggeridge's Something Beautiful for God, it introduces readers to a modern yet traditional religious life style which is profoundly spiritual and evangelical. Just such a discovery gives youngsters, and oldsters too, courage and hope.

To WHEC-TV, Rochester:

About 8 each morning I give a four-minute program of local hospital news, a brief prayer and an occasional pertinent announcement over the loud speaking system. This morning Rochesterian Sister Andre Streb, one of our beautiful Sister-nurses, phoned from the floor: "Will you please announce Mass is televised at 8:30 from Channel 10? Many patients like it." So I did.

Later, about 10:30 I met a terribly crippled lady at the Canisteo rectory, five miles from Hornell. She is the mother of the pastor, and rarely can get to Mass. She beamed contentedly: "Well, I went to Mass at 8:30, thanks to Channel 10, Rochester. I am too crippled to get out, so every Sunday I am able to have Mass through the TV station. It's wonderful."

A bell rang in my belfry reminding me: "Stop fustering around and write to Channel 10 that many people are delighted to have the Sunday Mass." So this note is a thank you and the Basilian Fathers in behalf of a great many people who cannot get out to mass but who have Mass regularly — thanks to you.

To Readers Digest:

What an anomaly is your March Digest! Considering your tradition of fidelity to Judaic-Christian values, the Alexander article on abortion is regrettable. Recently I met a worker in a Rochester hospital who worked in the operating room. She was shocked as she said: "I think the aborted baby was well over the legal six-months. What should I do?" Had she asked you what would you have suggested?

On the other hand, I was glad for the article on Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Mother of the Poorest of the poor. Putting Mother Teresa's Pro-Life magnanimity along side the abortionist Anti-Life egoism makes a queer contrast. Did you notice the grim humor in the box advertising April's Digest? It was on the concluding page of the abortion article, at the bottom of the page, and read: "What can we do to protect our children?" Anyway, thank you for the article about Mother Teresa.



Photos by Susan Mc Kinney

### Indians in the Classroom

Mike Tschuderer, Bill Burecree, and Chuck Foose, left to right above, act out events in Indian history while classmates and visiting teachers look on. The activities were part of an afternoon program, March 14, investigating innovations in humanities in junior high and non-graded primary classes, at St. Lawrence School on North Greece Road.



## Ruling Shows Cynicism, Black Physician Charges

North Brunswick, N.J. (RNS) — A black physician from Boston warned here that a new era of "annihilationism" is following the Jan. 22 ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court which struck down the nation's anti-abortion laws.

Addressing more than 700 persons attending the first annual convention of the New Jersey Right to Life Committee, Dr. Mildred Jefferson, who is president of Boston's Value of Life Committee, said the decision reflects "an elitist philosophy espoused by tired and cynical people . . . who hold that only the perfect, the privileged and the planned have a right to live."

"Their solution to our perplexing social problems," she charged, "is to exterminate the problem people or to encourage them to exterminate themselves."

One of several speakers to address the 12-hour session, Dr. Jefferson was joined by Martin McKernan, Jr., a Camden attorney and counsel to the National Right to Life Committee; Mrs. Valerie Vance Dillon, former associate director of the Trenton diocese's Family Life Bureau; and Mrs. Sandra Simmons, wife of an Episcopal priest who is vice-president of Minnesota's Concerned for Life.

In addition, the day-long con-

vention was attended by at least 10 members of the New Jersey legislature, where there was introduced recently by 21 Senators a resolution calling upon the U.S. Congress to propose a constitutional amendment to effectuate the protection of unborn humans.

Dr. Jefferson, in her address, declared that the Supreme Court's abortion ruling has turned back some 5,700 years of human development and 24 centuries needed to establish the practice of medicine.

She charged that the Court has become an "enemy of the Republic" in leaving the "right of death decision" to a woman and a physician. "Who will get the right next?" she asked, adding that "if we accept any human life as disposable, we can no longer defend any human life."

McKernan, in his keynote address, traced the history of legal decisions which, he said, had in the past upheld the rights of the unborn. He charged that the high Court has chosen "to write a whole class of human beings out of the Constitution," and asked, "who will be next?"

The South Jersey attorney told his audience that a constitutional amendment is being prepared which will grant protection to all human life.