



TOWARD TOMORROW

Fr. Henry Atwell

Holy Week is a time we traditionally think of the sufferings of Christ.

Perhaps we tend to think of much of his past sufferings rather than his present sufferings.

If we take to heart his words to Saul on the Damascus road, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" then we must admit that he continues to suffer when people suffer.

I recently read about Private Charles Gordon who described how he and a few other U.S. soldiers were herding a batch of prisoners who were unarmed toward a ravine.

Gordon then says, "When we reached the entrance to the ravine, the prisoners drew back, frightened, and began to talk excitedly amongst themselves, then, glancing apprehensively over their shoulders; they entered, one by one, and huddled against the far bank.

"One of the prisoners had very blue eyes and didn't seem frightened at all. He began to talk to his comrades, smiling and shaking his head. I couldn't understand what he was saying, but I had an idea he was telling them not to worry because there was nothing to fear.

"Suddenly the blue-eyed man looked at me and smiled, and before I knew what I was doing, I smiled back at him. Then Sergeant Pelton gave the signal to fire and the rifles began cracking and spraying bullets from side to side. I took steady aim at the blue-eyed man. For some reason I wanted him to be killed instantly. He bent double, clutched his belly with his hands and said, 'Oh! . . . Oh!' like a boy who has eaten green plums. Then he raised his hands in the air, and I saw that most of his fingers were shot away and were dripping blood like water running out of a leaky faucet. 'Oh! . . . Oh!' he kept saying in an amazed voice, 'Oh! . . . Oh!' Then he turned around three times and fell on back, his head lower than

his feet, blood flowing from his belly, insistently, like a tide, across his mud-caked tunic; staining his throat and his face. Twice more he jerked his hands upward and twice he made that soft, shocked sound. Then his hands and his eyelids quit twitching.

"I stood there spraying bullets from side to side in accordance with instructions. . . . 'Everything I was ever taught to believe about mercy, justice, and virtue is a lie,' I thought. . . . 'but the biggest lie of all are the words "God is Love." That is really the most terrible lie that man ever thought of."

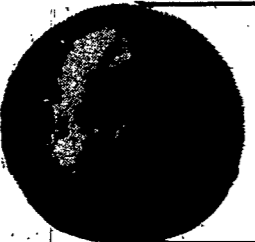
Did Jesus perhaps act like that blue-eyed boy who smiled and then got nailed to the cross? his hands, his holy face, his feet "dripping blood like water running out of a leaky faucet"?

Did Jesus many centuries later look down at the blue-eyed boy who tried to tell his companions there was "nothing to fear" and identify himself with the lad who got shot or the lad who did the shooting?

And lest we think the Private Charles Gordon story is a product of our recent, permissive culture, we should know that the Gordon story was written in 1933 — forty years ago, to describe someone our father's age, even our grandfather's age.

The problem of faith is, therefore, not just an aftermath of Pope John or his Vatican Council. People who ever did any serious thinking, as Private Gordon did while shooting the blue-eyed lad and his companions, have always had to wrestle with the mystery of human suffering and the Christian teaching that "God is Love."

That's why we need Holy Week, to remember that Jesus knew it wasn't a lie, no matter what his Christians might do later on. He knew that "God is Love" and that we serve God best when we seek out our bleeding, needy neighbor and comfort him.



THE SLOT MAN

Carmen Viglucci

Probably the worst thing about junk mail is that we must go through it or we might miss an occasional gem such as offered by a recent mailing.

There amidst all the self-seeking, self-proclaiming waste was an envelope containing a poster, lapel pins and wallet cards.

The poster, bearing the slogan; "We have changed laws, now let us change hearts," is decorated with a heart, half black and half white. Also included were some tiny lapel pins of the hearts.

The card declares:

"I am an American, I believe that all men are brothers. I am united with, I care about, and I am devoted to every person of every race, of every nation, of every creed. Regarding race, nationality or creed, I will treat every man the same, welcome any responsible person into my neighborhood, my social group, or my family in friendship or in marriage. I decry discrimination of every single kind, the hurts which I may have inflicted on others because of bigotry or racism."

The other side of the card reads: "In testimony of these declarations I will wear a black and white heart through all of 1973 to encourage others to

examine themselves, to the end that 1973 may see my nation become a witness to the world of the brotherhood and love which it once promised to mankind."

A. homily, prayer and follow-through all in one.

Petitions supporting the Human Life Amendment have been mailed to every Catholic church, high school, college, seminary, retreat house, convent, hospital and pro-life group, according to the Committee of Ten Million.

Each mailing is accompanied by a release which states that the committee "has distributed 12 tons of these petitions, enough for 30 million signatures."

The Courier-Journal has explained the amendment, introduced by Rep. Lawrence Hogan of Maryland. Known as HJ Res. 261, it is now in the House Judiciary Committee, headed by Rep. Peter Rodino. The gist of the amendment is in Section 1 — "Neither the United States nor any State shall deprive any human being, from the moment of conception, of life without due process of law; nor deny to any human being, from the moment of conception, within its jurisdiction, the equal protection of the laws."

Pontiff Lauds Leper Helpers

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul VI expressed warm regard for men and women who devote their lives to the prevention and cure of leprosy, and to the rehabilitation of the victims of this disease.

Speaking at a private audience with delegates of the General Assembly of the European Society Against Leprosy, the Pope remarked:

"We dare to say that in a society that claims to seek to banish all forms of discrimination, the work for lepers surely constitutes one of the corner-stones of a truly human civilization."

The pontiff observed that "undoubtedly" today, leprosy, or Hansen's disease, is no longer approached with the same fear and repulsion which, he said, once condemned its victims to live as social outcasts and "thus, so deeply wounded in their human dignity," to live "without any hope."

Noting that the Christian church has "always" considered work with leper victims "a privileged sector of the charity," Pope Paul concluded:

"Today, like yesterday, a real Christian community is one which does not hesitate to consecrate its efforts to the rehabilitation of its unhappy brothers."

Discipline Inescapable, Pontiff Says

Vatican City [RNS] — Underscoring what he called the need of "ascetical discipline" in Christian life, Pope Paul said that "self-discipline" was not "an optional recommendation" but "an inescapable requirement" for all Christians.

Speaking at his customary Wednesday general audience (April 4), the pontiff expressed scorn for the "permissive" life — a life he described as one "without obligations, without precepts, without prohibitions."

Such a life, he went on, is a "spontaneous, instinctive, passionate" way of living adopted by those who feel they have been emancipated from "what they consider the "moralistic" traditions of the past.

On the other hand, said the Pope, the Christian life is a "strong" life. "The Lord," he explained, "does not want His children to be weak, sluggish, lazy or soft. He does not want them to be unable to make sacrifices or incapable of bearing the cross."

"Jesus wants strong people to be behind Him," he added.

Asserting that measured and reasonable "self-denial" was a necessary factor in personality development and growth in maturity, Pope Paul said that Christians had an added motive for the practice of self-denial:

"We are sinners. We must strive to avoid sins or repent of them. We must expiate our failings. We must castigate the existing disorder in our lives that stems from sin."

LARGE TYPE BOOKS

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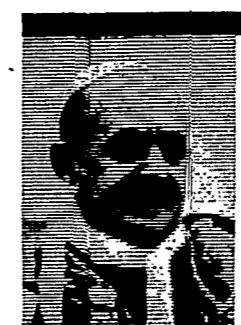
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HAPPY EASTER? HERE'S HOW!

THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE ORIENTAL CHURCH

GIVE SOME HAPPINESS TO A CHILD

When are you happiest? Happiness lies in giving. You're happiest when you give yourself to the people who need you most. . . . A mother, for instance, hums with happiness when she bathes and dresses her baby. A good nurse always has time for a smile. Good fathers whistle at their work. . . . The best sort of giving involves more than writing checks—still, how better can you help the children now who need you overseas? Boys and girls who are blind, lepers, deaf-mutes, orphans—your money gifts, large and small, will feed them, teach them, cure them, give them a chance in life. . . . Want to be happier this Easter? Give some happiness to a child. You'll be happy, too!

HAPPINESS IS A SISTER OF YOUR OWN

In Erumathala, south India, a young Indian girl in training to be a Sister of the Destitute will learn, among other things, how to care for orphans. Her training costs \$300 all told (\$12.50 a month, \$150.00 a year), a small investment for a Sister's lifetime of service. Like to be her sponsor? We'll send you her name and she will write to you.

HAPPINESS IS A HOME OF THEIR OWN

For only \$200 in Ernakulam you can build a decent house for a family that now sleeps on the sidewalks. Simply send your check to US. Cardinal Parecattil will write to thank you also.

HAPPINESS IS CLOTHING

Brighten the heart of a blind boy in the Gaza Strip (where Samson lived). \$3 gives him shoes. \$5 clothes, \$10 a set of braille readers!

HAPPINESS IS TO BE EDUCATED

Where there is none in south India, you can build a six-room permanent school for only \$3,200. Archbishop Mar Gregorios will select the village, supervise construction and write to thank you. The children will pray for you, and you may name the school for your favorite saint, in your loved ones' memory!

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