



TOWARD TOMORROW Fr. Henry Atwell

Father Charles Mulligan joined pickets in front of Sibley's downtown department store last week to protest continued sales there of Farah slacks. Several bishops, including Bishop Hogan, have endorsed the strike against the Farah company.

Many Catholics, however, object to priests or other clergymen getting involved in such activities. "They should stick to religion," these people say.

Which then raises the question, "What really is religion?"

One person who's likely to know the answer is Jesus Christ. What did he think religion was supposed to be like?

Turn to any page in the gospels and you will read about the miracles Jesus worked — he gave sight to the blind, he gave hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute. He cast out demons to heal the mentally disturbed, he healed the paralytics so they could walk again. He even raised the dead back to life again. He changed water into wine so a wedding feast could continue, he multiplied loaves and fish so hungry people could have a bit to eat, he arranged for his fishermen-apostles to have a remarkable catch of fish so they would have an adequate income for their families.

And in his sermons, he invariably advised people to pray less and act more.

He told one questioner that the way "to gain eternal life" was to "go and do" what the Good Samaritan did — help a neighbor in need. And Jesus pointedly indicated who not to imitate — the priest and levite hurrying on their way to the Temple services.

Certainly Jesus did not suggest that everybody should cease to pray or worship. He himself gave eloquent example of nights spent in solitary prayer and of regular and devout attendance at synagogue on Sabbath. What he did make crystal clear, however, is that a purely "spiritual" religion is only a half religion.

Jesus used his divine power to assist people in their very down-to-earth, day-to-day needs — food, health, life, income, mental outlook.

He didn't suggest to the blind man that he make a novena or to the crippled fellow that he say the Rosary or that the hungry people "offer it up" and be patient to await a reward in heaven.

During this month of June, the month of the Sacred Heart, we are reminded of the Lord's invitation to learn of him who was meek and humble of heart. What we learn from even a quick glance at his words and his example is that he had a most compassionate human heart.

The lesson is, therefore, patent for anyone with eyes to see — we now in our turn must do all in our

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power to assist people in their very down-to-earth, day-to-day needs — food, health, life, income, mental outlook. If we did this, then, I'm sure, our personal prayers and our rituals for worship together would be far more acceptable.

Pope Paul and the world's Catholic bishops at the Vatican Council emphasized that our works of mercy should be done, not in isolation, but in collaboration with other Christians, indeed with all people engaged in such works: "Such cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be ever increasingly developed . . . to relieve the afflictions of our times, such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing and the unequal distribution of wealth."

So my principal regret about Father Mulligan on the picket line is that I wasn't there with him.



50th Anniversary

Some of the graduating class of 1923 from Immaculate Conception Grammar School swap reminiscences at a recent 50th year reunion. According to Mrs. Eleanor Finn Herrmann, an organizer of reunion, more than one-third of the original class was able to be present for the festivities.

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