

Father Henry A. Atwell, Ecumenist, Editor, Dies

Father Henry Austin Atwell, pastor of St. Agnes Church in Avon, a pioneer in ecumenism here and former editor of the Courier-Journal, died March 24, 1980, at the age of 58. He had suffered a series of heart attacks during the past few years.

A Pontifical Concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial was offered last Thursday morning at St. Agnes Church, with Bishop Matthew H. Clark as principal concelebrant. Bishop Dennis W. Hickey was principal celebrant of the previous evening's Mass of Christ the High Priest. The burial was in St. Agnes Cemetery.

Father Atwell served the Courier-Journal in an editorial capacity for 14 years. Bishop James E. Kearney appointed him assistant editor in 1953, and editor in 1958. He left in October 1967 for the Avon pastorate, on appointment by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen.

In 1965, Father Atwell covered Vatican Council II for the diocesan newspaper, and he became an active promoter for the ecumenical movement which the council launched, a movement of which he had been a local precursor.

From 1972 until 1974 he



Father Atwell in a familiar situation.

was director of the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries (GEM), while remaining pastor of St. Agnes. He stayed with GEM as a consultant, and last fall he was named director of the diocesan Commission on Ecumenism and Inter-religious Affairs. He was well-known among church and synagogue leaders.

He had been director of the Third Order of St. Dominic since 1956, had been chaplain

to the Sisters of the Cenacle during his newspaper years, and was active throughout his priestly life in various civic organizations.

Father Atwell, slight in build, quiet and unaggressive in his approach, had his own way of doing things; conformist, he was not. After three and a half years in the Avon pastorate, he asked his people whether they wanted him to stay. "A pastor," he observed, "easily falls into the

habit of circulating among those who agree with him, without ever hearing from those who don't. Having prepared parishioners young and old for it, he took a poll and received an overwhelming vote of confidence — 929 voting for him to remain. There were 21 "Go!" votes, including two from youngsters who explained, "I think this pole is dumb," and, "I don't like church, anyway."

Father Atwell said he thought that the "stay" votes had put a seal of approval on his ecumenical activities. Within the year (1972), he took on the job of GEM executive, although his health even then was less than robust.

Bishop To Auction Merchandise

Four prominent members of the Catholic community will be auctioneers in the Chancel 21 Auction later this month. Bishop Matthew H. Clark, Father Charles Lavery, president of St. John's Fisher College; Father Richard Kinsky, superintendent of Rochester Catholic schools;

He conducted a number of pilgrimages and tours to far places, and in 1967, he travelled to the Middle East with two photographers, preparing a running feature for the Courier's dull mid-summer days.

Not all of his devices for capturing reader interest were accepted calmly, and reaction, of course, captured more readers. Father Paul J. Cuddy became the standard bearer for the Loyal Opposition: Out of the arguments, private and public, between the two priests, came Father Cuddy's continuing weekly column, "On the Right Side."

The columnist recalled, in a recent conversation, how he, as pastor of St. John's in Clyde, had tried in vain to persuade his parishioners to switch from the Courier to the National Catholic Register, a weekly of unquestioned conservatism. Father Cuddy said he had felt that much of the Courier's reading matter was "leftist, theologically and philosophically, undermining; reflecting far-out causes." The two men debated publicly, drawing large crowds, and they fired letters back and forth.

Came the day, Father Cuddy recalled, when the editor suggested the column, noting that "there are people who think as you do."

Father Atwell, the columnist said, was "most gracious, and the most imperturbable man I ever knew. While we sometimes were in collision, we remained personal friends; we found each other interesting."

In recent years, when Father Atwell was to be absent from his parish, he asked Father Cuddy to fill in for him.

"He had a great deal of polish, savoir faire," Father Cuddy said. "And he was organized, whereas all I had was the strength of my convictions. His letters were cold and calm; mine were written at boiling point."

Father Atwell was born in Syracuse May 1, 1921, son of the late Oswald and Delia Hauser Atwell. His mother died last Feb. 19 at the age of 96.

Brought to Rochester in his childhood, he attended St. Ambrose School, then went to St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries. He was ordained to the priesthood Oct. 19, 1946. He served as assistant pastor of St. Michael's, Newark, and St. John the Evangelist, Greece, before his appointment to the Courier.

He leaves one brother, Paul Atwell of Pittsford, and several nieces and nephews.

Fr. Sullivan to Be Ordained

Rev. Mr. Michael J. Sullivan will be ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Rochester by Bishop Matthew H. Clark on Saturday, April 12, at noon in St. Francis Xavier Church on Bay Street.

The ordination rites will have an unusual flavor in that they will reflect the ethnic cultures of the central city parish which Deacon Sullivan has been serving as an intern. The liturgy will include songs in English, Italian and Spanish, and will feature Black Gospel music. The theme of the rites has been stated as, "Hope in the Lord Now and Forever/Espera en El Señor Ahora y Siempre/Spera nel Signore Ora e Sempre."

The readings for the liturgy will also be in the different languages of the neighborhood.



FATHER SULLIVAN

Deacon Sullivan is the son of Edward and Martha Sullivan of Luce Street in Elmira. He is a graduate of Elmira schools: St. Mary's and Notre Dame High School. He earned a BA in Sociology from St. John Fisher College

and an MDiv from St. Bernard's Seminary.

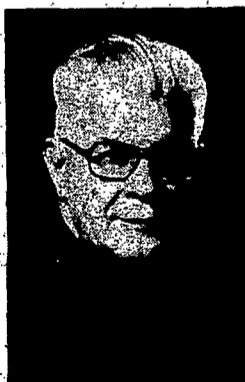
He has been associated with St. Monica's Church, the State School of Industry, St. Michael's in Newark, and Corpus Christi in Rochester. He took his Clinical Pastoral Education at Spring Grove State Hospital in Catonsville, Md., and attended the Language Institute at Georgetown University. In addition, he has studied language in Puerto Rico, and has worked in the Archdiocese of Brooklyn.

Father Sullivan will celebrate a Liturgy of Thanksgiving on April 13 at St. Francis at 10 a.m. A reception will follow both the ordination and the Sunday Mass. The following weekend, Father Sullivan will celebrate a 12:30 p.m. Mass on Sunday, at St. Mary's Church in Elmira, his home parish.

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