



"CAN I SEE YOU A MINUTE BEFORE YOU GET COMFORTABLE, BROTHER?"

On the Line

The Beauty Of Seeing Again

By Bob Considine



"I began going blind when I was 15 or 16 and still in high school," a bright young Buffalo attorney named Peter Cook told us over lunch at the Overseas Press Club. "But it didn't really worry me until I was at the University of Buffalo. There I found myself making sudden turns while swimming in competition, yards before reaching the wall of the pool. I couldn't see the wall."

Cook tried assorted powerful eyeglasses to little avail. He wore contact lenses for a time but they had to be discarded for the simple reason that the corneal tissues of both eyes — the clear thin (1/25th of an inch thick) and coldest part of the human body — had separated from the rest of the eyes and assumed a conical shape.

Somehow, Cook got through his law course and just before his lights went out almost completely he passed the New York State law examinations. He practiced from 1962 to 1964, blind, during which time he listened to the experience of a lawyer friend named Anthony Moscato. Moscato had undergone corneal transplant operations on both of his eyes. One worked fine; the other was a tissue rejection.

"I finally listened to him," Cook told us. "I went down to the Buffalo eye-bank and put my name on the list. I got a call in a week. I must hurry over and pick up two eyes, given to the eye-bank by a donor. The donor, of course, was dead. He or she—I'll never know—had agreed in life to will the eyes to people like myself.

"The eyes had been taken from the dead person within three hours after death. That's why there's no moral and legal debates, as in heart transplants. The heart of a donor is beating when taken. In the case of the eye, the transplant can be a success if, first, the eye is taken within three hours, properly refrigerated and transplanted within 36 hours.

"So with my wife leading me I picked up two eyes. They were contained in a sort of 2-gallon insulated picnic bottle; actually they were strung on wires in a small tube in the core of the bottle, with ice all

around the tube. The bottle had a sign on it: 'Caution, human eyes — handle with care!' I heard a little girl reading it, when we got to the Buffalo airport. She thought it said 'humanize.' I guess it did.

"Anyway, I held the bottle on my lap on the flight to New York. We had all the directions. It was midnight when we got to the hospital at 9 East 91st St., where I had been instructed to leave the eyes with someone at a side door. The place was closed, otherwise. Then we went to a hotel. And the next day I went to the hospital, hoping the fellow I had given the eyes to had kept them refrigerated."

Cook was operated on by one of the fathers of corneal transplantation, Dr. Ramon Castroviejo. A section of Cook's left eye one-quarter inch square was removed delicately and replaced with an exact section of the donor's eye. The operation is done with only a local anesthetic because the cooperation of the patient is needed. He must continue to "look straight ahead." Another patient, on an operating table next to Cook, received the cornea of the other eye Cook had flown to New York.

Several weeks passed. Then the bandages were removed, the stitches taken out, and Cook was invited to see the world once more. The first thing he noticed were the fingers of his hand, resting on his leg. He had not seen his fingers for a long time. Then all the colors of the room came to life. Then his wife, and later he realized just how beautiful his three young children are.

The later operation on the other eye was an anti-climax. It doesn't work as well as the first, but that's only in the daytime. At night, Cook has 20-20 vision. It will be used, gratefully, in Buffalo on the night of Nov. 7 when he presides over the 25th anniversary dinner of the eye-bank. Most of those at the head table will be persons whose vision has been restored. Buffalo has a list of 75,000 persons who have willed their eyes to those who, like Cook, will carry a dead person's sight into the wonders of the 21st century — and beyond that, because he plans to leave his eyes for someone else.

On The Right Side To Fr. Shamon Part II

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



As vicar for education, you may like this anecdote:

Recently I attended a clerical meeting where a nice young priest addressed the group. He stated, and this is verbatim: "In the old days people memorized the Catechism but didn't know what it meant."

This is pure bunkum. I am ancient enough to know "the old days" better than youngsters who inform oldsters what they think the oldsters thought in those "old days," and can speak with some authority.

Were our catechized people Augustines, Aquinases, or Rahners? No one claims that. That our catechized people memorized clear answers to clear questions but did not know what was meant by the answers is a ragged judgment on good fathers, mothers, all kinds of good people who were central in our spiritual formation. What they memorized at 12 they still knew at 40, and thought according to their age.

These people of "the old days" learned the answers to: Who made you? Why did God make you? Who is Jesus Christ? What is the Church? What must we do to save our souls? They knew the Beatitudes, the Sacraments, the Commandments, the virtues, the Seven Capital Sins, the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Catechisms give concise expositions of the Scriptures. They are the fruits of the medi-

tations of the Church. They are the religious clarities enjoyed by rational man. They give sparkling gems from the Sacred Scriptures. They are epitomes of the Councils of the Church. To sluff off these Catechism truths as incomprehensible to rational people is an odd twist. That a child of 12 will comprehend deeply the effects of original sin is not likely. But when that child is a man of 42, and has experienced the Pauline conflict between flesh and spirit, the definition stands him in good stead.

Will my admiration of the Catechism be misunderstood? By many, of course. May this be clear. If I had the instruction of children, I should use the best of the new methods. I should use judiciously chosen filmstrips, movies, tapes and charts. Not all of them are good. I should choose textbooks carefully, assuring myself that the doctrine is Catholic, the method is workable, the purpose directed to the glory of God. If the Lord is first, then the good of neighbor necessarily follows. The reverse is not quite true.

Emphatically I would not deny the children the privilege of memorizing standard prayers, including the Hail Mary, the Hail, Holy Queen, and the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. Nor would I deny my children the opportunity to know great Scriptural texts by heart. We admire the facility with

which many Protestants can draw from their memories, Scriptural treasures like Psalm 22/23, or The Sermon on the Mount. These are treasures stored in their minds to be taken out of the jewel case of memory, and loved and lived as God's Word.

Does this letter imply a rejection of the Come to the Father Series? Not at all. Under rather ideal conditions that Series is excellent. But to totally discard catechetical methodology is appalling. If doctors must have clear concepts of medicines, surgery, their effects on the human being, which include his psyche, I think religion teachers have a parallel need of clear concepts of the Faith which are available in the teaching of the Church: in Denzinger's Enchiridion, in the Creeds from Apostolic times to the Credo of Pope Paul (Mystery of Faith, September 1965), and in attractive modern Catechisms.

Best thanks for the Institute, which most of us found stimulating and instructive. I was especially interested in the films on the Eucharist and on Penance, and also the film on the Mysteries of the Rosary. I hope to borrow all of them, but think that the modernity of the Eucharist and Penance films will have a different audience from the audience which will delight in the rather solemn baroque of the Rosary Mysteries.

The Church: 1970

On Being 'Too' Catholic

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



In a recent review in the "National Catholic Reporter" of Gregory Baum's book, "Man Becoming," the theologian Mary Daly comments, "... it appears that Gregory Baum's openness is hampered by his zeal for Christianity in general and for Catholicism in particular."

God forbid that a Catholic theologian should in any respect demonstrate any zeal for Christianity in general or for Catholicism in particular!

Professor Daly admits that Baum is open. She quotes him as saying, "There is no radical difference between Christians and non-Christians," and yet goes on to lament the fact that he is not able to be consistent in this position.

I have read this statement in Father Baum's book and also have heard him express it at a gathering of theologians. I'm not absolutely certain, however, what he means by it. If he means that Christians have no monopoly on truth he is, of course, correct. If he also means that Christians and non-Christians are both members of the same human race, he is certainly correct. If he means, however, that the Christian world view, the Christian interpretive scheme is no different from that of modern secular humanists or ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Mesopotamians, then I must say that all the evidence from the sociology and the history of religions runs to the contrary.

I don't think that Gregory Baum means to say that but I find it very difficult to interpret Mary Daly in any other way:

"Moreover, to say that 'the divine word... was revealed in an unconditional and definitive way in the person, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is a very dogmatic statement which does not reflect the experience of all who were brought up in the Christian tradition. Many college students, for example, would have great difficulty with it.'"

Yes, indeed, it is a very dogmatic statement. It is also, I take it, the essence of Christianity, at least as that religion has been believed for two millennia. Prof. Daly can't have it both ways. Either Christians are committed to such a "dogmatic" position, and their faith is different from the faith of others, or they are not and Christianity is, indeed, not different from anything else.

And I don't really give a hoot about whether college students would have difficulty with it or not; at least their difficulty with it is not going to be the criteria of my faith and I am astonished that a professional theologian like Prof. Daly would turn the opinions of college youth into a locus theologus. But she does it a second time in the review:

"There is a preoccupation, for example, with trying to make sense out of biblical passages for modern man. A common reaction among the young would certainly be: 'So what? If it makes sense, fine; but if it doesn't say anything to us, don't try to twist it for the sake of saving it.'"

Prof. Daly is obviously com-

mitted to the modern faith that youth are the criteria to which all else must yield. I do not think that Professor Daly or any other academics are doing youth much of a service by pandering to their inexperienced emotions.

But Gregory Baum and, indeed, all of the rest of us who are willing to make commitments of faith, had best beware for Prof. Daly is convinced that we are on the road to mental illness:

"Equally exclusivist is the statement that 'because He was without sin, because the Word was in Christ and constituted his history, Jesus surrendered Himself to the Father as no other man did or could.' How does Gregory Baum know that this is the case? If so, isn't his conception of faith equivalent to that 'will to believe' which Tillich justifiably classified as a distortion of faith and as a cause of psychic illness?"

So, if one is committed to religious position, to faith, to a zeal for Christianity and for Catholicism, one had best see a psychiatrist as quickly as possible — or at least find some sort of floating therapy group with which one can share one's problems.

Those who are familiar with Gregory Baum's writings, and particularly with "Man Becoming," may well be moved to remark, "If Father Baum is 'too Catholic' then who does fall within Prof. Daly's acceptable criteria of acceptable Catholicism?" One suspects it would not be a very large group.