

On The Right Side

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Some Blind Themselves To Truth

What of the Witnesses of Jehovah?



Fr. Cuddy

They seem to undergo a kind of brainwashing similar to the Moonies. They become irrationally convinced of their own self-righteousness and collar every possible person to persuade him to join their sect. I know of no other group who deliberately blind themselves to the truth—the truths of Scripture, scholarship, history. They even isolate themselves from normal human society.

Blind themselves to the truth?

Yes. They memorize many Bible texts which they weave into conclusions unrelated to the Divine message and work

prodigiously to pass on their doctrine to others. For example, Father John Morgan told me of two witnesses, father and daughter, who arrived at the rectory ready for battle. "It was weird from the beginning. The father opened up by declaring that the Catholic Church was founded by the Emperor Constantine the Great in 325 A.D. and that he was the first pope! It takes no great historian to know how silly that is. I called his attention to the fact that historically the Catholic Church goes back to Christ, and Matthew 16:18 gives us the promise to Peter: 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church.' His response was significant. With complete confidence he informed me that I had mistranslated the text and said, 'May I read it to you in the Greek?' This is a disarming technique. I said, 'Of course.' He proceeded to read the short text in the Greek with his finger as he translated: 'The first word, petros, means a rock; but the second, petra, means a pile of little rocks.' I asked him, 'Have you studied Greek?' Taken aback a little, he

said no. 'Well, I have. The words petros and petra are basically the same word which means rock in Greek. The ending of the words is different because of the difference in case—nominative and objective—which, as any Greek scholar knows is the way Greek grammar designates case. Also, Petra happens to be feminine, but since Jesus is talking to a man, He uses the masculine form, petros. Remember too, Petros is the name Jesus himself gave Simon the first time He met him.'

How did he reply?

As they always do. Just ignored the fact and shifted to another subject.

How could he arrive at such a queer translation?

That's simple. These people get together constantly and read and study and confirm one another in their misinterpretations. Their teachers and texts tell them, "This is what the Greek original says." Then these poor people just swallow it whole and knock on doors to persuade others to swallow the same errors. Good heavens, imagine such foolishness as Constantine the Great being the first Pope of Rome! With the

death of Pope Paul and the coming election of his successor so widely broadcast over TV and radio, the world must know that the popes go back to the Apostle Peter; not so the Witnesses, with their blinders over their minds.

While I admire the zeal and perseverance of these people, I am outraged at their terrible perversion of God's Word and their dreadful lies and self-deception. My priest friend told me that when his callers were engaged in conversation with him, the young daughter, about 20 years old, pulled out that old chestnut "Call no man Father excepting my Father in Heaven." The priest pointed to the man across from her and said, "Well, who is that man there?" "That's my father." Yet, she probably is still knocking on doors and twisting the text about the Fatherhood of God, our Creator, to the mystification of the many who don't know the answer but who sense there is something rotten in the Denmark of the Witnesses.

Any suggestions?

Many of them, but no room for now. We will follow up this theme at a later date.

All in the Family

By Sarah Child

The Sign Of Peace And Life

A friend and I were having a heart to heart one afternoon on such varied subjects as feuding children and Japanese beetles when somehow the subject of the Sign of Peace came up.

I started to explain it to her, a non-Catholic, when she broke in quickly.

"I know, I know," she muttered, "that's when you fall all over each other in church and then ignore each other the rest of the week."

I can't remember what I answered but I was chagrined and not a little embarrassed.

Exchanging greetings with those around us in church means a great deal here and has since its inception.

Nothing else demonstrates so graphically that we are indeed a community, a united group, a "Church" in the original sense rather than a bunch of individuals who have happened to meet and pray in solitude. For me, at least, it is always a source of warmth and good feeling. In addition, I have met many people in our large congregation whom I might not otherwise have had an opportunity to speak to.

It was a bitter little speech for my friend to make and not worthy of her. She is seldom a detractor.

Knowing she had been having more than a few problems lately, the comment was silently dismissed as untypical of her and we went on to new subjects.

Later on though I thought of it again and wondered how much truth there was in her statement.

There was a kernel, no doubt. Obviously, ritual in church forces many people into a situation they would otherwise avoid.

Not everyone finds it easy to speak to those they don't know and some probably find it downright difficult to exchange greetings even when they are acquainted. But, maybe they should — and for more than one reason.

Psychologists who have done research into the subject tell us that the people who live the longest, who are survivors, are those who get involved, who are talkative. (Welcome news, indeed, for those of us who tend to prattle on.)

So very possibly it is not only peace we are offering at Mass but a sign of life itself.

And perhaps continuing the practice of greeting those about us throughout the week more than just a pleasant and rewarding thing to do, is evidence of a continuing vitality.

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