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Parish Decency Groups Urged

New Orleans — (NC) — Formation of parish Legion of Decency committees to register objections against objectionable films in neighborhood movie theaters, as well as to protest improper floor shows in grills, cocktail lounges and other "show places" was suggested by Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel of New Orleans in a letter to his clergy.

Regarding the establishment of the parish committees, Archbishop Rummel wrote: "While the Legion of Decency aims primarily to prevent and banish immoral and obscene features from screen pictures, its spirit should prompt action against improper and suggestive showings in dance halls, grills and cocktail lounges which feature questionable floor shows."

"At times the signs and placards and even newspaper cartoons advertising such so-called 'show places' deserve condemnation. Comic books and scribbled and sexy illustrated magazines should also engage the attention of the parish committee of the Legion of Decency."

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'Religion Has a Place on the Screen; Brings Public Closer to God' -- McCarey

The following article, published in the NEW YORK TIMES Sunday Drama Section for Dec. 12, 1943, discusses the value of religion in the movies and how motion pictures can bring audiences closer to the Church and God.

The author is a leading Catholic writer-producer-director, famed for such films as "Going My Way" and "The Bells of St. Mary's."

By LEO MCCAREY

As the greatest common denominator of all the entertainment media reaching us it does some 70,000,000 theatregoers per week in America alone, the screen constitutes a tremendous channel of education, enlightenment and influence.

Faced with this fact, we can not escape the conclusion that the office and robes functions of the motion picture is the presentation of the highest precepts of religion as interpreted in the terms of an everyday living philosophy.

THROUGHOUT the world today there is a growing plea for more motion pictures with a religious influence. And on strong, healthy American soil the need is there, too. A vital, urgent need expressed not merely as the echo of the hapless in foreign lands, but as a desperate call of succor for essential guidance to lasting peace and good will on earth to all men.

Clearly, then, religion does have a place on the screen. Religion as a theme need not be concerned solely with church history, and it need not be treated with somber pomposity. Genuine spirituality is a positive, active thing, and it probably finds the screen the most compatible to its teachings when it is shown as a working philosophy and a credo which we can apply daily in our own lives.

In such terms religion and its principles can be absorbing and tellingly presented within the basic frame of the screen itself. After all, the cinema could soon forfeit its universal influence, if

How can the motion picture bring audiences a little nearer the church and God? By presenting religious concepts without any apology. There is no

Eighteen famous Catholic stars of the movie and radio world will unite for a reverent pre-Christmas broadcast Sunday evening Dec. 19 at 8:30 p. m. when the Family Rosary Crusade presents its annual "Joyful Hour" on 433 stations of the Mutual network.

Produced by the Rev. Patrick Peyton the full hour Catholic program will feature the recitation of the Rosary by the Hollywood artists, dramatic sketches of the Joyful Mysteries and Christmas music.

Listeners of the diocese may hear the show on Rochester's WVET (1280 kc.), Auburn's WMBO (1340 kc.)

Starred in the dramatic section of the show will be Ethel Barrymore, Ann Blyth, Pedro de Cordoba, Ann Jamison, Joan Leslie, Roddy McDowell, Maureen O'Hara and Maureen O'Sullivan.

Christmas songs by Bing Crosby, Dennis Day, Christopher Lynch, the Mullen Sisters, and Perry Como will be supported by a professional Hollywood Glee Club and the Mutual Orchestras of New York City and Hollywood.

It lost its primary function of entertainment. The theory that pictures with religious themes had a limited public appeal was entertained for years in certain quarters of Hollywood. The success of "The Song of Bernadette," my own "Going My Way" and similar pictures has proven this theory wrong. Both "Going My Way" and "Bells of St. Mary's" played to three times as many people as "Love Affair," "The Awful Truth" and "Rugles of Red Gap." Yet spiritual inspiration on the screen is not limited to any particular creed.

MOREOVER, the picture industry is coming around to thinking of "religious" film subjects as having a much broader meaning and application than just stories based on biblical characters and times. Underlying many of the motion pictures of today, there is a strong spiritual influence of the goodness of God as against the banality and wastefulness of lives without beliefs.

When "The Robe" is finally made, which it will undoubtedly be in the near future, the motion picture industry will be quick to follow suit with other and similar films—knowing full well that, treated tastefully, properly and entertainingly, there is a place for religion on the screen. Belaboring an audience with lengthy solemn sermonizing is not necessarily either entertaining or inspiring.

RELIGIOUS films, in order to succeed, need not be dull. Cecil B. DeMille's "The Ten Commandments" was an eloquent example of the cameras filming the Gospels, and doing an editing and entertaining job of it. Films, in fact, do not have to be even deeply religious to achieve their purpose.

Writer Donald Culross Peattie put it rather well when he said some time ago: "Dreary moralizing is poison in a cup of holy water."

The most absorbing and inspiring drama, whether on the screen or elsewhere, must inevitably partake of the conflict of the spirit and the flesh, the triumph of good and the folly of evil. Without these ingredients you have pretty thin stuff, indeed.

Hitler Hideout Gets New Cross

Munich — (NC) — Adolf Hitler's former "fox house" on Oberammergau mountain near Berchtesgaden will soon be razed and replaced by a huge cross which then will be lighted at night.

The proposal was made by a committee of the Berchtesgaden municipality regarding the future disposition of the late "Fuehrer's" properties generally known as the "Berg-hof."

The cross which is to stand on top of the peak called "Scharitzkehl" is to symbolize the conquest of Nazi paganism by Christianity. Numerous Americans, both military and civilians, have visited the spot since the cessation of hostilities.

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