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Women's Viewpoint

No Apologies Accepted

MARIE WEIDMAN

The most impressive fact about the current film "Joan of Arc" is that it cost four million dollars to produce. Complete with fleur de lis, and in white armour, the intrepid Ingrid sits astride a Percheron horse exhorting her impassioned followers to level the nasty old English.

Marie Weidman

As the holy and simple French Maid of Orleans, Miss Bergman is a nice-wholesome Swede. She wears her doublet and hose well, looks fetching in cropped hair and displays her Scandinavian accent to a slight disadvantage in a fifteenth century French setting.

Her best scene by far is the last, when, lashed to the stake, amid slowly rising flames she clutches a rude crucifix. Thru the acrid smoke she contrives a spiritual look. Otherwise Ingrid storms about like an harassed Girl Scout who's lost her compass.

• • •

THE ENTIRE extravaganza is a top heavy pageant of pomp, color and motion. The stuffy supporting characters, and there is a phone-bookful of them, give forth with dull, Maxwell Anderson dialogue that no lusty, rollicking, full-blooded Frenchman would ever dream of uttering.

The intrigue, trial and sentencing of Joan gets a bit confusing so that actually Catholics have felt uncomfortable about the position the Church took in the matter. The conniving Cauchon is so hissable that Catholic faces have become slightly pink and opinion seems to be that Joan's life had best be left untold to American movie audiences.

In all fairness, despite an overdose of crossbows, ancient cannon and tarnish-proof armour, this film is Catholic both in spirit and tone and follows closely the actual trial proceedings.

• • •

THERE IS sympathy and belief in Joan's guiding voices and it is indicated that the Maid was sold to the English and burned by civil authorities. Of course Cauchon arrange the trial; he was a type of worldly self-seeker on which the Catholic Church has no monopoly. He was wrong, let us admit it.

There is no need for red faces—nor does very Catholic moviegoer have to become an apologist because Joan's inspiring tale is being retold more correctly than usual this time.

• • •

THROUGHOUT the last century scholars felt Joan was a victim of superstition and the voices some neurotic manifestation which accompanies those who pray a good deal. (They agreed, however, that it was sound and credible that Martin Luther threw his inkhorn at the devil).

When Samuel Clemens finished his research on Joan's life he came away with the opinion that the Catholic Church was engaged in some kind of perpetual hunt for high minded purposeful individuals like Joan.

Catholics always seem to be a bit fearful of their Church's past lest something come to light which cannot be easily explained or justified.

The attitude that we must be constantly on the defensive about our faith is an American attitude and is even seriously hampering our development of good Catholic novelists in this country. We need to be more aware of the Holy Ghost, He is behind us, even at the movies.

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JAPAN PILGRIMS' GOAL

Efforts are being made to complete the new memorial church (right) in honor of St. Francis Xavier, at Kagoshima, Japan, so that it will be dedicated during the great international pilgrimage there in late May. Pope Pius XII donated the funds for its construction. The old church (left), burnt during the war, will be used as a parish hall. In front of the new church, a public park will be laid out by the city and a statue of the saint erected there. (NC Photos)

At Our House

Christ in Baby Bundles

By MARY TINLEY DALY

Antoinette Nee telephoned our house early this morning: "How about pinch-hitting for one of the Christ Child Committee who has a bad cold? We need lots of hands to get layettes ready for new babies when the new babies are ready for them."

"I don't know anything about making layettes," I protested. "My mother makes 'em, but . . ."

"You'll learn and you'll like it," she laughed.

Mary Daly

Antoinette was right on both counts. Today was "cutting day" at Christ Child House. A group of women, working in pairs at long tables, measured off pink, blue and white outing flannel into piles of exact lengths.

"Have to be exact about it," explained Antoinette. "Otherwise an inch or two might be wasted here and there — and some baby would be minus a layette."

• • •

THERE WAS NO waste in the cutting department. As the women at the tables measured, Mrs. Kennedy expertly manipulated the razor-sharp cutting machine around master patterns for nightgowns and kimonas, then around narrow patterns laid along the edge of the material for facings.

"You see," she said, zipping the cutter around a corner, "we like to pretty 'em up a bit so we use contrasting colors for facings . . ."

Next step was assembling—and of course we talked. "You should see how welcome these layettes are," said my partner. "We take them to homes where there is little or nothing for the new baby — and how relieved the mothers are to have the essentials! And they love the fancy touches — some of the sewing girls and women add — just to make them daintier."

"And who does the sewing?" I asked.

"Groups of girls in schools," they told me, "and women in their homes — anybody who wants to help."

Guiltily I thought of some of my wasted afternoons when I, too, could have been helping.

During lunch they talked more about the work of the layette committee. One of the most enthusiastic was Mrs. Galvin who has been making Christ Child layettes for fifty years — and likes it better each year.

• • •

THE MAKING of layettes, I learned, was the first work of the Christ Child Society and is still its principal project. The same scene that was going on here in Washington, today, was being repeated periodically in the cities and towns of the many branches of the Society. And the same warm, human touch of Christian charity goes into every bundle of clothing given to a baby in need, with no discrimination as to creed or color.

It all started more than 60 years ago when Mary Virginia Merrick, hopelessly crippled by a fall, felt that she must do something for others. So she and her six sisters and a few friends gathered to make clothing for poor babies — to be given in the name of the Infant Christ Child. This was the beginning of the now International Christ Child Society.

After more than sixty years, the Society has become a complete child welfare organization, with settlement houses in the larger cities, free dental clinics, a convalescent home, summer camps and all sorts of activities; but the basic universal project of the Christ Child Society—from its smallest to its largest branch—still remains the making of layettes, intrinsically bound up in love of the Christ Child.

Before we left this afternoon I saw a finished layette — one that had gone through the cutting and assembling processes, been sent to one of the women who sew, reassembled wrapped in clean brown paper and securely tied, ready for delivery.

• • •

THERE WERE TWO double-breasted infant shirts, two nightgowns, two pretty colored kimonas, some diapers, a hand-knit sweater, bonnet and bootee set, a cake of soap, a card of safety pins, a miraculous medal and, on top of all, a card with St. Luke's story of "The Birth of Christ" and at the end the simple notation, "From the Christ Child."

On this particular layette, opened at random from the pile, the "sewer" had taken time to "pretty up" even more the standard garments with her own love; on each tiny kimona was embroidered the word "BABY" with a few embroidered flowers for good measure. Why any new mother would thrill at receiving such a bundle!

Back at our house I found a letter from my mother, in Council Bluffs.

"Have been making Christ Child layettes," Mom wrote. "The directions are so simple and the little garments look darling and it's always so much fun to add little extra touches as surprises . . ."

Like thousands of Christ Child workers everywhere, Mom has been doing this for years yet the appeal still holds.

Teen Talks

Pain in the Brain

By NORMA DE PREZ

There are some that have it, many that work for it, and others that avoid it as if it were a case of the five day measles. The "it" in the case is what we lovingly (or not so lovingly) refer to as the pursuit of knowledge.

Norma DePrez

When we opened a second hand textbook in the beginning of the semester to find carefully inscribed therein, "Seven days of this makes one weak" or "In case of fire, use this for fuel," we laughed at the pun.

Now that mid-term exams are peeking their ugly little heads around the calendar, it's "punishment" with the joke on us.

• • •

SPRING IS student enemy number one. Who wants to get all involved in a geometry proposition when the field is just right for baseball practice? Why should you worry about getting causes and effects, subordinate clauses and the adverbial element in your head when you are more concerned with getting an Easter bonnet on your head?

You know the answer, although it is hard to admit it. School isn't a road to just anywhere, a diploma doesn't mean a stop sign. These four years can and should be a road to somewhere. It is up to you to get on the right track.

Have you ever noticed some gals' and guys' attitudes toward school? To some, it's a necessary evil, a place to spend one's waking (or nonwaking) hours. There is also the other group who resolutely declare that this battle with the books is an accepted way of spending four years or that it is a conveniently arranged center for social activities.

Whether you feel that the little red school house is a joy forever or an inexhaustible subject for crabbing, you must admit that education is a two way street. It means give and take.

• • •

AT TIMES IT seems that we are just slipping a few classes into an over crowded schedule of coke sessions, sports events and dances in a date-to-date existence.

Everything is as smooth as a melted marshmallow until the black coffee brigade appears on the scene as a gloomy reminder of January or June cramming. But high school is a career in itself, a career to prepare us for another.

Right now, you may not be able to see the wisdom in those heavy homework assignments and endless classes, but it is there. You're laying a neat little foundation for that career corner just ahead. But how can a hundred pages of Caesar, a handful of dependent clauses or the effects of the War of 1812 help you in a career? you ask.

Here's how. Maybe in you there is a faint flicker of artistic genius, the makings of a junior Michelangelo. If you were left on your own, the potentialities with the palette and oils may become missing in action or that spark might be hidden beneath a bushel of Dorsey discs.

So creative writing is your long suit. If you are going to write the great American novel, it will be helpful to know an adjective from an adverb or how to write a description in terms other than "terrific" and "super."

Teachers have a funny way of wanting to see your creative genius down on paper. Enough inspiration and perspiration along with the gentle necessity of completing an assignment may help you make the best seller list.

Education is a two-way street. Are you headed in the right direction?

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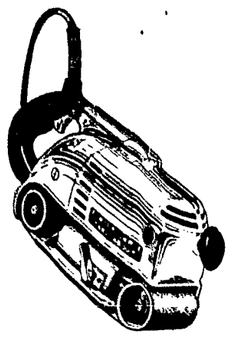
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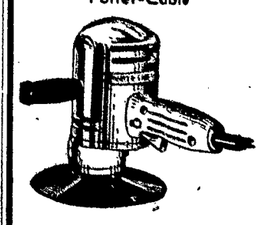
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Conspiracy of Silence

Vainly, we have searched through secular newspapers and magazines, for a single word of recognition of the great charity of the Catholics of America to the homeless, hungry Refugees of Palestine. There was not one! BUT GOD KNOWS, and He will not forget those generous souls, who have given so freely to help the starving, the sick, the dying, in the Homeland of Our Savior. . . . Have you made a contribution to the Cardinal's Refugee Fund? If not, we ask you, in God's Name — give today! We need thousands of dollars for food, clothing, medicine, shoes, shelter. We promise you God will repay, both in time and in eternity. Send us one dollar, ten, fifty, a hundred. Whatever your need — theirs is a hundred times greater, and God wants YOU to be generous, today!

HALF FINISHED
We cannot do penance for you during Lent. That you must do yourself. But we can help you fulfill the other half of your Lenten obligation — charity or alms . . . So very many unworthy, undeserving appeals come to each of us that it is a satisfaction to know that our alms go where there is genuine need. . . . Imagine cloistered nuns hungry. Yes, starving because they cannot go out to beg or forage for food. The Carmelite nuns of Bethlehem need food — we and You need their prayers. Though Lent is half finished there is still time to help. Can you give ten dollars for a Food Package?

OUR LADY AT SIXTEEN
The picture fell out of an envelope from the Novitiate of the Sisters of Perpetual Help at Harissa. The face could have been — Our Lady at sixteen. The girls in our office gasped "Isn't she beautiful?" She needs a sponsor for her two years as a Novice and Postulant. We will write to Lebanon and get her name — if someone will give the three hundred dollars for her two years' course.

OUR LOST CAUSE
We have begged and pleaded and prayed for help for the BASILIANS, our dollar-a-month club for Schools. Now comes an appeal from Monsignor McMahon for funds to provide books, pencils, paper for children in the Refugee camps. Will you help what seems to be our lost cause? Send us your dues for a month or a year.

BLOOD STAINED HANDS
The blood stained hands of Christ stretched up from Calvary — from the altar of The Cross — to beg God's pardon for the sins of men. Will you give an altar of reparation as a Lenten gift to God? Patriarch Mark Khouzam in Egypt needs many. This precious and unceasing gift of atonement can be yours for fifty dollars.

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