Balancing The Books

Meet Father X

By REV. JOHN S. KENNEDY

"This will sell like mad"—so runs the publishers' prediction concerning *Everybody Calls Me Father* by an author whose identity is not revealed. He is presented to us as Father X, but, whoever he is, he is evidently not unfamiliar with the printed works of Bruce Marshall and the celluloid works of Leo McCarey.

Fr. Kennedy

Which is another way of saying that the prediction is likely to be borne out in full. The work deserves such success, at least in part. For it is a casual, easy to read, informative, tears-and-laughter account of some experiences of a priest in the first five years after his ordination.

Father X writes with vividness and impact when he is at his best. He is blessed with humor and a more than modest wit. He is overflowingly human and gets this humanity onto the cold page. He enables anyone, everyone to share the daily round, as well as the tender heart, of a priest.

He is quite an ordinary chap, he says; his looks "are something to make horses shy." The latter fact, obviously, is no disqualification for ordination, at least in the automobile age. Exteriorly unprepossessing, less than stellar scholastically, he has sturdy faith, reasonably good sense, bottomless generosity and zeal, an interest in and a way with people.

He tells us a bit about his very ordinary background, a little more about the crystallizing of his resolve to go to the altar of God, something of his seminary career, and a great deal about those years of initiation at St. Rose's where Father Tim Malloy was pastor. Father Tim assured him, at a first meeting chaperoned by the rectory airedale, Murph, "Well, Father, if you take care of the sick and the kids, you will never have any trouble with me."

FATHER X didn't have any trouble with Father Tim, but there was considerably more to his apprenticeship than those two items. He proceeds to demonstrate this in prose which is uncorsetedly colloquial, sometimes slang, and cast almost invariably in that historical present which has something in common with eternity.

His coverage of the priest's routine, while extensive, is uneven, and this in two ways. First, some vital subjects are better managed than others. On the matter of confession there are superb paragraphs, gems of concise, clear, and persuasive explanation of the reason for, and the operation of, the Sacrament. Baptism, more informally and even jocularly dealt with, fares almost as well. But other crucial functions of the ministry are not nearly so incisively and impressively set forth.

Secondly, credulity is needlessly taxed by resort to the narrative device of having almost everything happen to one family in the parish, the Smiths.

It is Tom Smith who is an alcoholic. It is Mrs. Smith who illustrates the heroic virtue of the woman who takes seriously her duties as Christian wife and mother. It is Jimmy Smith who is the "pal" that Father X seeks to make of all the youngsters, Jimmy who typifies the problems of adolescence (very well discussed, by the way), Jimmy who decides to be a priest. It is Janet Smith who is the Catholic Action leader, who exemplifies Christian courtship, who demonstrates the Christian way to die. Those Smiths!

Moreover, I find a false romanticism sicklying o'er not a little of the book. The young people in Father X's orbit are, with hardly an exception, either handsome or beautiful, not mildly so, but almost wildly so. The word "wonderful" is used to reckless excess. And certain incidents in the second and far less felicitous half of the book, are so sentimental as almost to be silly: the story, for example, of the druggist whose black heart was bleached when his mother died.

It is all very well to familiarize the people with their priest (Father Trese did it brilliantly in Vessel of Clay). But I, for one, am not too happy about an approach to the subject which over-emphasizes the "right guy," "good Joe," crony-of-the Aldrich-Family note.

I may be told, in reply, that, after all, St. Matthew and St. John were folksy types whom Christ fished out of the mediocre mass. Maybe, but when they took pen in hand, they did not write on the level of the first century equivalent of the movie scenario or soap opera script.

Please don't misunderstand, all you friends I know Father X is going to have. I laughed heartily at much of his book, was moved by much of it, deeply admired much of it. But I do think that there are limits to the worth of the unbuttoned manner, and I hope that no one decides to carry it any further.

EVERYBODY CALLS ME FATHER by Father X. 180 pages. New York: Sheed & Ward. $2.25.

Regents Revokes NY License for 'Miracle' Movie

New York — (NC) — Court test of the action of the State Board of Regents in revoking the license for the showing of the motion picture, "The Miracle," is expected in the appellate division of the Supreme Court of New York here on Mar. [illegible]

The members of the Regents viewed the film at a private showing last week and unanimously termed it "sacrilegious." Immediate reaction was the withdrawing of the film from the screen of the [illegible] theater where it has been showing since mid-December despite numerous widespread protests.

Produced in Italy by Roberto Rossellini, "The Miracle" was one of a three-part omnibus picture called "Ways of Love." The other two films, produced in France, continue to be shown at the theater.

The Regents cancelled the license for the trilogy, and said the distributor could apply for a new license to show the other two pictures.

Condemned by His Eminence Cardinal Spellman of New York and by the National Legion of Decency, the film was picketed by Catholic War Veterans and other groups.

Condemnations came also from the New York County American Legion, comprising 167 posts; from many Protestant and Jewish leaders, and from some publications.

One group of 30 Protestant ministers, Jewish rabbis and others in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut had circulated a petition through the Liberal Ministers Club of New York calling for continued showing of the picture.

On WRNY

The Rev. [illegible], regional director of the Sacred Heart Program, will introduce the world-famous devotion known as the Novena of Grace over that popular radio broadcast on Friday, Mar. 2.

(The Sacred Heart Program is carried from 7:05 to 7:20 a.m. daily, except Sundays, over Rochester's Station WRNY, 680 kc.)

The Novena itself will begin on the Monday, Mar. 5, program, and will continue each day until Mar. 12. It will include Novena prayers, hymns sung by the famous Schola Cantorum Choir of St. Louis University, and talks on the life, gifts, and achievements of St. Francis Xavier by outstanding Jesuit speakers.

CBS Personnel At Fordham TV School

New York —(NC)— Columbia Broadcasting System personnel are being sent by the network to the current Fordham University class in television production, William A. Coleman, chairman of Fordham's radio-television division, has announced.

Courier Journal Staff To Recite Rosary on Radio

[illegible]

ROCHESTER Movie Guide

RKO PALACE
Payment On Demand, B
Pygmy Island, A-1
PARAMOUNT
September Affair, B
LOEW'S ROCHESTER
Vengeance Valley, A-2
Dial 1119, A-2
CINEMA
Bitter Rice, C
LITTLE
Francis, (no listing)

Thousands of Catholics Attends HNS Passion Play

[illegible]

Record Year Seen for Religious Books; New Titles Listed

New York — (NC) — This should be a record year for religious books if the present rate of publication is maintained, Publishers' Weekly declares in a special religious book number.

Many books by well-known Catholic writers will be sold by booksellers this Spring, according to the trade magazine. Among these are works by His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York; Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen, director of the National Society for the Propagation of the Faith; Msgr. Ronald Knox; the Rev. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., director of the Family Rosary Crusade; Fulton Oursler and Jacques Maritain.

Cardinal Spellman

Spring book titles include three autobiographies by converts, biographies of His Holiness Pope Pius XII and Saint Maria Goretti, and a book about the Vatican. A number of novels with Catholic backgrounds will be issued.

On the other side of the ledger, a second book by Paul Blanshard is scheduled for publication in May by the Beacon Press. This one will be called "Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power," and presumably is based in part on Blanshard's eight-month stay in Rome during 1950. His earlier book, "American Freedom and Catholic Power," has been attacked widely for its anti-Catholicism.

Cardinal Spellman's first novel, "The Foundling," will be published late in May by Scribners. The book, which was serialized in Cosmopolitan magazine, will be the June selection of the Literary Guild. Cardinal Spellman has given all rights to the New York Foundling Hospital.

J. Maritain

Monsignor Sheen's "Three To Get Married," a book of counsel for married couples, will be issued by Appleton. His "The Life of All Living" will be published in a $1.25 reprint edition by Garden City. Farrar, Straus and Young also will issue a book containing counsel for the married, "The Catholic Book of Marriage," by Rev. Philip Christopher M. Kelly C.S.C.

Monsignor Knox's "St. Paul's Gospel" has just been published by Sheed and Ward. It is a discussion of St. Paul's impressions of Christ as reflected in the Pauline Epistles.

"The Ear of God," a book about prayer by Father Peyton, is slated for publication by Doubleday.

Fulton Oursler's "A Child's Life of Jesus" is being issued by Franklin Watts. First printing will be 25,000 copies.

"Man and the State" by Jacques Maritain will be brought out by the University of Chicago Press March 5.

In the fiction field, "The Left Hand of God" by William E. Barrett sold 10,000 copies ten days after publication, according to Publishers' Weekly. It is the story of an American in China who, in order to escape from a dangerous situation, impersonates a priest. A condensation in Redbook magazine brought in a record amount of fan mail. Winchester Productions, an indpendent movie organization, has purchased film rights to the novel.

O. Halecki

"Eugenio Pacelli: Pope of Peace," by Oscar Halecki, is listed as one of Creative Age's most important spring books. Its latest publication date has been set for March 23. "Lily of the Marshes," subtitled "The Story of Maria Goretti," by Alfred MacConastair, will be published by Macmillan.

"Faith Is A Weapon," the story of the part played by the Vatican in the fight against communism, is to be issued by Putnam's in June. Its author, Thomas B. Morgan, a non-Catholic, served as United Press correspondent to the Vatican.

Bavarian-born Karl Stern, now a practicing psychiatrist in Montreal, tells the story of his conversion from Judaism to Catholicism in "Pillar of Fire," to be published February 26 by Harcourt, Brace. His book won a $5,000 Christopher award.

Dr. John Wu

John Wu, former Ambassador from Nationalist China to the Vatican, will recount his conversion in "Beyond East and West," scheduled for April publication by Sheed and Ward. And a woman newspaper correspondent, Gladys Baker, will describe her conversion under the influence of Monsignor Sheen in "I Had to Know," on the Appleton list for May.

Another book to be published in May, by Bruce, is "The Concept of the Diocesan Priesthood," by the Rev. Joseph C. Fenton.

Legion of Decency Listings

CLASS A-1 — Unobjectionable for General Patronage

Abbott and Costello in the Foreign Legion
Abilene Trail
Arizona Territory
At War with the Army
Bedtime for Bonzo
Blue Blood
Border Treasure
Breakthrough
Buckaroo Sheriff of Texas
Cassino to Korea
Counterspy Meets Scotland Yard
Dalton's Women
Destination Moon
Farewell to Yesterday
Prince Tornado
Gasoline Alley
Gene Autry and the Mounties
Holy Year at the Vatican
Holy Year, 1950
I Killed Geronimo
I'll Get By
I Shot Billy the Kid
King Solomon's Mines
Lights Out
Lightning Guns
Ma and Pa Kettle Back on the Farm
Magnet, The
Mr. Music
Mr. Universe
Mudlark, The
Miss Pilgrim's Progress
Operation Disaster
Outcast of Black Mesa
Prairie Roundup
Redwood Forest Trail
Revenue Agent
Ridin' the Outlaw Trail
Right Cross
Rio Grande
Rough Riders of Durango
Rustlers on Horseback
Saddle Legion
State Secret
Streets of Ghost Town
Sunset in the West
Trail of Robin Hood
Two Flags West
Two Weeks With Love
Two Lost Worlds
Under the Gun
Vatican, The
Wooden Soldiers
Wyoming Mail
Yank in Korea

CLASS A-2 — Unobjectionable for Adults

Al Jennings of Oklahoma
American Guerrilla in the Philippines
Another Shore
Bandit Queen
Belle Le Grand
Black Rose, The
Blue Lamp, The
Bowery Battalion
Bunco Squad
Buried Alive
Cause for Alarm
Chain Gang
Chance of a Lifetime
Company She Keeps, The
Cyrano de Bergerac
Dallas
Eye Witness
Father's Wild Game
Fuller Brush Girl
Glass Menagerie, The
Groom Wore Spurs
Halls of Montezuma
Harriet Craig
He's a Cockeyed Wonder
Hijacked
Holiday Rhythm
Hunt the Man Down
I'd Climb The Highest Mountain
Korea Patrol
Lightning Strikes Twice
Lucky Nick Cain
Mr. Music
One Minute To Twelve
Only the Valiant
On the Isle of Samoa
Pagan Love Song
Paper Gallows
Prelude to Fame
Queen of Spades
Rawhide
Redhead and the Cowboy
Royal Wedding
Second Woman, The
Seven Days To Noon
Short Grass
So Long At The Fair
Steel Helmet, The
Sugarfoot
Tainted
Teresa
Three Desperate Men
Three Guys Named Mike
To Please a Lady
Trio
Tripoli
Vengeance Valley
Walk Softly, Stranger
West Point Story, The
Woman on the Run

CLASS B — Objectionable in Part

All About Eve
Call Me Mister
Cry Danger
Flesh Is Weak
Forces of Destiny
Emergency Wedding
Film Without a Name
For Heaven's Sake
Furies, The
Gambling House
Great Missouri Raid
Highway 301
Molting Season, The
Midwest Story, The
Mrs. O'Malley and Mr. Malone
My Forbidden Past
Naughty Arlette
No Way Out
Payment on Demand
Prehistoric Women
Prelude to Madness
Fish String and Sealing Wax
Second Face
Surrender
Thirteenth Letter
Vendetta

CLASS C — Condemned

Bitter Rice
Blue Angel, The
Bullet for Stefano
Flesh Will Surrender
Gigi
Jungle Stampede
Manon
No Orchids for Miss Blandish
Paris Waltz
The Story of Bob and Sally
Ways of Love
Wench, The

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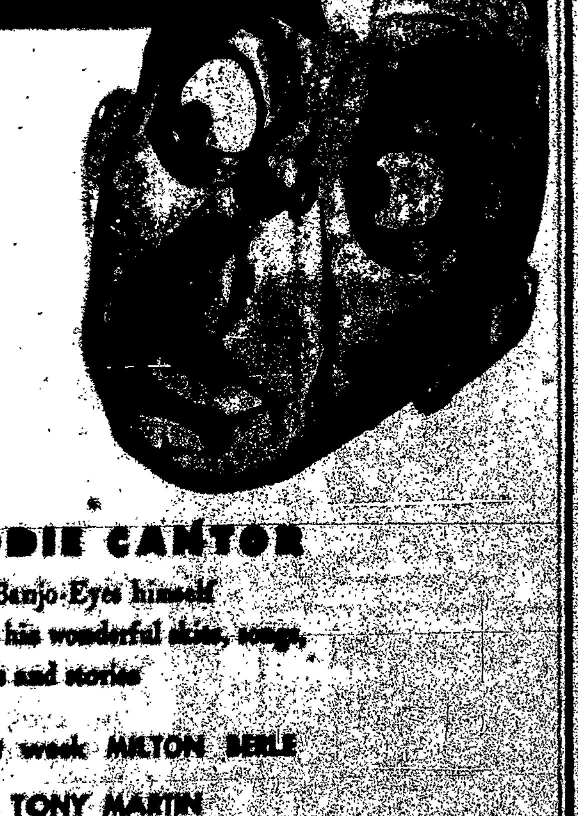

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