

Oscar Winning Ben Hur Said '3rd Class Western'

Buffalo—(RNS)—A Jesuit sociologist, likening the film "Ben-Hur" to a "third-class Western quickie," denounced the award-winning motion picture as a "fraud against Christian teaching, school-age children, the American public and history."

Acknowledging that the Legion of Decency gave it a "top rating," Father Joseph F. Castillon, S.J., assistant professor of sociology at Canisius College here, said the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture is "without any semblance of true religious feeling or even common humanity."

Father Castillon attacked the film at a talk before the mixed Varisty Choir of St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic church.

"Ben-Hur," he said, depicts "senseless brutality piled upon brutality, cruelty for the sake of cruelty. The mentally disturbing effect of this pornographic masochism and sadism is incalculable."

"All the Romans are both stupid and ignoble," he said, "and all the Arabs and Jews are noble characters. Real life is never that simple. Yet this 'masterpiece' possesses the subtlety of a third-class Western quickie, with 'good guys.'"



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St. Patrick's Mission Still Lives

London—(NC)—A new bishop has been named to the historic Scottish See of Argyll and The Isles, which proudly traces its foundation to St. Patrick himself.

He is Father Stephen McGill, 48, who escaped from Nazi-occupied France by coal boat and returned to Scotland by way of Gibraltar. He was ordained in France in 1936 and remained there until the German occupation.

Argyll and The Isles is regarded as the most picturesque and romantic diocese in Britain. It covers hundreds of storm-driven islands and the fjord-riven west coast of Scotland.

The diocese was formed in 1878 by the union of two sees that had been vacant since the Reformation: The See of The Isles, said to have been founded about 447 by St. Patrick, and the See of Argyll, founded about 1200.

The new bishop will spend much of his time traveling by boat or helicopter to his thinly scattered flock.

Persecution Protested

Munich—(NC)—Ruthenian Aits Catholic representatives living in West Germany have protested against religious persecution in their Ukrainian homeland.

They also protested against the arrest and imprisonment of Archbishop Joseph Slipyi of Lvov, who was tried on trumped-up charges of "treason and collaboration with the German occupation forces" in 1948. He is reported to be seriously ill in a hospital near Irkutsk, Siberia.



Passion Play Just Whiskers Away

Oberammergau—(RNS)—Sporting splendid examples of local chin foliage, villagers of Oberammergau, Germany, discuss the famed Passion Play which is expected to draw some 750,000 spectators for its 36 performances scheduled for May 1-15, September of this year. Even those men not taking part in the play grow beards to add a picturesque touch for visiting tourists. The eight-hour spectacle has been faithfully performed by villagers every 10 years since 1634, with only a few interruptions.



Moscow Radio Blasts Easter

Vladivostok—(NC)—Moscow radio has declared that "Easter sermons about being meek and humble do a lot of harm."

The communist broadcaster's words were reminiscent of a remark made by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev during a recent tour of France. He said he disagreed with Christ's advice to turn the other cheek, declaring that if anybody hits him "I knock his block off."

The broadcaster also derided Easter as one of "the wildest and most idiotic prejudices."

Do You Want More English?

London—(NC)—The Vernacular Society of Great Britain has decided to discuss with how many English priests would like to see the English language used in church services.

The society decided at its annual conference here to take a sample poll of all priests in a single diocese, with the permission of the bishop.

The Vernacular Society seeks to promote greater use of English in the liturgy of the Church.

Newspaper Pilgrimage
London—(NC)—About 700 readers of the national Catholic Newspaper, the Universe, have gone to Rome on a pilgrimage marking the Universe's centenary.

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Baroque Art Exhibit

Melk-On-The-Danube—(RNS)—This is a detail from the main altar of the world famous Benedictine Abbey of Melk-on-the-Danube, a mecca for thousands of tourists which will celebrate its 300th anniversary by staging a huge Baroque-Art-in-Austria exhibit from May 15 to Oct. 15. Samples of 17th century sculpture, paintings, wood-carvings, tapestries, altar cloths, vestments, as well as other kinds of religious art are currently being assembled by a team of art experts and historians from all over Austria.

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