

Nurses' Dinner Set In Palmyra

Canandaigua—Annual Dinner for Catholic Nurses Association of Canandaigua will be held at Garlock House, Palmyra, Wednesday, Nov. 8 at 7 p.m.

THE REV. RAYMOND P. Nolan, pastor of St. Stephen's Church, Geneva will be guest speaker.

Mass at St. Mary's Canandaigua at 5:30 p.m. will precede the dinner.

Power and Glory

Does 'Bad' Priest Make Good TV?

In a recent issue of the Sunday Visitor, Dale Francis presented a tongue-in-cheek letters-to-the-editor column. Many of the questions and answers were offered in high humor, but there were several pearls amid the fluff.

One letter asked how, with so many indecent movies filling the screens, we are able to distinguish a REALLY GOOD film from a BAD one. True to his muse, Mr. Francis answered that a REALLY GOOD film was one which had a priest OR a nun in it!

Theatre and movie audiences, television viewers and readers of fiction know that a priest or nun in the role of protagonist usually makes for very poor viewing and dull reading.

Through the years we have been faced with simpering Cradle Songs, clerics crooning Going My Way, and YMCA secretaries of the cloth bringing the Keys of the Kingdom to the mission lands of China.

A well-known Catholic playwright, hired as a technical advisor when The Miracle received its latest filming, was forced to argue fast and furiously to dissuade the directors from placing a scarlet veil on the nun-like head of Carole "Baby Doll" Baker — authentically-damned, the film was being shot in technicolor!

It would seem that the life of a priest or nun is simply not the stuff that films are made of. But conflict is the very stuff that drama is made of. Broadway and Hollywood know this. A priest is a man subject to the world, the flesh and the devil. Somehow between the stage wings or in the unraveling of celluloid, the fictional priest is lost.

He emerges usually as the crooner, the labor leader, the YMCA secretary, the do-gooder or, more often, a dyed in the wool, plaster saint with outstretched arms and floating halo, crying out in stentorian tones that there is no such thing as a bad boy.

The nun is even more monotonously stereotyped. She usually looks like Loretta Young. The mission school will have to close if money isn't forthcoming. All nuns keep their hands in their sleeves, not in rich Protestants' pockets. The rich Protestant is the landlord. By means of cute chicanery and darling little white lies, she completely vamps the rich Protestant into paying the rent and the school is saved.

Once in a while some insight is shown into the priest-man that contains enough dramatic conflict to produce something of artistic value.

Canon Sheehan's My New Curate and Bruce Marshall's The World, The Flesh and Father Smith both had merit. West's The Devil's Advocate and Greene's The Power and the Glory had it to such an extent that both were labeled "controversial." As a one-word critique, controversial doesn't mean much — the work has caused controversy — some peo-

ple liked it, some didn't — de gustibus.

We were beleaguered and belabored during the past week by unhappy viewers of David Susskind's TV version of Graham Greene's The Power and the Glory produced last Sunday by CBS.

One of the most expensive of television ventures—two hours, \$780,000, Sir Laurence Olivier, and thirteen-other-stars' worth—the production was designed not merely as a one-shot TV presentation but for the overseas movie market as well.

Greene's novel was an immediate success with literary minds both here and in England. It soon filled the movie palaces and then, briefly, the theatre.

The story is laid in Mexico in the 1930's, at a time when the Church was being battered by a wave of persecution. The protagonist of the piece is a dissolute priest who escapes to a remote and more tolerant section of the country where the peasants, who have lost their own priest, receive him with a job. Here he finds love and protection.

Finally, however, his conscience leads him back to his original parish and into the path of his pursuer, an atheistic army officer intent on carrying out anticlerical laws, and eventually to a martyrdom that proves Greene's point about the essential enigma of God's grace.

The iron of the story — the last priest left in this no-priest land is, in his own words, a bad one. He is presented as a weakling, a coward, a drunkard and father of an illegitimate child.

The only virtue left to this hunted, frightened man is a simple honesty about himself. He loves the child of his sin, a little girl who berates him and spits in his face — the child for whose conception he says he traded heaven for half a bottle of whiskey and a moment of painful solace.

His captor reasons that the priest's personal weakness is proof of the general disintegration of the Church. The prisoner responds that as bad as he has become both as priest and man, he is still the only one left who can "put God in a man's mouth."

But the healer is not allowed to heal himself. He is knowingly lead into a trap. He turns his back on an assured escape to go to the side of a dying murderer. Again he meets with frustration that would lead other men to despair. The murderer, more concerned with the safety of the priest than with his own salvation, dies without confession leaving the priest



Sir Laurence Olivier portrays a priest in CBS's "The Power and the Glory."

without his one reason for existence — to serve as a priest.

The final and agonizing thrust is given when he knows he must face his execution burdened by his sins. The only other priest available is an apostate, who fear has reduced to something less than a man.

Death before the firing squad is the climax and, happily, the priest remains true to his characterization. Having made his last confession directly to God, he is taken to the place of execution. He accepts the blindfold and asks for the comfort of a well-aimed bullet.

We are amazed that people would ask why this story should be given a production — and the issues taken were moral and not artistic.

True, it was not the story of a St. Francis which, in a recent movie, depended upon the noise of a full-sized Crusade for its only excitement. The sometimes medicinal, sometimes cotton-candy injustices done St. Francis made us wish he too was a fictional character. There is simply no way to apologize to a saint for man's unctious lies.

Did the criticism come from the fact that a priest could be a drunkard and father of an illegitimate child? Such ostrich-hiding whitewash-septicriticism would turn its back on an Augustine and witch-hunt a Magdalen.

Was there no rapport at all

between viewer and character? Was not Graham Greene's theme — that God's graces to the fallen priest find any re-manifested in the most unlikely sponse in our hearts? Was it not a poignant shock treatment for the lethargic? — SMETT

German Prosperity Attracts Workers

Freiburg — (RNS) — The German Caritas organization welfare arm of the West German hierarchy, has established 37 pastoral care centers for foreign workers in the Federal Republic, it was reported here.

These Roman Catholic centers are designed to provide spiritual guidance and worship facilities for the large numbers of foreign workers who have been attracted to West Germany because of the country's booming economy and a severe shortage of labor.

They also help laborers in making proper use of their leisure time, arrange for German language lessons, care for the sick, give advice in dealing with German authorities and labor offices, and in many other ways, try to help the foreigners feel at home in Germany.

Dr. Georg Huessler, secretary general of Caritas, disclosed that because of the labor shortage, there are at present about 500,000 foreign laborers in West

Germany, of whom more than 13 per cent are Italian.

Appealing to Catholic organizations and parishes to help establish contacts with the foreigners, Dr. Huessler stressed that "the Christian duty and virtue of hospitality must be progressed to foreigners, too."

Fr. Hesburgh In India

New Delhi — (RNS)—Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., president of Notre Dame University in Indiana, met here with Indian educators while on his way to attend a meeting of the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

In the Indian capital, Father Hesburgh talked with K. L. Shrivastava, Indian Minister for Education, who advised him on the efforts being made in the country to wipe out illiteracy through adult education.

Keating Awarded Malta Cross

New York—(RNS)—Senator Kenneth B. Keating of Rochester and Henry Cabot Lodge, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, were invested here with the Grand Cross of Merit of the Sovereign Order of Malta, highest honor the Roman Catholic order can bestow on non-Catholic laymen.

Both men, who are Episcopalians, were honored for their "significant humanitarian" contributions in this country and overseas. They were invested with the sash and medal of the order by Don Enzo di Napoli Rampolla, Prince di Resuttano of Rome, the order's Grand Chancellor.

Sen. Keating became the second American to be invested with the decoration, and Mr. Lodge, the third. First U.S. layman to be invested was Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, a member of the Disciples of Christ, who received the cross earlier.

Membership in the Knights of Malta is limited to Catholics but on occasions the order's sovereign council grants a special decoration — the Grand Cross of Merit — to Non-Catholics for their exemplary personal life and goodwill toward the church.

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