

Direct from Radio City: First Word on Film Trends

By J. D. Nicola

New York—Direct from New York's Radio City Music Hall. There was a time when that phrase meant almost the same thing as an A-1 moral rating whenever parents were looking for a movie to take the whole family to.

But nothing more sharply reflects the changing pattern of movie-making and movie-going than the fact that in the last several years, "direct from Radio City Music Hall" has ceased to be a guarantee of family entertainment. And nothing more heavily underlines the change than the latest film to go out across the country direct from Radio City, "Two for the Road," a film that carries a "Suggested for Mature Audiences" tag from the Motion Picture Association of America.

"There's no purpose in talking about what might have been ten years ago," commented the Music Hall's president James Gould. "You've got to be conscious of the subtle changes that are taking place, and bend with them."

The degree to which Radio City Music Hall "bends" is looked upon as an important

factor in the future trend of major films; for a booking in films like "Any Wednesday" the country's biggest movie and theater (6,200 seats) consider-ably helps a film's gross and, as Bob Thomas, the Associated Press Hollywood reporter, wrote, "it carries prestige which impresses theater men throughout the country."

This prestige comes from the fact that millions of American tourists have made the Radio City stage and screen shows a must on their New York visits and, more importantly, theater operators know that Radio City Music Hall is the only theater that never books a movie without seeing it first.

The scope of the Music Hall's influence, which appears to have shifted from assurance of family entertainment to a guarantee that an adult film will not shock audiences—was revealed by a spokesman for "Seventeen" magazine, explaining why that publication had accepted an ad for "Two for the Road," despite the "Suggested for Mature Audiences" label.

"We decided that the picture couldn't be too rough if it's playing at the Music Hall," he said.

old Production Code and by Office for Motion Pictures praised the film in its official newsletter after classifying it A-3, or morally unobjectionable for adults.

"Some may find this technique confusing," NCOMP said of the film's quick back-and-forth style, "but once understood it proves an interesting way of exploring attitudes; Mark's growing egoism and selfishness, Joanna's need for recognition as an individual, and the effects of these on the marriage."

"It is possible to construe this subtle film as artful pagan propaganda for the primrose path, but that would be missing a point, namely, that the affair, with all its attractive exuberance and irresponsibility, was actually poor preparation for the mature requirements of marriage, which the film affirms in its paradoxical way."

Almost echoing NCOMP's position on such adult films in recent years, the Music Hall's president defended his booking of "Two for the Road" by commenting, "Yes, children are important, but contrary to what some people think, the bulk of our audience is adult and mature. We have an obligation to serve their needs." — (Catholic Press Features)



Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney in "Two for the Road."

God's World

No Renewal Without Pain

BY DENNIS J. GEANEY, O.S.A.

Some months ago a lay editor wrote an article entitled, "The Renewal Mess." His thesis is the understatement that "the renewal of the Church is not going well."

This negative thinking bothered me but I too have become a victim of it. I decided to use this column as a catharsis. In the words of James Baldwin, "to vomit up my anguish" and then return to the Peale power of positive thinking.

The renewal of Vatican II was meant to unleash the creative power of the Christian people by releasing them from the bondage of legalism and excessive moralisms. In the spirit of the gospel and the letters of St. Paul, it wanted people to claim their birthright as free men who have been delivered from the constricting influence of the Law.

The law of love was to replace the negative restrictions of the ten commandments. Liturgy was meant to be looser and allow for some spontaneity in the communal expression of our love of God in Christ Jesus. The Council called for democratic structures and procedures at every level of Church life, so that people would communicate up, down, and across with facility.

How Are We Doing?

In surveying the situation much depends upon where you start and what you are looking for. In the liturgical area there is a general acceptance of such things as Mass facing the people, the vernacular in most of the liturgy, singing and respon-

ding. It is less boring, but the liturgy is suffering the test of time. The assembly needs to be made more alive to the Word as it is proclaimed is far from a reality.

The dullness of our Roman liturgy is suffocating the test of time. I doubt that I would buy it as adults when they have more options. If we try the surgery that is needed, there would be a hue and cry from the older generation that might create a greater mess. Besides, how many liturgical commissions and pastors comprehend our present liturgical needs?

How many people want to be free? The professors at St. John's University and Catholic University wanted it and are getting it. The process was messy. But, the academic community live in a rarefied atmosphere and have always been jealous of freedom. They are by no means typical.

The bishops of the country gave the people freedom from fish on Friday, but the majority of Catholics are not happy about it. Like the nun's modern habit or non-habit, this another loss of identification.

A Yearning for Rules

Many confessors are willing to accept a person's conscience on their attitude toward birth control, but they find the person wants a permission that they cannot give. They do not want freedom of conscience, no matter how enlightened it may be. They want a new rule substituted for an old one, not freedom.

My own feeling is that Cath-

olics would be less threatened by the Church changing "Crisis Today" said. "This so-called prayer book did not contain one holy picture and certainly not one picture of the Mother of Christ. A prayer book filled with pictures and prayers based on racial issues. Since when is Jesus our brother? Most of the prayers started with the words 'Jesus, our brother.' We Catholics were always taught that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour, not our brother. What is our beautiful Catholic religion coming to? How are parents of today going to teach religion, in the home, when the children of today's Catholic schools are being taught something different?"

'What's Going On?'

I feel that this letter writer speaks for legions of American Catholics. Each one would write the letter differently but the chorus would be the same. "You switched the signals without telling us. My sympathies are with the letter writer. I agree."

I see our failure on two levels. First, bishops, priests, sisters, and educated lay Catholics either did not understand what the Council was all about or were unable to grasp the genuine feelings of the people in the pews or both.

Second, we attempted no wide-scale adult education for up-coming Catholic youth. We had no training and liturgical speeches to the elite and precious little trickled down to the unwashed.

Thanks for hearing me out. Next week I'll be all smiles and everything will be sweetness and light.

Keith Scolds 'Status Quo' Catholics

Hollywood—Brian Keith, the soft-spoken and seemingly carefree star of television's "Family Affair," has bluntly berated members of the family of God who keep the Church "from growing, from changing, from evolving."

At a film- and TV-industry communion breakfast sponsored by James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, Keith attacked clergymen and laymen who "have so identified our souls with the status quo that we can no longer think rationally about anyone who questions it."

Keith, who has starred in several "insight" religious TV dramas produced by the Paulist's Rev. Ellwood Kiessner, said that most of the opposition to change in the Church comes from those who see "the Catholic Church as a miraculously wonderful spiritual deep freeze that has been fully stocked by Christ. It holds, quick-frozen and ready for instant use, all that the Christian needs on his journey through life."

These Catholics, he said, were "never told that even (the) sacraments have evolved much over the years, that in the early Church most people went to confession only once in a lifetime, and that the directions for the use of marriage are constantly changing."

But the Church, Keith told the communications-industry audience, should be seen as a "living being." "Living things are hard to describe. So it must be with the Church. We can never be sure just what it's going to look like in the future. Our job is to stay with it, to keep it watered, to never try to box it in. If we try to keep it from growing, from changing, from evolving, we will kill it."

"When Cardinal Doepfner of Munich lectured here in October, someone asked him where the Church was going. He said that he didn't know, that the Church has to dare all kinds of experiments; that history and the Holy Spirit will then bless some of the experiments and not others."

"We must travel in faith. We must put aside our timid in-

securities, our suspicions of Communists under the bed, our fears of the modern world. Openness is what we most need. We need to open our minds to social change, our hearts to the visions of youth, our hospitals to the wounded children of Vietnam, our homes to exchange students from India and Africa and Latin America, our neighborhoods to those who are different from us in racial origin and religious belief."

A key problem faced by Church leaders in encouraging social change, Keith asserted, is pressure brought on them by conservative laymen.

"If a priest marches with the grape-stickers in Delano, the Bishop is flooded with letters of protest. . . . Just let a priest demonstrate for a change in

the segregated housing pattern with them in close-knit gatherings, listening to the enthusiasm of their songs, observing a joy in their faith and a single-minded reverence in their attention that put me to shame."

"In these groups have been veterans of lonely and dangerous assignments in Appalachia and Mississippi, young recruits for work in India, Africa and Mexico—all united by a common dedication to Christ and his work. I still get boiling mad when some timid, narrow-minded adult tries to debunk their enthusiasm and scoffs at their so-called 'hot-catchy Mass.' It is always someone so set in his ways that he has never participated in one of their liturgies or tried to open himself to the true catholicity of their spirit." — (Catholic Press Features)



Brian Keith in a scene from an "insight" drama, with Beverly Garland.

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Men outnumber women slightly better than two to one in the coeducational special session, with 342 males and 1 females registered. During the regular academic year the students attend more than a hundred different colleges at universities throughout the United States and Canada.

Dr. Meder attributed the record enrollment to John Fisher's steadily growing reputation.

Pope Names U.S. Bishop

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul has appointed a coadjutor bishop for the Diocese of Chicago, it was announced here.

The new Chicago auxiliary are Msgr. Thomas J. Grace currently the rector of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Msgr. William E. McManis archdiocesan superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Chicago, and Msgr. John May, secretary-general of the Catholic Extension Society of the U.S.

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