

Film Ratings

Following are the titles of films reviewed this week by the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures.

Class A, Section 1
Blast Off (American International)

Class A, Section 3
The Climax (Ital.) Lopert (United Artists)

Eye of the Devil (MGM)—This classification is applicable only to prints shown in the U.S.A.
The Tiger Makes Out (Columbia)

Class B

Point Blank (MGM)—Objection: This story of a successful execution of underworld vengeance is developed in an atmosphere of extreme violence and of gratuitous sex.

Family Rosary Radio Leaders

The Family Rosary for Peace program is broadcast each evening at 7 p.m. by Rochester radio station WSAY, WMBO-FM in Auburn, television cable companies, Channel 8 in Elmira, Channel 5 in Hornell and at 88.75 mc in Corning. Those who will lead in recitation of the Rosary this week will be:

Friday, Sept. 29 — Father Roger Baglin.

Saturday, Sept. 30 — (Mass will be celebrated) — William Gmelin, St. Thomas the Apostle parish.

Sunday, Oct. 1 — John Peters, Our Lady of Mercy.

Monday, Oct. 2 — Father Roger Baglin.

Tuesday, Oct. 3 — Representative of Knights of Equity, Court #10.

Thursday, Oct. 5 — John Butler, St. Augustine's.



Rosary Talk

Father Roger Baglin will explain his apostolate to Spanish speaking people in the Rochester Diocese on the Family Rosary for Peace radio program tonight, Friday, Sept. 29, and Monday, Oct. 2. Bishop Sheen appointed Father Baglin to this increasingly necessary special task this past June. The broadcast is aired nightly at 7 p.m. on a live station network — in Rochester WSAY, WMBO-FM in Auburn, television cable companies Channel 8 in Elmira, Channel 5 in Hornell and at 88.75 mc in Corning.

Forty Hours

Devotions of Forty Hours, Diocese of Rochester:

Sunday, Oct. 1 — Holy Cross, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rochester; St. Mary, Canandaigua; St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads; St. Patrick, Mt. Morris; St. Mary of the Lake, Ontario; St. Rita, West Webster.

Victor Players In Rehearsal

Victor — The cast of the forthcoming Victor Community Players production, "Come Blow Your Horn" is now working in rehearsal.

Play dates are set for Oct. 27-29 in the Victor Junior High School auditorium at 8 p.m.

The play's director is Frank Riesenberger, an employee of Todd Division-Burroughs Corporation in Rochester. The cast includes Marilyn Hergesell, the mother; James Ottman, the father; James Aha, the son Alan; Jon Rawleigh, the son Buddy; Shirley Ottman, the sister Peggy; Ruth Keller, Connie and Oressa Brown is Aunt Gusie.

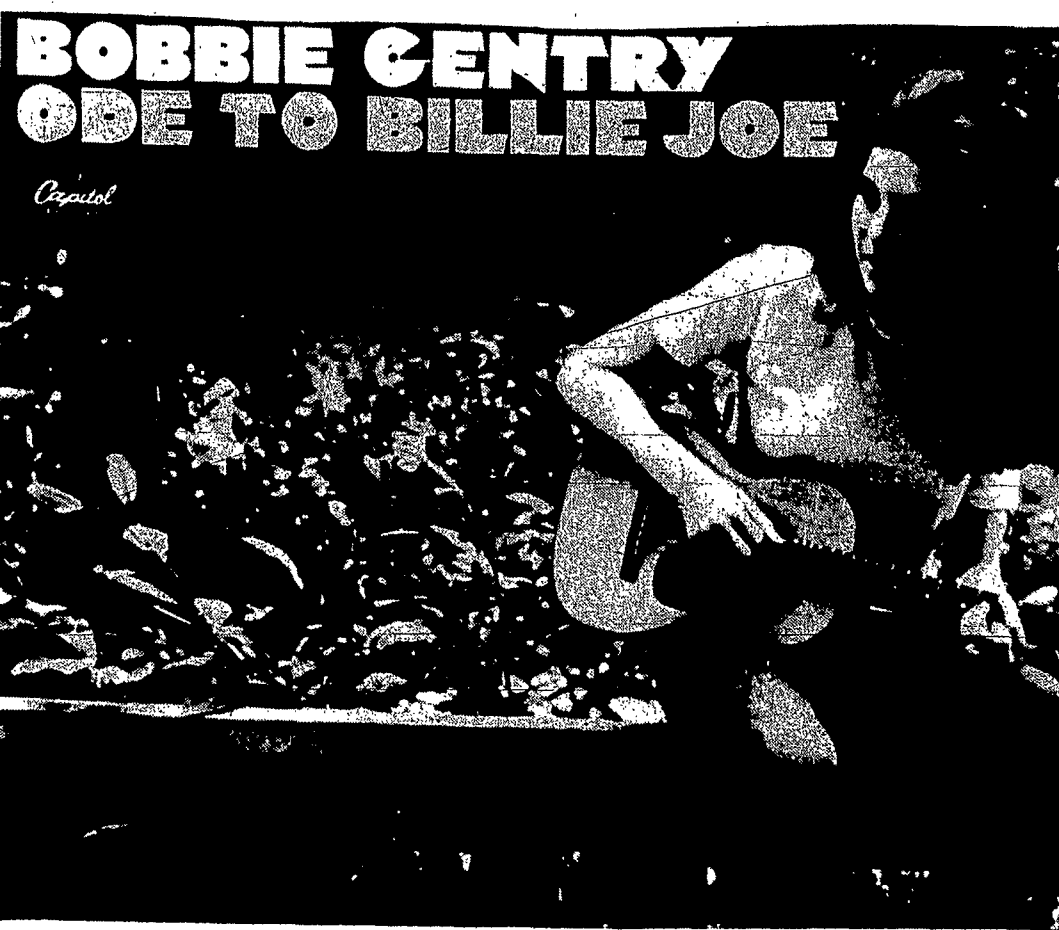
The scene of the play, a comedy, is New York City and it involves two sons who would rather ski than work and their hard working father.

Honored At

Banquet

Mrs. Pauline LaLoggia was honored by the Eccles Society of St. Francis Xavier parish on Sept. 9. At this time she was presented with an American flag flown over the capital by Congressman Frank Horton.

Other guests included Mayor Frank Lamb and Judge Edward Provenzano. Andrew Celli was toastmaster.



Album-cover for "Ode to Billie Joe," featuring composer-singer Bobbie Gentry.

'Ode to Billie Joe'

A Plea for Compassion

"Ode to Billie Joe," the strange but phenomenally popular song about a young man who "jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge," can be heard as a plea for Christ-like compassion, a priest-columnist has written.

In his "The Church Today" column in the "Texas Catholic Herald" of the Galveston-Houston diocese, the Rev. William D. Steele commented:

"The song, of course, is not in the usual sense of the word. It doesn't mention Christ at all. But a person who believes that Christ is not dead but living in this world in people through the Spirit must believe that this song has something to do with Him."

"Ode to Billie Joe," written and recorded by Bobbie Gentry, a 23-year-old girl from Mississippi, is a long, five-verse narrative about one family's reaction to the news that someone they knew tried to kill himself. (The song does not say whether or not he died, but most listeners assume he did.)

The lyrics tell of the indifference shown by the mother and father as they discuss the bridge incident at dinner with mundane comments like "pass the biscuits, please" and the mother's insensitive "Child, what's happened to your appetite? I been cookin' all mornin' and you haven't touched a single bite," unaware that her daughter was in love with Billie Joe.

In the last verse of the song, by which time "a year has come and gone since we heard the news 'bout Billie Joe," it's learned that the mother has been grieving the recent death of her husband. Rather than comforting her mother, the daughter chooses to "spend a lot of time pickin' flowers up on Choctaw Ridge" and dropping them off the bridge, apparently in memory of Billie Joe.

Casualness toward feelings

"The main point of the 'Ode' is... the casualness with which we humans regard one another's feelings and tragedies," Father Steele observed in his column. "It is this indifference to man that accounts for the evil of the Vietnam war and the extreme poverty that begets urban riots."

"It is striking to note that the song stresses not only the indifference of the family to Billie Joe's death and their daughter's grief but also the daughter's subsequent indifference to her mother's grief."

when she loses her husband. It works both ways. The older generation and the younger generation are not listening to each other."

Father Steele went on to give illustrations of Christ's compassion for individuals ("He loved people, not just mankind") as opposed to the "business as usual" approach to tragedy and death today.

Recently, he wrote, "as I drove to Galveston in a heavy rain I was listening to the car radio. A good song was playing. Then there was this interruption: 'George Lincoln Rockwell has just been shot and killed in a shopping center in Arlington, Virginia.' The music resumed and continued, and the rain kept falling. But a man had died. Like Billie Joe McAllister... And Christ weeps, in me and in you. Or does He? 'Pass the biscuits, please.'"

Using the Media

Father Steele's commentary on "Ode to Billie Joe" is the latest example of how clergymen are making use of popular films, TV programs, and even comic strips to make sermons and religious-writing more interesting. Ironically, the song's composer and singer, Miss Gentry... said that her Southern Baptist upbringing is reflected in her work.

"The church was very im-

portant in our lives, in every Southern's life," she recalled of her childhood. "It was in the church that I learned my music. First in the choir and then advancing to quartets and sextets."

In "Ode to Billie Joe," it is a preacher who informs the family of the bridge-jumping, who knows of the daughter's relationship with Billie Joe and whom the mother invites over for Sunday dinner.

"The Mother who wants the girl to marry the preacher," Miss Gentry explained, "as do all good Southern Baptist families, want their daughters to marry preachers. The same was true for me. Whenever I would visit my grandparents they would always have the preacher come to dinner, hoping that I would marry him."

But she wants neither this element nor the widespread guessing game as to what the "something" was that the girl and Billie Joe were seen throwing off the bridge (most common guess: a ring) to overshadow her main purpose.

"I don't really know what they were throwing off the bridge, exactly," she said. "It's not important. The important thing is that people don't really care what happens to another person. I wanted to show the casualness and the unawareness of people." (Catholic Press Features)

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