

COURIER-JOURNAL EDITORIAL PAGE

Vol. 79 No. 38 Friday, June 21, 1968

Movies And Morals

Theaters in our diocese — as in every city of the nation — seem to be wallowing in a series of the most sensual movies produced in a decade. Not only the advertisements but the reviews by secular critics warn us that all cinema standards of modesty and propriety have been destroyed by a creative realism which insists on placing the camera like a mirror before the most private and the most depraved passions. Themes, situations and personalities rarely noticed in the daily environment of the ordinary person, even though he knows they exist in the shadows of society, have become the standard fare on so many movie screens of our communities.

When people ask "Why aren't movies like they used to be?", the usual reply is that the film has become an "art form" rather than an entertainment device. The cinema apologist will contend that when films begin to treat serious human problems they must invariably touch on "serious human failures." Because sins like infidelity, promiscuity, abortion, perverted sexuality and the whole catalogue which fill screen-plots today are human failures, we must, producers insist, "allow films to show immorality as it really is."

Recently some Catholics, and observers of other religions who have approvingly respected the Church's concern for movie quality, were shocked to see the U.S. Bishops' film office award prizes to "Darling", "Georgy Girl" and "Bonnie and Clyde." They were further mystified to note that the Catholic Office for Motion Pictures refused to condemn such adult-theme films as "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?", "Ulysses", "The Knack" and others. They simply could not swallow the rebuttal that this trend in film-judging did not represent a relaxation of censorial vigilance but was rather "a due recognition that even gross immorality can be treated in a manner that is good art, and perhaps even good Christian art." The Office still has some explaining to do.

A new book, "Movies and Morals", published by a Dominican Father, Rev. Anthony Schillaci, (who may be an expert because he is publicized as being on the staff of the National Film Study Project at Fordham University), bluntly suggests that Catholic audiences need to be reeducated to rid themselves of "narrow moral perspectives". He says: "We have undergone a perversion of our moral sensitivity, one which blinds us to the larger picture of any film and forces us to respond, like the sensors of a fire-detection system, to increasingly specialized stimuli in modern films." He calls for a "vast re-educational policy" by the Church to undo several decades of faulty guidance on movies. He says our upbringing with emphasis on virtue vs. sin has conditioned Catholics to react automatically and negatively to new-provocative films which may be saying something highly moral about today's society.

This bothers me: In advance of the required education in film-appreciation, which anyone of us probably could enroll in or buy books about, what does the good Dominican Father say about the senses and latent passions of the moviegoer? Existentially we remain highly responsive to suggestions which trigger our physical nature no matter how the mind is re-conditioned not to look for evil.

Dare we seek out all the movie-hits and try out the reviewers' judgments, no matter how the films offend our moral sensitivity, simply because we are really looking for "the message"? I'm afraid that procedure would be as dangerous, if not as insincere, as the producers' contention that he is really not showing me fornication or nudity or erotic passion, but simply teaching me something about "death of love", "search for identity", "the cruelty of life" and "the wages of sin." —Father Richard Torrey

A Graduate's Prayer

The following prayer was offered by Miss Susannah H. Wood, a graduating senior, at the Radcliffe College baccalaureate service.

We pray that You will hear us as we think about our graduation, even though we have trouble using the traditional language for talking to You and though many of us no longer feel a part of a religious community.

Graduation presses the past and the future together in our minds so that we face it with mixed feelings and we do not know what to affirm.

It is especially hard for us because the events of this year have forced us to have a personal reaction to public events. We do not feel like a cool, swinging generation — we are eaten up inside by an intensity that we cannot name.

Somewhat this year more than others, we have had to draw lines, to try to find an absolute right with which we could identify ourselves. First in the face of the daily killings and draft calls of the curiously undeclared Vietnam war. Then with the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Senator Kennedy.

There is a strain in all we do — a sense of "the time is now," added to what we would feel anyway as we graduate. We are grateful for what we have learned and experienced here, but we are not sure we have done the best we could. We feel we have gained a certain competence, but realize we fall far short of what we would do or be. We are excited about next year, but frightened of it at the same time.

We pray that You will help us accept the past and face the future with courage and dignity. Help us to leave our friends with love that does not depend on geography, and to face loneliness if we must with a willingness to appreciate without a desire to be appreciated.

Help us to prepare a kind of renaissance in our public and private lives. Let there be born in us a strange joy, that will help us to live and to die and to remake the soul of our time.

COURIER-JOURNAL BISHOPFULTON J. SHEEN President MSGR. JOHN S. RANDALL Managing Editor REV. ROBERT KANKA Associate Editor ANTHONY J. COSTELLO Advertising Director REV. RICHARD TORREY Editor CARMEN J. VIGLIUCCI Associate Editor

The Holy Father

Mary: No One Closer to Christ

In public ceremonies closing the month of May in Rome Pope Paul gave an inspiring commentary on the Vatican Council's teaching about Our Lady's role in the Church. Here are excerpts from his discourse:

The Vatican Council dedicated to Our Lady the whole of the eighth chapter of the great Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, thus placing at the summit, as it were, of this stupendous doctrinal edifice the sweet and luminous figure of Mary. This is enough to make us all feel bound by very reason of the Council's authority for this renewal, to reanimate our concept of the Blessed Virgin and our devotion towards her.

The Council had no wish to expound new doctrines concerning her; just as it did not aim to say anything possible about her. But it did present Mary in such a way and with such titles that everyone who is faithful to the Council teachings must feel strengthened in professing that Marian devotion which has always been held in such great honor and with such great intensity in the Catholic Church.

We will point out before all else that Our Lady is presented to us by the Council not as a solitary figure, standing alone in an empty heavenly sphere, but as a creature most singular and most blessed and most holy precisely by reason of the divine and mysterious relationships which encompass her, which define her unique being, and which fill her with light such as is not given to any other creature.

The words in which they are enunciated bear so weighty a meaning as to plunge them in mystery. Let us listen to them again as they are uttered by the Council. Mary "is so endowed with the high office and dignity of being the Mother of the Son of God (made man) on which account she is the beloved daughter of the Father and temple of the Holy Spirit. By reason of this gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven and on earth." (Lumen Gentium n. 55).

Then Our Lady — Who does not know this? — belongs wholly to Christ: in Him, through Him, with Him. We cannot, even for an instant, forget this other relationship which defines Mary, Mother of Jesus, animated and living by His Word and the companions of His Passion.

It is this relationship that gives reason for her every prerogative, for her every grandeur, for her every title to our unbounded veneration, to our love, to our trust. Just as we cannot form an idea of Christ without reference to the supreme truths of the Gospel regarding His Incarnation and His Redemption, so we cannot leave out of consideration the presence of Mary — and the ministrations which she was called upon to fulfill, in the actual realization of these same truths.

No human creature has come nearer to Christ, none have been more His and more filled with grace than she; no one has been so closely united to Christ as His Mother, and no one has been so loved by Christ as she who gave Him virgin birth by the power of the Holy Spirit, she who heard His Word with a "fiat" which marked Our Lady's whole life, she who was the willing participant in every mystery of Christ's salvific mission.

No one has had so great a faith in Christ. No one has had so great a trust as she in the beneficent goodness of Christ. No one, it is easy to believe, had so great a love for Christ as had His Mother, not only because of the ever incomparable love-relationship that a mother has with the fruit of her womb, but also because of the Charity of the Holy Spirit which was in her a vivifying and loving principle of her divine maternity.

Yes blessed art thou, Mary, to whom we now have the unmerited good fortune to give a title which the Christian centuries always recognized as thine, not in the sacramental order as a cause of grace, but in that of the widespread communion of charity and grace, proper to the Mystical Body namely, the title of "Mother of the Church."



"I THINK HE'S FINALLY PLANNING TO GET INVOLVED IN CIVIL RIGHTS — HE JUST BURNED AN OLD NELSON EDDY RECORDING OF 'SHORT-NIN BREAD'."

In Face of Violence ... Time for Restraint

Following is a message by Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh, "Needed: The Ministry of Reconciliation," published in the Pittsburgh Catholic Diocesan newspaper following the death of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The latest violence to shock the nation, and mankind, confirms more than ever the need for Christian restraint, for disciplined speech, for maximum forbearance, for avoiding the violent word or deed which estranges the evildoer beyond recall, and for speaking only the word that seeks to reconcile.

This is a time for the spirit of Gamaliel, of St. Francis de Sales, of Pope John; of those who well-know the reality of evil and fight it at every turn, but refuse to be overcome or disoriented by it.

Such men do not give in to evil; in patience and in truth they resist it and conquer it. But they call it by its right name. That name is sin.

Sin reveals itself in the spirit of division. Sin is charged with suspicion, intolerance, loud talk. Sin is stamped all over the present national crisis. But this is no time for loud-mouthed denunciation, even of sin, if by such denunciation we play into the hands of the opportunists and the reactionaries.

In the face of political moral paralysis, surrounded by the violent screaming mob, Jesus, the Scripture tell us, kept silent. Pilate issued a statement. So did Herod. The crowd yelled all the slogans that the instigators of their frenzy taught them. Jesus kept silent.

The silence of Jesus was not because He had no plan, purpose or feeling for the human condition. It was precisely because He had a plan of peace, a purpose of unity and a compassion so profound that He did not utter the angry, defensive word which would further divide or express merely His personal hurt.

It is a time for similar creative disciplined silence on the part of all who seek to do the work and perpetuate the spirit of Jesus. That work is the work of reconciliation.

Reconciliation at the moment calls for a responsible guard on our tongues, a careful control of our emotions, a season of silence not in light from either thought or action but in order to produce ideas and decisions, somehow matching the desperate need in which we stand and the titanic task of total moral renewal which calls out to every resource left to us in the midst of our chaos or still available to us from the mercy of God.

As one listened to the whirlwind

of words which followed on the air — the news of the tragedy in Los Angeles — the crescendo of confused talk, building up all over the land, which has become so characteristic of us in times of crisis and is itself so great a part of our problem — one thought again of the mood of pre-Hitler Germany as violence was preparing to take over there.

One thought also, by total contrast, of the majestic silence of Jesus when His ministry of reconciliation was beginning its witness and work.

In the face of violence unleashed and evil in possession, Jesus kept silent; strangely but significantly, He made no comment. There was a time when He spoke, passionately and prophetically, but that was when the violence was not yet in unholy riot and the evil not yet triumphant.

Our present moment is one in which the inflammatory word and the violent deed, certainly not of those who utter in anger and the reaction that is almost compulsive when we are frustrated, can only multiply the evil and make all but impossible the work of reconciliation. This is a time to be guided by the Old Testament proverb: A man who can control his tongue has knowledge, a man of discernment keeps his temper cool (Prov. 17, 27).

This year has become, urgently, a time for the soft answer that turns away wrath, for the persevering work that seeks peace, for the production of peace, for the prayerful meditation that prefers self-examination and self-renewal to the denunciation of others, even those who do evil. It is no time for recrimination.

It is a time for utter sobriety, for honest self-searching and quiet self-sacrificing, for the silent labor that binds up wounds, not inflicts new ones; that builds with what we have and what we hope that God will give us, not destroys further the ties of trust. It is no time for blasting, counter-blasting and further alienation even of sinners, certainly not of those who, however blindly, seek, as Christians must, sanity and salvation.

The need is for that ministry of reconciliation which is the heart of Christ's priesthood, who have a share in that priesthood, on whatever level, under whatever aspect, are called as rarely before to play their part in Christ's ministry of reconciliation.

God give us men and women disposed in this penitential spirit to work together in the patient, undiscouraged ministry of reconciliation by which we in the Church, the nation, in all the human family, can alone be brought, through our suffering and God's grace, to unity in peace.

The High Court Ruling And Catholic Education

The following article was prepared by the Office of General Counsel of the United States Bishops' Catholic Conference to explain the decisions of the Supreme Court and their significance to Catholic education.

Washington — In a landmark decision on June 10, 1968, the U.S. Supreme Court opened the courts to taxpayers' suits challenging federal assistance to parochial school students.

In a related case, probably of greater significance, it also announced that such assistance is constitutionally valid whenever the purpose of the legislature is secular and the primary effect of the law neither advances nor inhibits religion.

Mr. Justice White, speaking for a majority of the Court in Board of Education v. Allen, affirmed the constitutionality of a New York free textbook law. The law, enacted in 1955, required public school boards to purchase textbooks and to lend them without charge to all children residing in a school district and attending approved schools, including private ones. The books had to be approved by the school board and had to be secular in content.

This is one of the most important decisions of the Supreme Court involving private schools. It strongly

affirms the duality of the educational system of this country — the public and the private schools each being a matter of state interest and concern and both contributing jointly to the education of children.

In the thinking of the Supreme Court, this is not a new or novel development but a projection of the underlying philosophy of its decision in the famous 1924 Oregon school case (Pierce vs. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510). The Court then upheld the right of parents to send their children to private schools.

In other words, the religious training in a parochial school is not a disqualifying factor. It does not prevent the state from extending aid to children in private or parochial schools. Just as the state may reasonably regulate private schools in the interest of the children, so it may extend financial assistance to these students. Such aid, of course, must satisfy a secular legislative purpose and have a primary effect that neither advances nor inhibits religion.

The Court said, "We cannot agree with appellants that all teaching in a sectarian school is religious or that the processes of secular and religious training are so intertwined that secular textbooks furnished to the students by the public are in fact instrumental in the teaching of religion."

Letters to the Editor

This morning as I was reading through the Courier I began to think what a pity it was that our Catholic newspaper offers so little guidance to the teenagers of our diocese. I am referring to guidance in temporal matters and more specifically to social activity within the community. The social guidance of teenagers is such a broad topic with so many different aspects to it.

There are many difficulties that confront our parish teens when they are introduced to the campus environment and all the aspects of it.

Such things as student protests, sit-ins, marches, the Student Power movements, the strong flood of student resistance to the established order, the cult of the Hippie, have finally brought home to the "adult world" that our young adults, the future leaders of our society, have been left without guidance far too long. I would like to propose that a small space in our Catholic newspaper be devoted to these young people who are entering colleges; give them some advice as to what college is all about, what they can expect to face, what obstacles may lie in their paths, how to adjust to the various aspects of the campus environments, subjects and subject matter, majors to choose, study habits, drinking, dating, socializing, etc. —Edward De Mott, Rochester, Senior at LeMoine College.

Editor: Pope John wanted a "renewal" We started out fine with liturgy change, ecumenism, school boards, etc. Lately we haven't gone quite far enough. Until we slick our necks out a little bit and have the courage the Holy Spirit has given us to use we will stay out of the news.

When pastors have the courage to make up their own parables and Christ remind their parishioners as Christ would have done that they may be committing a sin to deny equal rights to their black brother, then the

Church will be in the news. Then the young people who are leaving the Church may consider following in Christ's footsteps.

When our pastors (administrators) are willing to let their school boards and parish councils make some of their own decisions we will be in the news.

Why not accept all willing candidates for school boards, parish councils, etc? Let the people vote and decide who's best. There's gold out there. Quiet people, unknown good Catholics. It's the good talker who gets asked to do everything. There is talent going to waste among the quiet ones. —Frank Maslyn, Rochester.

Word for Sunday

God Loves Us Despite Our Sins

Last week I heard a lecture on Theology and Pastoral Counseling by Dr. Edward E. Thornton. The theme of his lecture was that our basic attitude in life shapes our perception, behavior, and response to life: A man, for instance, who does not trust his wife will perceive her actions not as a cocktail party as flirtatious; he will respond by behaving jealously.

Our basic attitude toward others can be one either of fear or faith. We view others through the eyes of distrust or trust. Whichever attitude we adopt will color our behavior. If we feel distrust, feel we are unloved and powerless, we normally react to make ourselves loved and able.

We build up a protective mask, an outer shell; we adopt a vicarious style of living. Thus to be accepted, we might strive to be witty or devoted. To be capable, we work to achieve—get a doctorate, let us say. Then we become obsessed with keeping on the mask, keeping up appearances.

If, however, our basic attitude is one of trust, of faith, we can easily become our authentic, genuine selves. real persons, not carbon copies. If I believe I am loved and can do things, then I can be myself. Our Christian faith is so important, because it can give us the correct basic attitude toward life and others that will insure our being true to ourselves.

The two parables in Sunday's gospel, for instance, tell us graphically about God's love. One of the hardest truths in life to believe is that God loves us — loves us despite our sins; in fact, loves us because we are poor, helpless sinners. Is it not precisely the helplessness of the small lost child that evokes everybody's sympathy? Yet we find it hard to accept God's great love for sinners. The chosen people stumbled over the block of God's love. "This man eats with sinners," they complained.

Physician that he was, St. Luke sought to heal our sinful souls by writing the Gospel of God's love for all sinners. Like pearls in a necklace, he strings along in Chapter 15 one parable after the other: the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son. All echo and re-echo the same message: God loves us. So have trust.

In all three parables the emphasis is on the one seeking the lost: the shepherd, who lost his sheep, the woman who lost her coin, the father who lost his son. Francis Thompson in one of the great poems of the English language dared to picture the persistence of the Searcher as that of a hound in pursuit of his prey. In the parables the Searcher found the lost, so did the Hound of Heaven. For "Fear wilt not to evade as Love trusts to pursue." What hope, what trust that should inspire if the joy of the finder was so great, what ought the joyful optimism of the "lost" — all of us — be!

Historic To Kee



OUR LADY

Parish Bulletin

Dropping Legitimate

By ALEX MacDONALD This is the third of a series of commentaries on parish bulletins, discussing the general feel and specific merits of 8 bulletins observed in six churches.

"Names make news" is an axiom of journalism. And in the weekly bulletins most of the names from many corners of the parish.

Although some bulletin writers admit that publication does stir passive parishioners to a role in the parish project while catering to the vanity of who love to see their names in the Name-dropping is a legitimate telling parishioners how the parish is run. Recently Father O'Brien at St. Mary's Church in Horseheads published full list of 41 people who are weekly parish payroll! Seem an excellent way to inform parish-contributors how many us worked for them and what salaries were.

Publicizing names is always form for saying "Thank you". parishes who have weekly binings list the men who are working committee for the Many parish bulletins discard altar-boy assignments for the lectors and commentators will be seen at the lectern this day, the girls who staff the and the ladies who are going "Our Lord's Housekeepers" mention is certainly due all of

Only a few parishes publish the babies baptized or

Q. The papers last week's groups of people fearing the world, because of possible planet hitting the earth, church doctrine about the world?"

—Mrs. B. K. V.

A. The Christian Church has had an official doctrine that of the world would come at a particular time. But the early Christians did believe that Christ have a "second coming" in time. Theologians generally believe Christ's coming will mark the end of the world, that it will be sudden and unexpected and that it will shock to the existent order of material universe. But Christ says: "Of that day and hour knows, not even the angels of God but the Father only" (Math. Read the final book of the Bible, Apocalypse, for some of St. Prophecies about the events end of the world.

PAT

Do you have questions about bug you? The famous PAT ANSWERS!... But write in your concerns... Address: PAT ANSWERS will not necessarily answer you... or of the Diocese.