

Van Dyke: Religious Humorist

Catholic Press Features

Westwood, N.J.—Dick Van Dyke, an elder in his Presbyterian church as well as an actor, has come up with a new kind of collection for Sunday morning.

It's a collection of photographs called by Van Dyke from films he has made, provided with clever gag lines and published as a small picture-book of religious humor titled "Altar Egos."

In the current Disney film, "Never a Dull Moment," there's a scene showing Van Dyke standing behind actress Dorothy Provine and trying to keep her from falling, as it she had just had a fainting spell, or been bopped on the head. Anyway, she looks like she's about to collapse.

In "Altar Egos," the scene carries the caption: "Really, Mrs. Allen, sitting in the front pew isn't nearly as bad as you think."



In "Fitzwilly," there was a scene in which Van Dyke visits a printer whose sole equipment seems to be a hopelessly archaic and very small handpress. In the photo Van Dyke holds a letter and is describing his printing needs to the printer, who is looking at him in something comparable to utter disbelief.

In "Altar Egos," the gag line makes Van Dyke a member of the "Church Bulletin" committee who tells the printer, "We were thinking of a full-color centerfold scented with roses."

In an introduction to "Altar Egos," published by the Fleming H. Revell Co., a leading Protestant book-publishing firm, Van Dyke explains that "this book is about me—a guy who goes to church on Sunday, who drops his kids off at Sunday school, who'd probably sit in the last pew if his wife didn't coax him down front, who knows he ought to give more time to his church—and maybe more money—and who knows he ought to pay attention to every word of the sermon, but his mind has a way of wandering."

Although the self-description isn't totally accurate (besides being an elder he is a leader of a Protestant youth organization and has frequently talked about going into church work after retiring from show business shortly) Van Dyke added something to the typical church-goer: "Sometimes he sings off key, or maybe too loud, and

maybe he pays more attention to the other guy's faults than his own. That's true, all right.

"Sometimes I want to laugh at myself for the things I do, but then I wonder whether I ought to laugh in church. But why not? Maybe that's where we need a little laughter to remind us that we're all just people, and when we're in church we're just as human as we are anywhere else—and God doesn't love us the less for it."

Thus, there's a photo from one of his films showing him

(in "Fitzwilly") putting his hand over co-star Barbara Felton's mouth as a matronly type wonders what's going on. Tagged "Fellowship Hour," the caption in "Altar Egos" reads: "Shhh! That 'old busy-body' is going to pay for half of our new building!"

Again from "Divorce, American Style," there's a shot showing Van Dyke in a state of open-mouthed surprise as he talks with his divorce lawyer, Shelley Berman. The "Altar Egos" caption: "I'm how far behind in my pledge?"

Priests Buy Homes To Rerel to Poor

Pittsburgh — (NC) — The Association of Pittsburgh Priests in an effort to make its housing program for the poor a reality, has deposited money on one house and expects to begin purchasing a second house in August.

Members raised more than \$10,000 among themselves and friends to purchase the first houses.

The APP—an organization of some 85 priests here—said the purchases are an attempt to express concern for the poor, while demonstrating that a small, private group can help solve the low-income housing crisis.

Archbishop Gets Further Duties

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI has named Archbishop Joseph Ryan of Anchorage, Alaska, to be Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Juneau.

While continuing his present duties, the archbishop will assume the added responsibilities of the Juneau diocese whose bishop had asked the Pope for permission to retire.

Parades Called Off

Newark — (NC) — After 60 years, the Essex County Federation of Holy Name Societies has broken ranks and will no longer sponsor parades for Holy Name members on Holy Name Sunday, the second Sunday of October.

Archbishop Named
Valleau City — (NC) — Pope Paul VI has named (June 24) as archbishop of Reims, France, Archbishop Jean Baptiste Maury, who has been apostolic nuncio in the Congo.

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