

# 'Rachel, Rachel' Handles Adult Subject Delicately

**Catholic Press Features**  
New York — "I hope it's successful, not because of any financial reward, but to prove to Hollywood you can make a film about basic, simple people, without violence and a band of Indians scalping the settlers," said Hollywood superstar Paul Newman.

The film is "Rachel, Rachel," the first film ever directed by Newman, and critics in both the general and Catholic press are also hoping it's successful, to prove that adult subjects can be handled on the screen in a non-sensational manner and still draw audiences.

"Rachel, Rachel" stars Newman's wife, Joanne Woodward, as a 35-year-old spinster schoolteacher who is fearful that unless she breaks out of her drab, emotionless existence right now, she will spend the rest of her years totally shut off from life. In her panic and confusion — helped along by a traumatic experience at a revivalist meeting — she enters into a summer affair with a childhood friend who has come back home for a visit. Her lover leaves suddenly; her hopes that she might be pregnant ("I didn't think anything alive could grow in me") prove false.

But, at film's end she decides to sever most of her ties to her old life in the hope that the second half of her life will be more meaningful.



Director Paul Newman reads Joanne Woodward for a scene in "Rachel, Rachel."

"It is easy for me to recommend 'Rachel, Rachel,' for every adult to see," wrote the Rev. John McDermott, film critic for "The Messenger," official newspaper of the Covington, Ky., diocese. "It could well become a class-room, film-study, even retreat film in helping us people to learn a little more than the more we know people, the more we know each other. The better

to love ourselves, others, God."

"Frustration has seldom been communicated so well," Father McDermott noted.

Other critics were impressed that, given the subject matter and the trend in modern film-making, "Rachel, Rachel" was a departure and "serves as a welcome alternative to the life-despising exploitation films that are flood-

ing the market at the moment," as "Newsweek" put it. "America's" Moira Walsh, admitting that adult subject matter is given "irresponsible and sensationalized treatment in something like nine out of ten cases," wrote that "Rachel, Rachel" is a "consolation to defenders of artistic freedom."

"It contains a couple of fairly frank sex scenes," she explained, "references to various psychological details, a fleeting lesbian overture and some other material with a high 'raunchiness potential.' Unlike those in 'The Fox' and a depressing number of other contemporary films, the frank details in 'Rachel, Rachel' are integrated into and subordinated to a moving and as far as it goes, valid human statement."

The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures gave the film an "unobjectionable for adults" (A-3) rating and said that although Newman's "use of flashbacks is self-conscious and their psychoanalytic character is not altogether successful in providing the crucial motivation needed to draw us closer to the main character," the film nevertheless "stands as a major directorial achievement, especially for a first film."

"The story could have become an ordinary soap opera," said NCMPP, "but its delicate characterizations and style of execution lift it far above this to the level of genuine human feeling."

## Grape Pickers

### Mark Strike's

#### 3rd Anniversary

San Francisco — (RNS) — More than 1,000 farm workers and their sympathizers — including many priests and nuns — commemorated the third anniversary of the Delano grape pickers strike here with a Mass and march to City Hall.

Sponsored by the S. F. Boycott Support Committee and the local Catholic Council for the Spanish Speaking, the day's program was marred by the absence of Cesar Chavez, director of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

Chavez, suffering from a painful back ailment, entered a San Jose hospital Sept. 6.

Doctors say he has been in almost constant pain for a week due to "a degenerative lumbar disc disease—premature wear and tear on joints and weakened muscles." He will be confined to the hospital for at least two weeks and faces an extended period of therapy at home.

Encumbered with 20 pounds of traction equipment and dazed from medication, Chavez was unable to accept a get-well telephone message from Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

Chavez and Delano's striking farm workers have since Sept. 8, 1965 been seeking the right to organize and bargain collectively with their grower employers.

## Cardinal Krol

### Acts to Relieve

#### Vocation Shortage

Philadelphia — (NC) — A program to stem the decline in vocations to the priesthood and religious life has been launched by John Cardinal Krol for the Philadelphia archdiocese.

Noting that Philadelphia traditionally had been "fertile soil which yielded an abundance of vocations," Cardinal Krol continued: "Regrettably, Philadelphia has not been spared the impact of those who by design or default demean the sublime privilege of a priestly and religious vocation. Such conduct does not inspire, but discourages vocations. It has impelled some youngsters to conclude: 'I want no part of that.'"

Noting that the archdiocesan seminary had admitted 94 candidates in 1964, the cardinal stated that the 1968 entrance class had 30 candidates.

"We have experienced the effects of the decline in religious vocations in our educational and charitable institutions," Cardinal Krol continued. "We are now faced with the impossibility of adequate staffing of our parishes. It is heartrending to be forced to deny a reasonable request for the services of a priest, and realize that such a denial compels some priests to work above their physical resources."

The situation calls for more than "hand wringing or a business-as-usual approach," Cardinal Krol said. He urged priests, religious and lay people—especially parents—to take "an active and prayerful interest in promoting vocations."

Inviting the special cooperation of priests, the cardinal declared: "Every priest, by virtue of his priestly vocation, is ever a promoter of vocations. The priest who does not inspire and attract others to the priesthood should be concerned about his own ministry."

# He Uses Fiction to Reach Spiritual Truth

Denver — Father Bernard Basset, S.J., is a British priest who gives retreats, writes books on spirituality and shows up from time to time on "The Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson.

Anyone who has attended his retreats — he has just arrived in Denver to begin another series — or read his books knows that Father Basset has no difficulty moving from the calm and quiet of a retreat into the frenetic late-night world of TV shows.

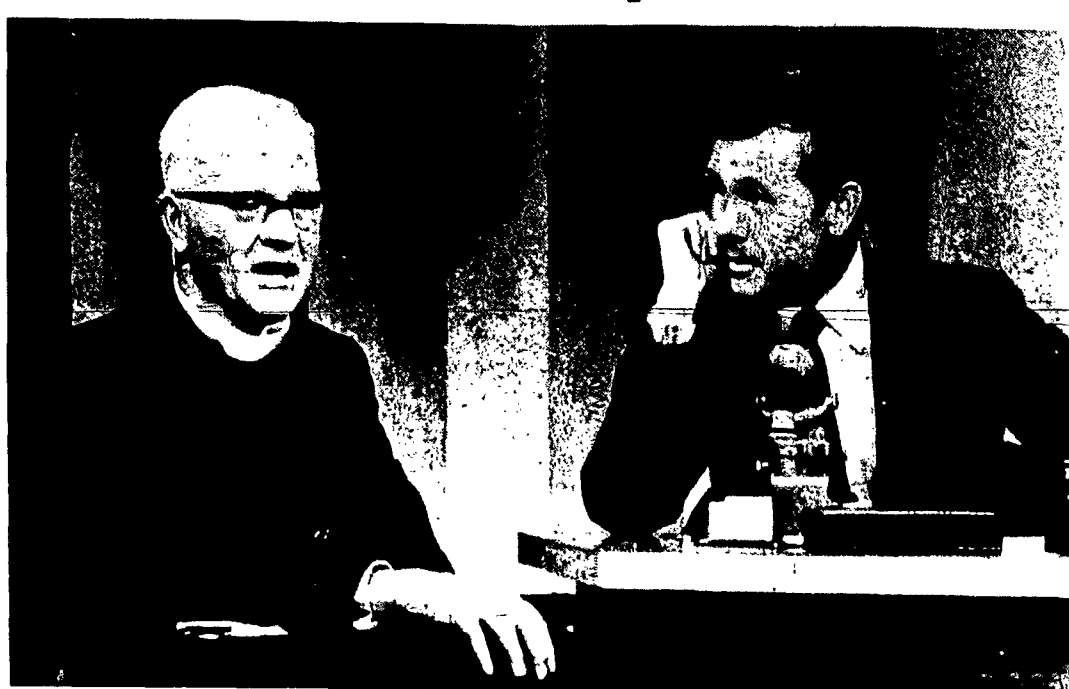
Evidence that Father Basset is not your every day brand of retreatmaster is the fact that he writes his spirituality books as fiction. As he says in the forward to his latest, "We Agnostics," "the author, after 25 years of work with tens of thousands of people, knows that in spiritual matters fiction may come frighteningly near to the truth."

Thus, he takes on the guise of "Harry Dawes," a 59-year-old Catholic, who buys some of the changes in the post-Vatican Church — though by no means all — and who is married to "Margery," whom he describes as "more papal than the Pope and far more trigger-happy."

But "We Agnostics" is about Harry Dawes' sudden loss of faith in God and his solution of the spiritual crisis. He wakes up one morning and discovers that the God he had been trained by the Church to believe in suddenly seemed inadequate and "shriveled" — too small and irrelevant for Dawes' modern needs.

"Harry Dawes' loss of God is terribly typical of too many previously believing Catholics," commented "Sign" magazine, "and the road he takes toward a new and more realistic faith is one which deserves wide and careful attention."

"Basset shows profound understanding of the dilemma of modern man and the agony



Father Basset on Johnny Carson's television show.

of the new Church. In Harry's homely — but never simple resolution of this problem of triviality, Basset points a direction more meaningful and more reliable than that of many other spiritual guides. This light-hearted but hard-headed journey over the 'tightrope of sterility' (as the book is sub-titled) deserves a wide circle of readers and high priority on the purchase lists of parish libraries."

Father Basset's "journey" through Dawes' spiritual oasis is freshened with bright writing that is entertaining as well as point-making.

Dawes — and Father Basset — finds himself suspicious of some of the changes in the Church ("At the moment we are jolly well going to be the people of God whether we like it or not. Frankly, I have no objection, though the full-throated Albigensians are not so easy when some of your teeth are not your own"), but he is not too sympathetic to those who cling to noxious

and yearn for the days of Pope Pius XII. ("Margery over the years has been assessing indulgences to keep her out of Hell. Once she was very, very angry when I said that she would be lost without Hell").

Father Basset's perplexed hero finds an answer to his agnosticism in the writings of Teilhard de Chardin, who believed that our concept of God must change and grow as man's knowledge and understanding of the universe changes and grows. "He, almost alone among Catholic thinkers, could grasp the sincerity of the modern agnostic who is too adult to worship a shriveled God who has a price (meaning that He could be easily placated with ritual prayers)."

"He was, as we know, silenced by the reigning theologians, and his calm acceptance of this obscurantist gesture has raised his head and shoulders above the angry, re-

bellious churchmen of our day. If religion is to have the Church a plant, then the private satisfaction of one branch or ear or cluster must be subordinated to the slower development of the whole." (Catholic Press Features)

## Former Nuns Map Appalachia Plans

Knoxville, Tenn. — (NC) — Designing and implementing programs in community development among the Appalachian people will have first priority for the Federation of Communities in Service (FOCIS) during the coming year.

The board of directors of FOCIS, a lay organization begun in August 1967 by former Glenmary Sisters, at a meeting here reviewed the past year and planned future activities. Reports from the four regions revealed:

—Chicago: FOCIS trainees in the uptown area worked with neighborhood people to sponsor three street festivals during the summer. Plans of the Chicago FOCIS community for the coming year include a training session during the second semester, services of one member as a professional librarian in the uptown public library, cooperation in neighborhood and agency activities.

—Eastern Tennessee: FOCIS members offer services through a variety of agencies, including the anti-poverty program, the public health department, the Department of Rural Development of the Catholic diocese, public schools and hospitals, and the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, an ecumenical church organization. They plan to expand their health services and recruit professional personnel to answer health needs in poverty areas during the coming year.

—In Virginia and West Virginia: A research project to understand the religious attitudes and values of the mountain people is under way. Professional service in art, music, and special education is offered by FOCIS members.

—In Cincinnati: FOCIS members maintain two apartments in the inner city, promoting a constructive coming together and mutual understanding among diverse elements of the community. Members perform a variety of social services in formal and informal situations.

Experience of needs and opportunities among the mountain people in five states led to the Board decision to give prime attention to designing new programs based on research done by the group, and to seek funds and personnel to carry out the programs.

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