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Lillian Gish and Religion

By JOHN DASH

"We are our ancestry, or we become it," she said last week, recounting her deepening appreciation for the affirmations and poetry which suffuse Episcopal worship.

The speaker was Lillian Gish, the sylph, whose fragile beauty remains as vibrant today as when she enthralled millions of viewers all over the world in her silent films.

Miss Gish amplified her statement, asserting that her mother's Episcopal lineage and training was the dominating religious influence in her family.

But, in the early years, when no Episcopal church was nearby for Sunday worship, her mother would admonish, "Go to church. Any church is better than no church." And frequently that church would be Roman Catholic. "And I understood none of it: the Latin, the bells, the jumping up and down and the changing of robes in the middle of ceremonies," she laughed. "But we went to church."

The actress received reporters last week during a stay in Rochester to present her newest book, Dorothy and Lillian, a selection of photographs of the lives and careers of the Misses Gish. "It's really Dorothy's story," she said. "No one's ever written it before." Dorothy Gish died in 1968, and, according to her sister, "was the far better actress." Critics, however, may consider the statement moot.

The volume, published recently by Scribner's, edited by Miss Gish's friend, Jim Frasher, with text by Lillian, is a beautiful book which will be especially interesting to anyone who appreciates the remarkable beauty and craft which the sisters brought to the medium.

Miss Gish has disciplined her life according to her own philosophy of establishing "equality among body, mind and spirit."

She said that if one part of the triangle receives greater emphasis than another "it becomes like an instrument out of tune."

Her respect for the body forbids her to eat white bread, "a national disgrace" and last week she became incensed over the texture of whole wheat bread that was served her here.

As to the mind, "I love writers and I'm an intellectual snob."

"And writers like me," she asserted, "because, I suppose, I listen well. You know I don't collect things — except books."

As to the spirit, Miss Gish is a communicant at St. Bar-

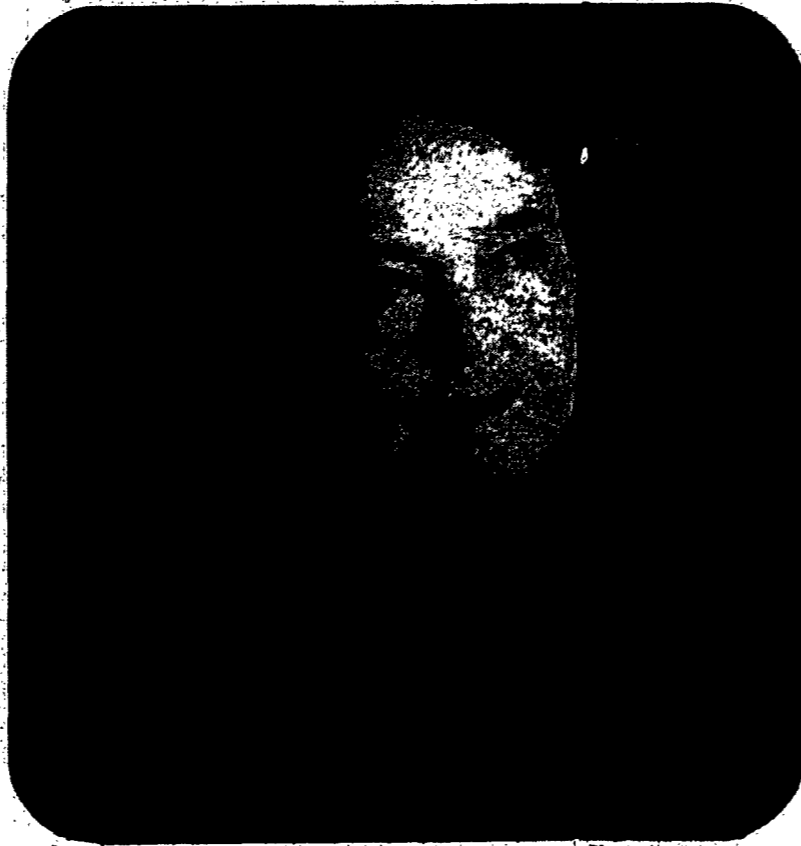
Knights Plan Blood Drive

The New York State Council of the Knights of Columbus is holding its annual blood campaign from December through February, 1974.

Thus far, only one area in the diocese has reported on its blood drive. Recently 159 units of blood were donated at St. Margaret Mary's Church Hall, Irondequoit.

The bloodmobile will be at St. Mary's, Canandaigua, on Friday, Dec. 21, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The K of C will have a special televised Blood-a-Thon Wednesday, Dec. 26, on WXXI, Channel 21, Rochester.



MISS LILLIAN GISH Photo by Dave Witbeck

tholomew's Church in New York City. She is also active in the church, voting in its elections, even by long-distance telephone calls when she is out of town.

Perhaps one of Miss Gish's most famous roles was that of the "White Sister" a 1918 film which for the first time recorded the ceremonies of the wedding of a nun to Christ.

The movie, made in Italy, required more than a year of research and filming, she said. "They just don't know how, or want, to do that kind of work on films any more. D.W. Griffith would insist that we know all the details and get them right."

She told an intriguing story of a monk who traveled with the company to Italy. He was acting as the still photographer for the film and had fallen out of grace with his monastic community.

One day during a break in the filming "I've forgotten, it was either the Uffizi or the Pitti gallery, I found him kneeling before a Rafael madonna. Tears were pouring down his face."

The monk, she said, returned to his community. She suspects he is alive today.

Miss Gish is convinced of a "renaissance in religion" happening today. "Of course there are natural diversions in that," she said, "with the young people looking into Zen Buddhism and the eastern religions. But all young people do that. I did it myself."

She is pleased with the pulp exchanges among various churches, and views it not only as a hopeful sign of the future but a small realization of "an impossible dream." That dream, she says, is a world of peace, unity and harmony.

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Charismatics List Meetings

The following is a list of meetings and Masses sponsored by area Catholics in the Charismatic Renewal.

Pentecostal meetings are held on Mondays at the homes of: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dunning, 159 Chestnut Ridge Rd., Chili Center; Mr. and Mrs. Klaus Schulz, 156 N. Greece Rd., N. Greece.

On Tuesdays, Mr. and Mrs. William Buechel, 3681 Lake Avenue, Rochester; Mrs. John Sherry, 15 Starlite Dr., Rochester; Mr. and Mrs. Warren Lynch, Hamlin-Clarkson Town Line Rd., Hamlin.

On Wednesdays, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Mahaney, 479 Covewood Blvd., W. Webster.

On Thursdays, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Hauser, 1570 Culver Rd., Rochester; St. Charles Borromeo Church, Rochester.

On Saturday evening, Mr. and Mrs. John Donnelly, 9 Ellicott St., Rochester; Mr. and Mrs. James Reid, 113 Amity St., Spencerport; Mr. and Mrs. Donald Wollschleger, 350 N. Winton Rd., Rochester.

Weekly prayer meetings are held at St. Peter and Paul Church at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and at St. Theodore Church at 8 p.m. on Mondays.

Mass is celebrated at 8 p.m. every First Friday at St. Lawrence Church and at 7:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month at St. Charles Borromeo Church.

YOU ARE INVITED

St. Monica's Parish invites all former and present parishoners to celebrate our 75th Jubilee and installation of our Parish Council.

DECEMBER 16

Concelebrate Mass at Noon. Followed by reception in school hall.

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