

**AS I SEE IT**

**A 'Chewy' Look at Christianity**

**Pat Costa**

I suppose there have been other spinoffs from "Gunsmoke" in the score of years the most famous TV Western has been seen on our home screens.

Offhand I can't think of any, however, and who knows, maybe in this respect "Dirty Sally" is unique.

For those who are unfamiliar with the name, "Dirty Sally" is Jeannette Nolan, or rather, a character played by this long time actress. Sally made her debut on "Gunsmoke" the same night Notre Dame was teaching Alabama about the vagaries of achieving a perfect football record. Thus, I don't imagine too many people got a chance to get acquainted with old Sal.

Miss Nolan was entrancing in her role of an old woman who toughs it out alone with a donkey named "Worthless" collecting and selling bottles thrown out of wagon trains. Dirty Sally comes by her name honestly. She looks a little ripe. And she loves her whiskey and her chewing tobacco. But Sally's virtues far outweigh her seamier qualities. A creature of indomitable spirit, chaste in mind and generous of soul, she may be the most interesting woman character presently seen on TV. Give her a try in her new time slot at 8 p.m. Fridays. May she have better luck

than her predecessor "Calucci's Department."

Tired of the doctor shows weary of detectives, just plain had it with the game shows.

Maybe what you'd like is a little soap opera — British style. Channel 21 last week unveiled a new 13 part sudser as the latest entry on Masterpiece Theater seen Sundays at 9 p.m.

Titled "Upstairs, Downstairs," the nice thing about this show is that each week a self-contained episode will be screened so you can miss one without it affecting your pleasure of the next.

"Upstairs, Downstairs" takes place in London between 1903 and 1910 in the elegant house of a government minister. The title refers to the upstairs activities of the swells and the downstairs going on of those in service to them.

I found the first episode about the hiring of a new parlor maid entertaining enough even if nothing too much happens. The characters being well-developed are interesting and the interplay among them fascinating.

You could do much worse on Sunday evenings when it comes to television.

**Philemon's Problem**, by James Burtchaell, CSC, (Life in Christ, 178pp, paper)

**BY JOHN DASH**

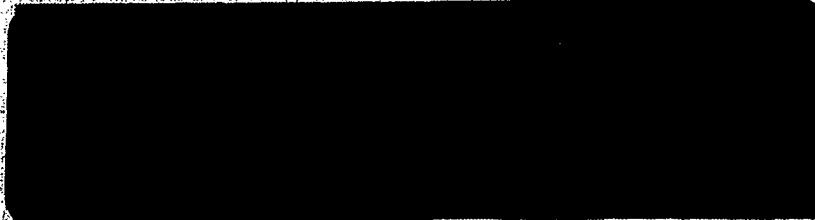
One of the most extraordinary pieces of religious literature to come down the line in the past 10 years is Philemon's Problem, penned by the provost of Notre Dame University, Father James Burtchaell.

Extraordinary, because it manages to present a careful analysis of current problems in Christianity with the vigor of a one-two punch, all the while focusing on the inanity of many of our more cherished rationalizations for behaving in an un-Christian way, and all the while insisting on a feisty sense of humor.

To wit, the humor: "It is this combination of qualities, of an unknown, a mighty and a judgemental god, that makes most divinities distinctly unpleasant. Most gods are not quite as appealing as your better friends. Far from hankering after an eternity of their companionship, most people would probably not be anxious to spend a weekend with their particular god or any one else's."

He marshals literary and religious thinking from the Scriptures to John Le Carre's book, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, with an incisive view of present social structures and ethics.

The result is "chewy" (his own word) but extremely rewarding.



Father Burtchaell's thesis is that God loves us, and he manages to prove that most of us who call ourselves Christians simply don't believe that fundamental teaching of Jesus at all.

His book is an engaging invitation to Christianity. But because it is Christianity to which Father Burtchaell calls the reader, it is not a little frightening.

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**At Home With the Movies**

**SOME KIND OF A NUT [1969]**

Wednesday, Jan. 16 [NBC]

A bank teller (Dick Van Dyke), picnicking in the park with his fiancée (Rosemary Forsyth), is stung on the chin by a bee. This painful condition forces him to grow a beard. The beard in turn earns him an unjustified reputation as a non-conformist, which he feels obliged to defend rather than knuckle under to his employers' petty officiousness. Fellow employees and associates choose sides in the dispute which develops into a protest movement, in the course of which the hero rediscovers the sterling qualities of his about-to-be-ex-wife (Angie Dickinson). Buried somewhere in this plot is a pleasantly whimsical examination of contemporary man's search for integrity and individuality. **A-III**

**THE UNDEFEATED [1969]**  
 Friday, Jan. 18 [CBS]

Solid, unpretentious Western has old-fashioned movie virtues and the great strengths of John Wayne and Rock Hudson in the key roles. Wayne and Hudson are respectively, ex-Union and ex-Confederate officers leading bands toward Mexico for a new start. They meet, clash a bit, and gradually develop a deep respect for each other, all the while taking adventure and adversity by the horns. Good viewing. **A-I**

**THE ARRANGEMENT [1969]**  
 Friday, Jan. 18 [NBC]

Kirk Douglas stars in this Elia Kazan movie based on an Elia Kazan novel based in part on Elia Kazan's life. The story is the not-so-savory tale of the rich-but-unfulfilled life of a high-powered advertising exec, who has certain "arrangements" — for example, with his loving wife Deborah Kerr, and with his loving mistress Faye Dunaway. **B**

**FOR A FEW DOLLARS MORE [1966]**  
 Sunday, Jan. 20 [ABC]

One of the violence-ridden, generally senseless early presentations of Clint Eastwood as the Man With No Name. This one has Eastwood as some sort of vengeful bounty-hunter hunted by another bounty-hunter, Lee Van Cleef. It's all done with that nonsensical flair of the early "pasta Westerns" of director

Sergio Leone. It may be worth watching if you've never seen any of the three films (the other two were *Fistful of Dollars* and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*) that made the cigar-chomping Eastwood Italy's leading box office raker. **A-III**

**SEE NO EVIL [1971]**  
 Monday, Jan. 21 [NBC]

Mia Farrow stars in this hokey but effective suspense chiller about a recuperating blind young woman who literally stumbles upon a mass murder scene in the home of relatives with whom she's been staying since her accident. Both the killer and the young woman's heroic boyfriend return to the scene of the crime — and it's a horse race to see which gets to the girl first. **A-III**

**SKULLDUGGERY [1970]**  
 Monday, Jan. 21 [ABC]

Witless and often remarkably tasteless film about a lady an-

thropologist (Susan Clark) in New Guinea searching for prehistoric humanoid remains, a priest-missionary (Chips Rafferty) who accompanies her safari, an opportunist financier (Paul Hubschmid), and two ne'er-do-wells (Burt Reynolds and Roger Carmel) who mislead the expedition into uncharted territory where the two hope to mine phosphor. In discovering the relics, the group comes upon a species of apes which seem to manifest human qualities. The priest considers baptizing them. When Hubschmid decides to enslave the apes for cheap world-wide labor, Reynolds recovers his offended moral sense, and the film apparently locates its theme: are the creatures human? It sounds like it might make an interesting study, but the extraordinary tastelessness of the film's comedy is easily a match for its aimless direction, its banal dialogue and its half-dimensional characterizations. **A-III**

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