



## Muggeridge Converts, Cites Mother Teresa

Words cannot say how beholden I am to her. She has given me a whole new vision of what being a Christian means.



London (NC) — Journalist and television personality Malcolm Muggeridge and his wife, Kitty, were received into the Catholic Church Nov. 27.

In an article in the Times of London, Muggeridge, who will be 80 next March, attributed his conversion in large part to Mother Teresa, founder of the Missionaries of Charity. In 1968, he produced a television documentary depicting her commitment to the destitute of India.

"Words cannot say how beholden I am to her," he wrote in the Times. "She has given me a whole new vision of what being a Christian means: of the amazing power of love, and how in one dedicated soul, if can burgeon to cover the whole world."

The Catholic response to the moral crisis of the present time had always appealed to him, he said. He cited


"Humanae Vitae," the encyclical issued by Pope Paul VI in 1968, saying its prohibition of artificial birth control seemed "absolutely correct." Like contraception, legalized abortion was "morally disastrous" and inevitably brought legalized euthanasia in its train, Muggeridge said.

"In becoming a Catholic, he said, he also experienced "a sense of homecoming, of picking up the threads of a lost life, of responding to a bell that has long been ringing, of finding a place at a table that has long been left vacant."

Muggeridge, who has professed an early admiration for communism and various illicit love affairs, has for some years been a proponent of non-denominational Christianity.

He is a former editor of Punch, the British humor magazine.

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## Deacon Graybill to Play Scrooge

Deacon Patrick Graybill, one of the foremost deaf actors in the U.S., will take the role of Ebenezer Scrooge in "A Christmas Carol: Scrooge and Marley," to be performed 8 p.m., Dec. 9-11, and 2:30 p.m., Dec. 12, at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf Theater in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Building on the RIT campus.

Deacon Graybill was ordained this year. Before

joining NTID in 1979, he spent 11 seasons as a leading actor with the National Theater of the Deaf.

The play's cast of 35 adults, students and children will be a mixture of deaf and hearing people. The performances will be presented in both voice and sign language for both deaf and hearing audiences.

According to director Bruce Halverson, "We're

really directing two plays at once, with deaf and hearing actors at the same time." The veteran of 20 years in the theater said, "I'm confident that we can give our audiences a presentation that will provide enjoyment for those familiar with 'A Christmas Carol' and for those who don't know the story."

The play is based on the story, "A Christmas Carol," by Charles Dickens.

## Help for Needy

Employees of the City of Rochester will be asked to donate toys until Wednesday, Dec. 15, to be distributed to needy youngsters by Marine Corps Reserves.

The city "will welcome gifts (no cash) from any area resident who wants to contribute to this most worthwhile project." Gifts must be in good condition and wrapped and may be deposited in the City Hall atrium from 9 to 5 any weekday. Further information is available at 428-7045.

## Father Bruce Ritter



In the jargon of the street he's known as rough trade and he plies his wares, himself, up and down the Minnesota Strip. He is fifteen and looks eighteen and he's seen the elephant, he's seen it all.

We faced each other across my desk casually, relaxedly while I carefully arranged my face and my eyes and my mind, so that nothing I said or did or thought or felt for the next hour was spontaneous or unconsidered. He offhandedly, with the practical skill that needed no explanation, probed for my weaknesses, inspecting my jugular with the guileless eye of the corrupted young. Slow waves of depravity and innocence washed in shadows of darkness and light across his face.

He used the shreds of his innocence with a kind of detached hapless malevolence to evoke my sympathies. By turns he was cynical and calloused, winsome and desperate—and for knowing moments at a time, even vulnerable. He drifted in and out of reach, in and out of touch, constantly probing, watching for the moment of advantage.

The Minnesota Strip is the slimy underbelly of Manhattan, a 15-block stretch of Eighth Avenue porno parlors, strip joints, cheap bars, fleabag hotels—home for thousands of drifters, hookers, and pimps. It parallels Times Square and intersects that block on 42nd Street where a couple dozen third-rate movie houses crowd together in grimy brilliance. At night, the crowds of

Father Bruce Ritter, OFM Conv., is the founder and President of Covenant House/UNDER 21, which operates crisis centers for homeless and runaway boys and girls all over the country.

## THE CORRUPTED YOUNG

castoffs and nomads and derelicts mingle with the crowds of affluent theater-goers from the high rent districts and suburbs. At lot of kids go there to make their living. Like the boy across my desk.

*"He plies his wares, himself, up and down the Minnesota Strip."*

You don't say very much to kids like that. It's always much more a thing of vibes and perceptions and boundaries. The trick is to offer what he needs at that moment and that's rarely a lot of God talk. It's enough if he knows why you do it. This kid's needs were simple enough: a place to live, some safety, some food. What complicated the essentially simple immediacy of it all was our "no strings" love. He wanted to pay for it. That's what he always had to do. That's how the game is played.

We play the same game with God all the time. We don't like His "no strings" love for us either, particularly if the "us" includes a depraved innocent, a vomit-splattered derelict or a pimp with a stable of children whom he rents by the hour. We try desperately to climb up out of the "us" by being good, by being better, by deserving more. We de-

*"Maybe that child, who was never a child, will become a child. Maybe."*

mand that God love us because we are good; and we are good to make God love us. We have to pay for it. That's the way we've always played the game. And to know that God loves us not because we are good, but to make us so, is sometimes unbearable. Because as He loves us, so we have to love "us," all of us.

And so I try to love the kid across my desk in a way he really can't understand. But grace does, and God working in a depraved and empty and terrified heart does and maybe, just maybe, the innocence will return to that face and he will take his eyes off my jugular and stop pushing his toe into my foot under the desk. Maybe that child, who was never a child, will become a child. Maybe.

He is yours and mine. Like it or not, he is part of us. Thanks for your own "no strings" love—your help.

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