

TELEVISION

Don't Miss 'Choices of the Heart'

By Michael Gallagher
New York (NC) — It's unlikely that 70 million Americans will sit down to watch the made-for-television movie "Choices of the Heart" at 9 p.m. on Dec. 5, but this account of the spiritual awakening of Jean Donovan, a young American woman from a well-off middle class family in Westport, Conn., and her death in El Salvador deserves that extensive an audience just as much and perhaps even more than "The Day After."

For if "The Day After" was about what could happen, "Choices of the Heart" is about what did happen. And if the appeal of the former was primarily to the fear and self-interest of Americans, that of the latter is to the conscience of Americans.

"Choices," written by playwright John Pielmeier, whose "Agnes of God" was a critically acclaimed Broadway hit, and directed by Joseph Sargent, obviously owes much to the splendid documentary "Roses in December." Like "Roses" it begins its tragic but profoundly moving and inspiring story in flashback.

One the night of Dec. 2, 1980, there's a reunion of four good friends at the airport in San Salvador. Jean Donovan (Melissa Gilbert), a lay missionary, and Sister Dorothy Kazel (Pamela Bellwood), an Ursuline nun, arrive to pick up Maryknoll Sisters Ita Ford (Mari Gorman) and Maura Clarke (Mary McCusker), who have just returned from a conference in Nicaragua.

Though Ita and Maura are veteran missionaries and Jean and Dorothy relative newcomers, the four have become very close through shared hardship and peril. Jean and Dorothy can always be depended upon for "wheels," the same white microbus that Jean has driven to the airport tonight.

Whenever Ita and Maura sent an emergency call from civil-war wracked Chalatenango Province, Jean and Dorothy made the trip up and transported hapless victims of the conflict back to the refugee camp near Libertad, the base of the Cleveland Mission to which they belonged.

But tonight all that is coming to an end. A short distance from the airport,

Jean pulls the microbus to a stop in front of a roadblock, and armed men in civilian clothes step out of the shadows.

From there the main portion of the story begins, with Jean in full riding dress galloping her favorite horse through a Connecticut woods, falling off at a jump and then getting back on at once with characteristic determination.

We see her enjoying herself with her customary appetite for life and through her experiences in Ireland during a junior year abroad. But then we also see her coming under the influence of a tough and, on the face of it, very old-fashioned Irish priest (Martin Sheen), who says to her much the same things that Ignatius Loyola at the University of Paris must have said to his greatest catch, Francis Xavier.

Jean begins — reluctantly, not at all pleased about it — to look more deeply into herself and into her faith. The results are not immediately apparent. Carefree as ever, it seems, she takes a well-paying job at a firm in Cleveland and embarks on a period of conspicuous consumption, finding time to start to fall in love with a young doctor (Peter Horton).

Finally, however, in a decision that startles those closest to her, she goes to El Salvador for a two-year period of missionary work.

There, confronted with a strange and tragic land, she overcomes her fears and and uncertainties, inspired by the example of her three closest companions and the charismatic figure of the soon-to-be-martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero (Rene Enriquez).

Though "Choices," with quite admirable restraint, doesn't depict any of the final ordeal of Jean and her companions, it makes abundantly clear what happened to them. In a scene set two years later, former ambassador to El Salvador Robert White (Mike Farrell) — who was ousted from his post by the Reagan administration and was determined to see the killers brought to justice — reads a confession of one of the four National Guardsmen accused of the crime but not brought to trial.

Melissa Gilbert, despite her youth, is as nearly perfect a Jean as one could hope for.



In war-torn El Salvador, American missionary Jean Donovan, played by Melissa Gilbert, is stopped and searched by government troops in "Choices of the Heart."

BOOKS

"The Bishops and the Bomb: Waging Peace in a Nuclear Age," by Jim Castelli. Image Books (Garden City, N.Y., 1983). 216 pp., \$7.95.

Reviewed by Jim Lackey
 NC News Service

"Historic" may be an overused word to describe the U.S. bishops' recent pastoral letter on war and peace.

But historic it was, and its development is captured well in Jim Castelli's "The Bishops and the Bomb."

Castelli, Washington bureau chief of the national Catholic newsweekly, Our Sunday Visitor, sets out to show how an informal discussion among the bishops in 1980 about the need to update the Church's teachings on war and peace evolved into the "revolutionary" pastoral approved by the bishops 238-9 last May.

He obtained, he says, unprecedented access to records of the drafting committee headed by Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago. Thus, the most valuable part of the book is not his reporting on the general meetings at which the pastoral was discussed in open session but the insights he gives into the give-and-take which shaped the various drafts of the pastoral in committee.

He provides probably the only account that will ever be available of what turned the second draft's call for a "halt" in the arms race into the third draft's "curb," only to be changed back to "halt" by the bishops at the final Chicago meeting.

Most of the book's faults probably could

be traced to the apparent haste with which it was put together. Sometimes there are typographical or factual errors, such as a reference to 1981 as the 26th anniversary of the first atomic bombing, or the bishop (Richard Skiba, auxiliary of Milwaukee) whose name is spelled wrong each of the two or three times it appears. And the book at times reads like minutes taken by a diligent secretary rather than a journalist's distillation of the debate among the bishops.

Castelli also makes the questionable judgment that Ronald Reagan's election was the "single greatest factor" contributing to the drafting of the pastoral. Though the election indeed was one of several factors which brought the call for a pastoral, some of the momentum which led to the pastoral was in place before Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter.

Some readers might also think Castelli treats too harshly the role played by Bishop John O'Connor, the member of the drafting committee and former Navy chaplain who had the most reservations about some of the statements in the pastoral's various drafts.

But those are more than outweighed by such things as the way Castelli early in the book places the pastoral in the context of Catholic social teaching, or the way he shows how the decisions by individual bishops to oppose the arms race contributed to the bishops' collective judgments in the pastoral.

"Portrait of Jesus?," by Franck C. Tribbe. Stein and Day (Briarcliff Manor, N.Y., 1983). 281 pp., \$19.95.

Reviewed by James C. O'Neill
 NC News Service

This year Umberto II, the exiled and, presumably, last king of Italy, died. He bequeathed to Pope John Paul II a large piece of ancient linen, bearing the image of a bearded, naked, crucified man.

Known as the Shroud of Turin, the relic has been venerated for centuries as the burial cloth of Jesus Christ.

In this skeptical age the disposal of a relic by an ex-king normally is not news. Umberto's gift, however, made the headlines, principally because the shroud itself has become news.

In recent years science and modern technology, often employed to expose the claims made for the authenticity of relics, have in the case of the shroud had exactly the opposite effect. Dozens of books have been published in the past 10 years or so and at least 20 scientific papers presented since 1978. The Shroud of Turin is "the" relic of the 20th century.

This book pulls together all existing information and reports about the shroud, its history, chemical and physical characteristics, and the findings of modern science.

It also provides ingenious theories of how the shroud found its way from the Jerusalem of the Apostles to the France of the 14th century.

What makes this particular relic a matter

of importance in the 20th century is the fact that it was photographed in 1898. On that occasion it was learned for the first time that the cloth as seen by the human eye was really a negative image of a crucified man.

On the photographic negative the image came out as a detailed positive print. It was, in Franck Tribbe's words, "the world's oldest photograph."

The discovery touched off a research effort that continues to the present. Tribbe presents these findings, including the work done by the American-organized Shroud of Turin Research Project (1977-1983).

This last was a private but academically well-affiliated and professionally recognized group of scientists who have come up with some truly startling new information about the shroud.

The author, although obviously quite sure himself, leaves it up to the reader to determine what answer should be given to the question posed by the book's title.

The American group of scientists have come to some conclusions beyond which they are unwilling to go. They found, for example, that the images, back and front of the figure, are not the sum of the stains, oils, sweat, blood and other bodily effluvia given off by the dead man. "The scientists are now certain," the author writes, "that the body images were not formed by human art or artifice, nor by known natural means."

MOVIES

These are the USCC symbols and their meanings: A-I — general patronage; A-II — adults and adolescents; A-III — adults; A-IV — adults, with reservations (an A-IV classification is for certain films which, while not morally offensive in themselves, require caution and some analysis and explanation as a protection to the uninformed against wrong interpretations and false conclusions); O — morally offensive. The word "recommended" appears behind the titles of those films that merit such a designation.

Here are the Motion Picture Association of America symbols and their meanings: G — General Audiences, all ages admitted; PG — parental guidance suggested, some material may not be suitable for children; R, restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; X — no one under 17 admitted (age limit may vary in certain areas).

A
 All the Right Moves, O (R)
B
 Ballad of Gregorio Cortez, A-II (PG) (Recommended)
 Betrayal, A-II (R)
 Beyond the Limit, O (R)
 The Big Chill, A-III (R)
 The Black Stallion Returns, A-I (PG)
 Blue Thunder, O (R)
 Brainstorm, A-III (PG)
 Breathless, O (R)
 Bugs Bunny 3rd Movie: 1001 Rabbit Tales, A-I (G)
C
 Class, O (R)
 Cross Creek, A-II (PG)
 Cujo, A-III (R)

D
 Daniel, A-III (R)
 The Dark Crystal, A-I (PG)
 The Dead Zone, A-III (R)
 Deal of the Century, A-III (PG)
 The Draughtman's Contract, O (R)
E
 Easy Money, O (PG)
 Eddie and the Cruisers, A-II (PG)
 Educating Rita, A-III (PG)
F
 Fanny and Alexander, A-IV (R)
 Fast Times at Ridgemont High, O (R)
 Final Option, A-III (R)
 Flashdance, O (R)
 48 Hours, O (R)
 Frances, A-IV (R)
G
 Gandhi, A-II (PG) (Recommended)
 Going Berserk, O (R)
 The Golden Seal, A-II (PG)
 The Grey Fox, A-III (PG)
H
 Hammett, A-II (PG)
 Heart Like a Wheel, A-III (PG)
 Hercules, A-II (PG)
J
 Jaws 3-D, A-III (PG)
 Joni, A-I (G)
 The Jupiter Menace, A-II (PG)
K
 The King of Comedy, A-II (PG)
 Krull, A-II (PG)

L
 Lianna, O (R)
 The Lonely Lady, O (R)
 The Lords of Discipline, A-III (R)
M
 The Man Who Wasn't There, O (R)
 The Man with Two Brains, O (R)
 Max Dugan Returns, A-II (PG)
 Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence, A-IV (R)
 Mr. Mom, A-II (PG)
 Monty Python's The Meaning of Life, O (R)
N
 National Lampoon's Vacation, A-III (R)
 Never Cry Wolf, A-II (PG)
 Never Say Never Again, O (PG)
 Night of the Shooting Stars, A-II (R)
O
 The Osterman Weekend, O (R)
 The Outsiders, A-III (PG)
P
 Pauline at the Beach, A-IV (R)
 The Pirates of Penzance, A-I (G)
 Porky's II: The Next Day, O (R)
 Private School, O (R)
 The Prodigal, A-II (PG)
 Psycho II, O (R)
R
 Return of the Jedi, A-II (PG)
 Return of Martin Guerre, A-III
 Revenge of the Ninja, O (R)
 The Right Stuff, A-III (PG)

Risky Business, O (R)
Romantic Comedy, A-II (PG)
 Rumble Fish, O (R)
S
 Screwballs, O (R)
 Smokey and the Bandit III, O (PG)
 The Star Chamber, A-III (R)
 Staying Alive, A-III (PG)
 Strange Brew, A-III (PG)
 Strange Invaders, A-II (PG)
 Streamers, A-III (R)
 Stroker Ace, A-III (PG)
 Superman III, A-II (PG)
 Survivors, A-III (R)
T
 Table for Five, A-III (PG)
 Tender Mercies, A-III (PG)
 Testament, A-II (PG)
 They Don't Wear Black Ties, A-IV
 Trading Places, O (R)
U
 Under Fire, A-III (R)
V
 The Verdict, A-II (R)
W
 Wargames, A-II (PG)
 The Wicked Lady, O (R)
 Wrong is Right, A-III (R)
Z
 Zelig, A-II (PG)

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