

Actor offers fine version of 'Henry V'

NEW YORK (CNS) — Fine acting, exquisite cinematography and powerful sound lift the current screen adaptation of Shakespeare's "Henry V" (Goldwyn) into the hall of classics not to be missed by students of the bard.

The film was adapted and directed by Irish-born actor Kenneth Branagh, who also stars as Henry V, the character originally brought so notably to life on film in 1944 by Laurence Olivier.

Branagh makes the most of close-ups and fluid camera movements that impart a sense of intimacy lost in stage productions. As King Henry V, Branagh is at once powerful and completely human, shrewd but accessible.

Although he looks like a pug-nosed kid, Branagh carries the weight of Henry's title well even as he must divest himself from kinship with his old drinking cronies, including Falstaff (Robbie Coltrane in a muddled flashback dying sequence), before he can succeed at being king. Henry's determination to reclaim the French throne at any cost sees him easily condemn former friends, now traitors, and hang wastrels who stymie his plot to overtake the French army.

The film is especially awesome during the last third as Henry and his weary, weather- and war-ravaged soldiers prepare to fight what they feel may be their last battle. Ten-thousand strong and on their own soil, the French gloat too easily about what they mistakenly judge to be a sure win.

The French are no match for Henry, however, who on the eve of the pivotal battle at Agincourt works his camp in disguise. He ferrets out discontent and challenges those whose spirits and bodies seem too exhausted to continue the fight.

As performed by Branagh, his powerful speech of unity on the following day, St.



Actor Kenneth Branagh (center) as Henry V, the king of England, leads his troops into battle against France in a new version of Shakespeare's "Henry V." The U.S. Catholic Conference says "fine acting, exquisite cinematography and powerful sound" will lift the production "into the hall of classics." It classifies the film A-II — adults and adolescents.

Crispin's Day, believably inspires even the most disheartened souls to follow his lead, despite the obvious suicide mission that lays ahead for these men.

Branagh puts on a brilliant show here as well as during the subsequent chilling battle sequence that is realistically confused and bloody and set in sea of mud and dank weather. As he and his surviving soldiers slog through bloodied mud and pick through piles of bodies to reclaim their own, there is no doubt that war then as now is hell, and that faith in one's country, one's leaders and especially one's God is a strong instrument in survival.

Although low on spectacle, special effects and other pointless big budget gizmos, this frugally produced "Henry V" pulls its strength from thoughtful cinematographic intimacy and immediacy. Aside from the distracting barroom flashbacks, nothing is extraneous, and no one will be immune from the universality of Henry's final battle cry, his painful struggles with conscience and angst over the losses resulting from his hard-won victory.

Also noteworthy is his comically clumsy whirlwind courtship of Katherine (Emma Thompson), daughter of the defeated Fren-

ch king (Paul Scofield) and his final prize.

Students of Shakespeare should give this film a well-deserved long life on video and everyone (older adolescents and adults) with even nodding knowledge of the bard would do well to catch its fever on film as well.

Due to a graphic hanging scene and an intense and bloody climactic battle sequence, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

Stallings

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"political tactics used by the powerful, the oppressors, to further enslave and oppress the oppressed," Father Stallings said.

"Those terms have no significance to me whatsoever," he added. "I cannot be cut off from Jesus Christ. That's the only thing I'm concerned about being cut off from."

During the program, Father Stallings indicated aspects in which the African-American Catholic Congregation may differ from Catholic teaching.

"I think priests should have the option of deciding whether or not to marry," he said. On the questions of birth control and abortion, he said life "should be respected from the moment of conception" but that a "well-informed conscience supersedes any decree or law of the Roman Catholic Church."

Asked whether he had taken the issue of greater black participation in the church to the Vatican, Father Stallings replied that "because of the hierarchical red tape, it is impossible for a priest to go to the Vatican."

On Feb. 1 and 2, when Father Stallings was on the campus of Vincentian-run DePaul University in Chicago to give a speech on racism in the church and to meet with black students and faculty, he reiterated his intent to form a separate church.

He said the new church "will be independent" just like the Polish National Catholic Church, which split from the Roman Catholic Church at the turn of the century. "Still Catholic, but independent," Father Stallings said.

The Polish National Catholic Church broke away because of its founders' long-held dissatisfaction with Roman Catholic ideology and administration — especially the assignment of non-Polish pastors to

Polish parishes — coupled with a desire for religious freedom.

Father Stallings said he did not inform officials of the Washington archdiocese of his plans in advance because he "didn't think they would care."

"I exhausted all efforts to make a change through the church," Father Stallings told reporters after his speech. "I came to that conclusion after I desperately sought to work within the confines of the church and met opposition."

On a Baltimore television interview program aired Jan. 14, Father Stallings said of his relationship with Cardinal Hickey: "We are moving to a point in the African-American Catholic Congregation where in every sense of the word I will be his equal."

Imani Temple spokesman William Marshall said Feb. 2 that there is "always a possibility" that Father Stallings would proclaim himself a bishop.

Parish-based farmworker support group to meet

ONTARIO — The Migrant Farmworkers Support Group of Wayne County will meet Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary of the Lake Church, 5823 Walworth Rd.

A parish-based, ecumenical effort, the support group was formed to help meet some of the needs of area farmworkers. Currently, the group is working in conjunction with the Literacy Coalition of Wayne County to raise funds for a van.

The vehicle will be used to transport migrant workers from their camps to local agencies and groups for a variety of services.

The meeting is open to the public. For information, call Rodrigo Alconero, 315/789-2686.

AQ's sports dinner nears

ROCHESTER — Former Pittsburgh Steelers great "Mean Joe" Greene, Buffalo Bills wide receiver Andre Reed, 1989 Rochester Invitational champion Patty Sheehan, and humorist/umpire Marty Springstead are slated to head the table at the sixth-annual Aquinas Sports Celebrity Dinner Sunday, Feb. 11, at the Diplomat Party House, 1956 Lyell Ave.

The dinner will also feature the inductions of four new members of the Aquinas Hall of Fame: Anthony "Chubby" Ciravola; Dr. S. Patrick Peartree; Mort Leary; and John A. Toscano.

Tickets for the dinner cost \$40 each and may be purchased from Aquinas' alumni office. For information, call the school at 716/647-2990.

Woman

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abortion was performed there.

The doctor treating Klein at the rehabilitation institute was not involved in the abortion and thus declined to comment about it, Passantino said after consulting with the physician, who was provided with a series of written questions on the case from CNS.

"We've heard that Nancy Klein is waking up — we would assume (with) a profound sadness when she discovers she has only one child and not the second," said Dr. John C. Willke, National Right to Life Committee president.

Willke said the court that heard the guardianship case consulted specialists who "agreed an abortion was not necessary to save her life."

"In fact," he said, it was "determined it would endanger her life to do one."

"In summary," he said, "there was no medical reason for the abortion. The abortion had no relevance to her coma. If she did not kill the baby, she would have the baby."

The case also raised several points about the treatment of comatose patients, Myers said.

"This shows once again it's wise not to withdraw food and water" from a comatose patient, she said. "It's important not to give up on people in a bad state, in a

coma."

One of Klein's doctors earlier had told the news media that the abortion allowed certain medications to be used safely in fighting the coma and assisting Klein's recovery.

At the time of the legal battles over the abortion, Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York said that he could "understand the anguish of the husband" in such a tragedy.

"In accordance with our theology, you can't attempt to save one innocent human life by taking another innocent human life," the cardinal said.

Contributing to this story was Mark Patison in Washington.