

# Farce pokes fun at religious; drama tedious

NEW YORK (CNS) — A lightweight British comedy, "Nuns on the Run" (Fox) tells the story about two genially daft gangsters who masquerade as Catholic sisters to escape being nabbed by the police, rubbed out by the mob they've double-crossed, or sliced up by the Hong Kong drug syndicate they've ripped off.

Brian (Eric Idle) and Charlie (Robbie Coltrane) are career criminals who rue the growing violence of their chosen trade. Wishing to retire from the business in one piece, they plan to steal a million pounds in drug money and live happily ever after in Brazil.

Unfortunately, when their getaway car runs out of gas, they grab the loot and dive through the open doorway of the nearest building, which is by chance a convent. With the police and the two rival gangs searching for them outside, the duo decide to stay awhile, don habits and introduce themselves to the convent's no-nonsense superior (Janet Suzman) as visiting nuns.

The rest of the film mines the sight gags and broad humor inherent in the ridiculous situation of men in religious drag. Idle and Coltrane make a fine team playing off each other's comic strengths, with the vague Idle (as Sister Euphemia of the Five Wounds) being totally ignorant of Catholic belief and practice while the haphazard Coltrane (as Sister Inviolata of the Immaculate Conception), who is related to a nun, struggles to explain what he remembers about his Catholic upbringing.

The movie treads on sensitive ground when Coltrane tries to instruct the uncomprehending Idle on the doctrine of the Trinity. It pulls it off humorously, however, when the exasperated Coltrane says something to the effect that if the Trinity were sensible, one wouldn't have to believe in it, whereupon a picture falls off the wall and cracks him on the head.

Written and directed by Jonathan Lynn, some of the gags are irreverent but their tone is good-natured rather than mean-spirited. The convent and its sisters come across very positively as being engaged in the real world, running a drug rehabilitation program, rather than as plastic stereotypes. There are several older, doddering sisters who contribute to the fun and a Scotch-drinking nun (Lila Kaye) who has put substantial convent funds on the horses. But the attitude toward these characters is warm and humanly sympathetic.

There are a few naughty words, some mild double-entendres and some flashes of nudity in the girls' shower at the convent school. There is also a confession scene involving Idle's girlfriend (Camille Coduri),

but it's more a plot device than anything else.

The movie is likely to offend the sensibilities of viewers who find nothing funny about female impersonators or irreverent jokes about religious subjects. Others, however, especially those familiar with British anti-establishment humor, will find some hearty laughs and a number of genial smiles in the material.

One's response to the movie is more a question of taste and the individual's sense of humor than of morality and respect for religious institutions. The ad campaign describing it as the story of an "immaculate deception" is more offensive than anything in the movie itself.

Though the humor in "Nuns on the Run" will not please all adults, it does humanize a contemporary community of women religious and the result provides some measure of healthy laughter about Catholic life.

Because of the irreverent but good-natured humor about Catholic matters, some mild double-entendres and saucy language as well as some flashes of nudity, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The

Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

## 'Lord of the Flies'

The second film adaptation of William Golding's 1954 novel, "Lord of the Flies" (Columbia) is a long, tedious, wasted effort that adds nothing to Golding's parable of good vs. evil.

Filed previously (1963) by British writer-director Peter Brook in black and white with a powerful all-British cast, "Lord of the Flies" makes its second go-round in color, directed by British director Harry Hook with an all-American cast of neophyte performers.

In this incarnation, a contingent of U.S. military school students survives a plane crash off an isolated Caribbean island. References to such strictly American heroes as Alf and Rambo and "Star Wars" gizmos are incorporated into Golding's original narrative by screenwriter Sara Schiff, and director Hook spends more time playing up the lush island flora and fauna than delving into the flaws of human nature that lead the boys into life-and-death

confrontations.

The acting is amateurish at best; thus, few viewers will be convincingly drawn into the boys' speedy dissolution into savagery or the psychological battle that ensues between conscienceless rebel leader Jack (Chris Furrh) and Ralph (Balthazar Getty), the boy who personifies law, order and civilized values.

Hook somehow manages to make us care more about the boys' brutal desecration of the island and its wildlife than the boys themselves. Danuel Pipoly looks convincing as the doomed pivotal character Piggy, but Pipoly's acting is marginal so Piggy's road to destruction as the voice of reason is a snooze.

Although Piggy's climactic murder is still visually shocking, it is quickly dismissed. Ralph's salvation is also anticlimactic and comes ironically from a battalion of U.S. Marines on maneuvers.

Due to much profanity and some grisly, conscienceless violence between adolescent boys that would preclude viewing by young adolescents, the U.S.C.C. classification is A-III — adults. The M.P.A.A. rating is R — restricted.

## 'Hope' conference slated

CANANDAIGUA — The Diocese of Rochester is sponsoring an all-day conference for separated, divorced and widowed people Saturday, March 31, beginning at 8 a.m. at the Community College of the Finger Lakes.

The ecumenical conference, entitled "Hope Growing in Life," will include talks, workshops, and a 7:30 p.m. dinner followed by a dance. Keynote speaker for the conference is Richard Morales.

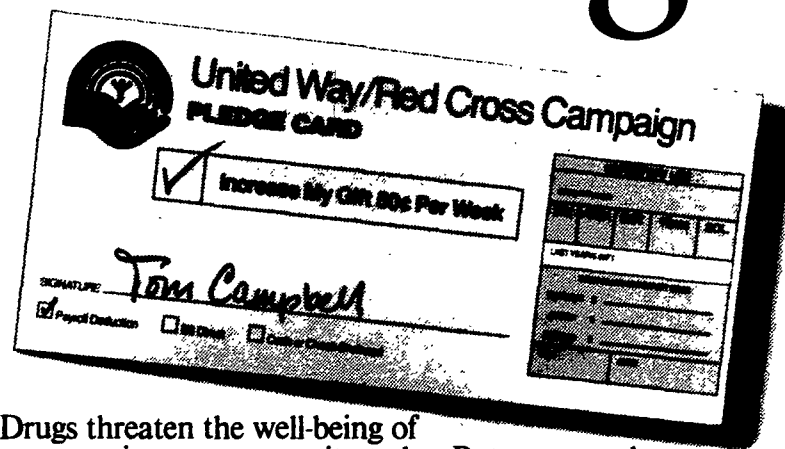
Dr. Dennis Boike is scheduled as the luncheon speaker, and Dr. Michael Henrichs, a clinical psychologist, will address issues surrounding children and loss during the afternoon general session.

Cost is \$40 per person for the entire conference; \$30 for workshops only; \$7 for the dance alone; \$15 for teen registration. Bagged lunches will be available for \$2; participants may bring their own lunches as well.

Scholarships are available.

To register, or for additional information, contact the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry, 110 Exchange St., Geneva, N.Y., 14456, 315/789-2686.

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