

Violence spews in this buddy action film

By Gerri Pare
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — Despite its innocent-enough title, *The Last Boy Scout* (Warner Bros.) is apt to delight only those who like movie violence in gargantuan doses.

Directed by Tony Scott, the movie stars Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans in a knock-off version of the equally violent Mel Gibson-Danny Glover *Lethal Weapon* movies by the same

screenwriter, Shane Black.

Willis plays bitter, burned-out private eye Joe Hallenbeck, unjustly fired from the Secret Service and consumed by his wife's (Chelsea Field) infidelity and his teenage daughter's (Danielle Harris) contempt for him.

When his client, a stripper (Halle Berry), gets brutally shot, her boyfriend Jimmy Dix (Damon Wayans) vows revenge and joins forces with Joe. The two discover that the stripper's death was tied to a plot by a

football team owner to ice a troublesome senator.

From its opening shock of up-close murder and suicide to its final smug suggestion of violent sequels to come, the movie is a major bloodbath packaged as a slick, buddy action movie.

Because of excessive violence, incessant rough language and brief nudity, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is O — morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.



Warner Brothers
Bruce Willis (left) and Damon Wayans team up to solve a murder involving extortion, blackmail and corruption in *The Last Boy Scout*.

Insightful book considers issues many have pondered

Testament: Belief in an Age of Unbelief, Faith in an Era of Skepticism, by Stan Parmisano, OP; Ave Maria Press (Notre Dame, Ind., 1991) 184 pages; \$12.95.

By Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

In December 1991, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger told the European Synod of Bishops that the church may "talk too much about itself" and not enough about God. His Eminence, I believe, should be pleased with *Testament*, which leaves aside discussions of ecclesiology and selection of bishops in favor of addressing "belief in an age of unbelief, faith in an era of skepticism."

Father Stan Parmisano, OP, has had wide experience as an author, teacher, parish priest and retreat master. His broad ministerial background makes this book worthwhile for a variety of readers. The slim volume considers questions about which many of us have pondered, but were fearful to raise even among our friends. And the author's answers are reassuring and comforting.

In the chapter entitled "Christianity," Father Parmisano poses the ques-

tion: "Why am I a Catholic Christian?" and answers it simply: "First, I'm a Christian because it's been given to me." He quickly adds that his Catholicism is essentially the result of grace, a free gift of God. No equivocation! No appeal to depth psychology!

Subsequently, he adds a thought that should give comfort to those who are struggling with the correct age for the administration of confirmation: "If in the beginning my faith was passed on to me without my asking, at a later date in full maturity I was interiorly converted to it such that now I was a Christian because I freely chose to be. And so I have been, am, and hope to remain a Christian." Although Christianity has a doctrine, he observed, "... it offered much more than this. It offers God himself — God not so much above us and out of reach — but come down to us, becoming one of us."

Father Parmisano is much aware of the emphasis on Christianity's social, community aspect since Vatican II. Community building, participation in the liturgy, small prayer groups, and common recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours all are the result of this

thrust to "become one body, one spirit in Christ."

Without in any way deprecating this concept of community, he emphasizes the personal, one-on-one relationship with God, noting that Christ heals with an individual touch and that the Gospels focus on Christ and the individual. "But at its best the Church is always individual and personal. Community is our goal but it is to be a community of individuals." This is a comforting note to shut-ins and others who live alone. In God's eyes they are beloved, precious and not forgotten.

We oldsters learned from *The Baltimore Catechism* that God is everywhere and even dwells in our souls through grace. That was no problem until someone raised a question: If God is present right here and now, how can he be above everything (transcendental)? *Testament* treats the question of God's transcendence and immensity in a most satisfactory manner.

Every page of *Testament* considers a truth of faith in a constructive, helpful manner. The sacraments are beautifully studied; immortality is squarely


faced. Nevertheless, the reader may be brought up sharp by the observation, "What I most fear is purgatory." The reason for such trepidation can be found in the chapter called "First and Last Things."

Father Parmisano enlisted in God's service out of a deep love of God and neighbor. He approaches the end of his service convinced more than ever of the rightness for the cause for which he volunteered and with a deeper loyalty to Christ to whom he committed his life. *Testament* reflects his joy and satisfaction at having fought the good fight and kept the faith.

One of my early professors maintained a reader approves of a book if it confirms the reader's preconceived ideas. That may be one reason that I find *Testament* so satisfying. Here is the voice of one who has served on the front lines, who remains enthusiastic and thoroughly convinced of God's love for all his people — individually and collectively. I highly recommend *Testament* and hope other readers will profit as much as I have in my two perusals.

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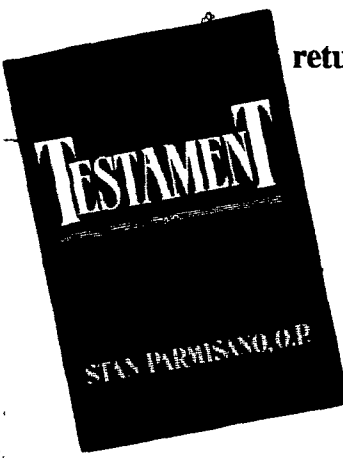
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TESTAMENT, by Stan Parmisano, O.P., is a book about belief in an age of unbelief; about faith in an era of skepticism; about essential truths in a time of subjective values. It offers a steady course for believers who wonder and reflect on the great questions of Christianity, and for adults on the catechetical journey to faith.

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