

# Engrossing Patriot Games simmers with suspense

By Gerri Pare  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Harrison Ford as ex-CIA agent Jack Ryan returns to the fold to protect his wife and child from an avenging IRA terrorist in the big screen version of Tom Clancy's best seller, *Patriot Games* (Paramount).

Ryan's quick action on a London street foils an unauthorized IRA attack on a member of the royal family. Of the three terrorists involved, ring-leader Kevin (Patrick Bergin) escapes while Sean (Sean Bean) is caught and vows revenge on Ryan, who has killed his younger brother in the melee.

After Sean is sentenced, Ryan returns to the United States with his pregnant wife (Anne Archer) and little girl (Thora Birch), only to learn Kevin has sprung Sean in a bloody shootout.

Needing the sophisticated resources of the CIA, Ryan returns in hopes of tracking the killers down before he and his family become a cold statistic.

Director Phillip Noyce knows how to keep the suspense simmering in this engrossing thriller. *Patriot Games* is less cerebral than Clancy's previous filmed novel, *The Hunt for Red October*. Here the emphasis is on action and emotional involvement. Ford is excellent, sweating it out from one showdown to



Paramount Pictures  
Harrison Ford stars in *Patriot Games*.

the next, and Archer plays her part with quiet intelligence.

The action sequences are tightly constructed, but unfortunately they rely a great deal on the violent aspects of the plot. Given the nature of terrorist tactics, this will not surprise viewers. On the other hand, the body count is high and a better director would have exercised more restraint without sacrificing suspense.

Due to much violence, a brief bedroom scene and rough language, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-IV - adults, with reservations. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R - restricted.

## Book's re-release is puzzling, but it serves as valuable period piece

*How Christ Changed the World: The Social Principles of the Catholic Church*, by Msgr. Luigi Civardi, trans. by Sylvester Andriano; Tan Books (Rockford, Ill., 1991); 111 pages; \$6.

By Sister Margaret Brennan, SSJ  
Guest contributor

If I had come upon an original copy of *How Christ Changed the World* at a garage sale, I probably would have picked it up, noted its date, perused its table of contents and considered buying it for old times' sake.

Although the book is only 31 years old, it is an antique in the social-doctrines-of-the-church category. For those of us who are "of an age" — this book was written the year I graduated from college, so I qualify — the reissuing of a book subtitled *The Social Principles of the Catholic Church* conjures up memories of the dear, dead days beyond recall when life in the world — and certainly in the church — was simpler.

Written in 1961 as a "text for Chris-

tian social education," this slim volume was evidently meant to serve as a basic introduction to the Christian response to social questions of its time.

In one way it's hard to put oneself into the pre-Vatican II, pre-Vietnam, pre-Roe vs. Wade, pre-AIDS, pre-Reagan-Bush, pre-Rodney King and pre-women's liberation time. In another sense, it's all very familiar.

Monsignor Civardi was a prominent figure in the Catholic Action movement, and — whether we call it Catholic Action or evangelization — he clearly was committed to the Christianization of the social order. If the style is dated and the language overly Thomistic and judgmental, the author's gentle spirit and his sincere desire to show the contemporary relevance of the incarnation comes through.

The book is organized, as a good text should be, into topics of social concern (the family, work, poverty, patriotism and so on) and each topic is discussed from Scripture and church

teaching — with a heavy emphasis on the latter.

Although his thesis is that it was Jesus who changed the course of human moral life and social practice, he relies more heavily upon papal documents and church teaching than on the Scriptures in his argument. But that, too, was true to the time in which he lived, before ordinary Catholics "discovered" the Scriptures.

And he did not, of course, have the advantage of decades of social analysis and the wonderful social encyclicals of John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II, or the pastoral letters of the U.S. bishops on peace, the economy and (soon?) women.

What you won't find in this book: references to human liberation, care for the earth, the church's mission, cultural pluralism and solidarity with developing nations. These are all part of today's agenda, however, so we cannot fault him for that.

Women may take exception to his analysis of their place in this social or-

der. "The Divine Redeemer raised women from this state of degradation by restoring her primitive dignity as a companion of man ..." or his statement that every Christian must be a knight who protected and defended the weakness of women (the women, evidently, were not Christians!).

It isn't fair to judge this book by contemporary standards. It is a book of its time, and can only be read as such, in its own context, with its own limitations, and according to its own purpose.

It could not be used as a text today, but only as a period piece — a footnote in someone's church history dissertation on *The Way We Were* in 1961. Or for a trip down memory lane by the likes of me.

What is puzzling is why Tan Press decided to re-release this book in 1991.

Sister Brennan serves as co-director of St. Martin's Place, a food program at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in Rochester.

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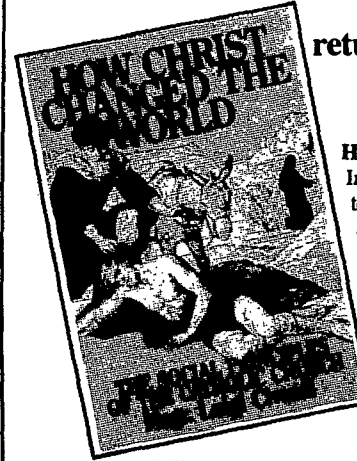
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