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Musketeers



Walt Disney Company

**The Three Musketeers** is the story of a valiant band of swordsmen.

Though many senseless liberties are taken with the original, the core of the story remains with country youth D'Artagnan (Chris O'Donnell) journeying to 16th-century Paris to become a musketeer in the king's elite guard.

After crossing swords with a rollicking

trio of musketeers (Kiefer Sutherland, Charlie Sheen and Oliver Pratt), the four get down to the serious business of saving the throne of France from the wicked Cardinal Richelieu (Tim Curry).

Director Stephen Herek's heavy-handed attempts to portray this lightweight foursome as lighthearted heroes is as unconvincing as the movie's comic villains are obnoxious.

Though the production is handsomely mounted, most of its energy is wasted on the huffing and puffing of the ever-grinning, always hammy musketeers.

Curry's broad performance as the venal cardinal is a bundle of sneers and winks that only emphasize the bad taste of the parody.

Sheen's jokey concerns about true religion while killing opponents or womanizing are equally tasteless.

The end result is a glossy miscalculation that turns a durable adventure classic into a campy, often mean-

spirited comedy.

Because of much stylized violence, sexual references and jokey treatment of religion, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

## Book is not just 'ordinary'

*Ordinary Time*, by Nancy Mairs; Beacon Press (Boston, Mass., 1993); 238 pages; \$20.

By Sister Margaret Brennan, SSJ  
Guest contributor

Not long ago I tuned into an interview program on the car radio. The interviewer was speaking with Nancy Mairs about Mairs' recent book, *Ordinary Time*. The title caught my attention, but at first I only half-listened to the interview.

Mairs seems to be an essay writer ... a convert to Catholicism ... living (and dying) with crippling multiple sclerosis ... her husband living (and dying) with cancer ... naming this book after the longest liturgical season ... struggling with the dichotomy of being Catholic and a feminist.

There was something about her voice, about her right and careful use of words, about the smile I could hear as she spoke of her unlikely home in the Catholic Church, about the wry humor that informed her answers, that made me listen more closely. I knew I had to read this book.

The next day I found *Ordinary Time* and read it in one sitting. I've gone back to it since and keep it for the day I'll need it again, if only for the lovely cadence of its prose or the wonderful sideways look at our church, or the wrenching courage of this "ordinary" woman.

Not an autobiography in the strict sense, *Ordinary Time* is a series of autobiographical essays written somewhat chronologically. This form gives the writer room to develop some themes

and to reiterate her statement that she is not a moral theologian, nor a biblical scholar, nor a proselytizer. She speaks only for herself and I found that voice quite enough for me.

Some of Mairs' ideas will shock and bewilder you; some will comfort and cleanse; all are provocative and born of experience. She speaks with a terrible candor about marriage and infidelity, about her experience as a woman, as a Catholic woman, as a person with a degenerative disease. Sometimes I had to put the book down and do something else. It was too intimate, too real for me. I was embarrassed for her. I wondered how she could write with such raw honesty.

And then I'd come across a wonderful sentence, a perfect phrase. She would call her prayer "muttering to God" or she'd say that Emmanu-el, God with us, is the one continuing miracle, "an astounding state of affairs," or that "coming to death is a kind of conversion experience, a turning away from old angers and infidelities, a turning toward this moment, and this moment and this one, and this." And then I could better understand her need for disclosures.

*Ordinary Time* is an extraordinary book — a funny, painful, absolutely candid story of someone who is searching for God, who finds a certain but uneasy home in the Catholic Church, and who faces death and life with equal measures of hope and dread.

I suggest that it be read first as a whole, cover to cover. Then, if and when you are unsettled, touched or cracked open, read it again. Slowly this time.



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