

New movies weak, but documentary compelling

NEW YORK (CNS) — The following are capsule reviews of movies recently reviewed by the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting.

'I Love Trouble'

(Touchstone) Tiresome, often tasteless, romantic comedy in which rival Chicago newspaper reporters (Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte) join forces in more ways than one to uncover a billion-dollar corporate scam. Directed by Charles Shyer, the result is a romantic misfire set in a weak comedy whose only compensations are some minor-league thrills. Some stylized violence and scenes of menace, much sexual innuendo and a few instances of profanity. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

'Wyatt Earp'

(Warner Bros.) Violent, overlong, revenge-themed Western in which reluctant lawman Wyatt Earp (Kevin Costner) and two of his brothers (Linden Ashby and Michael Madsen) dole out



Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte star in *I Love Trouble*.

Buena Vista Pictures

six-shooter justice in lawless towns of the Old West, until, joined by buddy Doc Holliday (Dennis Quaid), they track down and willfully execute the Clanton-McLaury gang who dared defy them. Much gory violence, justification of murders, discreet bedroom scene, fleeting nude photo and an instance of rough language. The USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

'Freedom on My Mind'

(Tara) Compelling documentary recalls the civil rights struggle in the early 1960s to register black voters in the segregated state of Mississippi. The tautly edited archival footage, intercut with frank commentary by those who were actively involved in the movement, provides a chilling portrait of institutionalized racism as well as heartening testimony to the power of committed individuals to effect change. Scenes of racial violence. The USCC classification is A-II — adults and adolescents.

Book provides detailed look at life of Dorothy Day

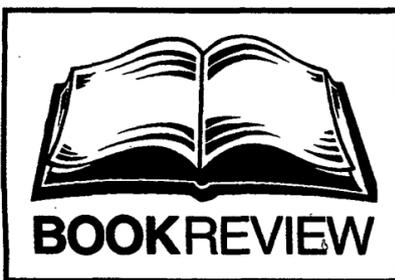
Searching for Christ: The Spirituality of Dorothy Day, by Sister Brigid O'Shea Merriman, OSF; University of Notre Dame Press (Notre Dame, Ind., 1994); 333 pp.; \$29.95.

Reviewed by Nancy L. Roberts
Catholic News Service

In the years since her death in 1980 at the age of 83, Dorothy Day's life continues to stimulate book-length analysis and interpretation.

And justifiably so. She is one of the most significant and interesting Catholics of the 20th century. A pioneer in American social Catholicism, she co-founded the Catholic Worker movement and its newspaper by the same name and profoundly influenced the consciences of several generations.

Now, Franciscan Sister Brigid O'Shea Merriman, in *Searching for Christ: The Spirituality of Dorothy Day*, provides a detailed look at the many spiritual and intellectual influences on Dorothy Day. Well written, with many engaging anecdotes and quotations from Miss Day and



her associates, the book is not a biography but the first in-depth analysis of Miss Day's intellectual and spiritual history, interpreted against the backdrop of 20th-century history.

A promising early chapter covers the literary influences alone. While Miss Day's debt to Russian writers such as Fyodor Dostoevsky (*The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Possessed*, *The Idiot*) and Leo Tolstoy (*War and Peace*, *Resurrection*) is well known, Sister Merriman gives the most cogent and analytical account of this debt. She also documents the Bible as "Dorothy's constant companion throughout life" and notes that

Miss Day's "predilection for the Psalms dates from (the) Episcopalian period" of her youth. Other key spiritual texts for Miss Day include the "Imitation of Christ" and St. Augustine's "Confessions."

In a fascinating chapter, Sister Merriman discusses the impact of monasticism on Miss Day's spirituality, particularly through her long relationship with St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., and her association with the American liturgical movement leader, Benedictine Father Virgil Michel. Her friendship with the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, also powerfully shaped her spirituality. Tracing the evolution of their friendship, she demonstrates considerable reciprocal influence between the monk and the Catholic lay leader. "I am touched deeply by your witness for peace," Merton wrote to Miss Day in 1959, affirming her vision of nonviolent resistance. "... you are right before God as far as you can go and you are fighting for a truth that is clear enough and important enough. What more can anybody do?" Sister Merriman analyzes Miss Day's

other influential friendships, with individuals such as the Catholic Worker's co-founder, Peter Maurin, and Nina Polcyn Moore and Helen Iswolsky. Sister Merriman notes that "just as real" to Miss Day as her "visible friends" were the saints. She found great inspiration in their capacity to love, and in their integrity. The author shows that Miss Day was most inspired by "pacifists, socially active saints, and great mystics."

The book's scope makes it a significant addition to literature on Day. Non-scholars will find it compelling because it sheds light on one of this century's most profoundly spiritual Catholics.

Nancy Roberts is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota, and the author of "Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker" (State University of New York Press, 1984).

Available at your bookstore or order prepaid from the University of Notre Dame Press, P.O. Box 1, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556. Add \$2 for shipping and handling.

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