

LEISURE

Jefferson revealed anew

Sworn on the Altar of God, by Edwin S. Gaustad. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1996). 246 pp., \$15.

Reviewed by Richard Philbrick
Catholic News Service

Yes, there have been numerous books written about Thomas Jefferson, and he was a prolific writer. *Sworn on the Altar of God*, is not, however, a new version of something written before. Its subtitle is "A Religious Biography of Thomas Jefferson," and it is at least that.

But author Edwin S. Gaustad has not allowed chronology to overwhelm what becomes a well informed and astute analysis of what led the famed statesman to be a strong, unyielding proponent of religious liberty.

There were years of experience, some of them painful, underlying his declaration when he said, "For I have sworn on the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." He had struggled for years to get fellow Virginians to adopt his "Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom," and there were other memories that fed that hostility.

Gaustad has sifted from Jefferson's eventful life the episodes that shaped the great man's approach to religion in the public area. At the same time he has writ-

ten with great skill of Jefferson's highly personalized, intricate concept of his own religious convictions.

Ready as he was to defend religious liberty, Jefferson was not willing to make public his beliefs about God and the differing currents of theology. This despite the fact that his opponents called him the anti-Christ.

In Jefferson's day a debate as fervid as the one today about the place of religion in the public square existed. Several states had not yet severed their ties to specific denominations, and their religious leaders were unwilling to see them cut.

With turmoil about him, Jefferson, as Gaustad sees him, "in the realm of religion ... blended the private and the public with startling success."

Gaustad observed that "Together with James Madison, (he) constructed a foundation of such solidarity as to endure through political discord, sectional war, economic reversal, totalitarian challenge, and unprecedented religious fecundity."

With two constitutional amendments designed to revise the First Amendment and its provisions about religion being circulated for approval in Congress this book has much of interest to say about religion in the public eye today as well as the fascinating history of our nation's earliest years.



BOOK REVIEW



The Walt Disney Company
A lonely boy named James finds some unusual new friends and unexpected adventures when he climbs inside a giant peach and sets sail for New York City in "James and the Giant Peach."

Fright and fancy fill screen

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

'Fear'

Manipulative thriller in which a psychotic youth (Mark Wahlberg) seduces a 16-year-old girl (Reese Witherspoon), then goes on a murderous rampage when her father interferes. Directed by James Foley, the premise is ridiculously contrived in escalating threatening situations into an absurd climax. Excessive violence, intense menace, graphic sexual situations, occasional profanity and recurring rough language. The USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

'James and the Giant Peach'

A 9-year-old orphan living in England escapes two vicious aunts by magically entering a huge peach filled with six scrappy insects who become his adopted family as the peach soars aloft to transport them to a new home in New York. Director Henry Selick creatively combines live action with stop-motion animation in this adaptation of Roald Dahl's 1961 children's story that may be too sinister and scary for the under-10 set. Frequent menace. The USCC classification

is A-II — adults and adolescents. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

'Kids in the Hall Brain Candy'

Canadian comedy troupe brings its TV antics to the big screen in a half-baked spoof of a pharmaceutical firm rushing an anti-depression pill to market before testing its side effects. Directed by Kelly Makin, the result is a hodgepodge of weak skits relying on males in drag, ludicrous situations and frequent bad taste. Sexual innuendo, rear nudity, occasional profanity and recurring rough language. The USCC classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

'Mrs. Winterbourne'

After surviving a train wreck, an unwed pregnant teen-ager (Ricki Lake) is mistakenly thought to be the widowed daughter-in-law of a wealthy matron (Shirley MacLaine) whose son (Brendan Fraser) promptly falls in love with his bogus sister-in-law. Director Richard Benjamin's sappy mistaken-identity tale fills this contrived Cinderella story with cardboard characters and cheap sentiments. A live-in relationship, fleeting violence, recurring profanity and minimal rough language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13.

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6:15 p.m. ... St. Stanislaus Church 1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951

7:30 p.m. ... Holy Family Church 1099 Jay St., Door M, Rochester 716-328-3110

7:30 p.m. ... St. Boniface Church 15 Wisliff St., Rochester 716-271-1468

TUESDAY

10:00 a.m. ... Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church/St. Andrew School,
..... Bingo Palace, Rochester 716-467-2725

7:30 p.m. ... St. Stanislaus Church 1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951

7:30 p.m. ... St. Helens Church Gates Center Bingo, Westmar Plaza 716-235-1210

WEDNESDAY

7:30 p.m. ... Holy Family Home School Assoc. 1099 Jay St., Door M, Rochester 716-328-3110

THURSDAY

7:30 p.m. ... St. Stanislaus Church 1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951

FRIDAY

8:00 p.m. ... St. Marks Church 54 Kuhn Rd., Rochester 716-225-3710

SATURDAY

12:30 p.m. ... Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church/St. Andrew School,
..... Bingo Palace, Rochester 716-467-2725

7:30 p.m. ... Good Shepherd Church 3288 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester 716-334-3518

8:00 p.m. ... St. Thomas the Apostle Church 21 Coburn Dr., Westmar 716-544-9951

CLIP & SAVE

All those who are specially challenged are to be respected and granted appropriate access to the sacraments.

— Constitution on the Liturgy, #14

The Specially Challenged and Sacramental Preparation

In the Diocese of Rochester, New York
(a guide for parents)

for more information, contact:
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