

LEISURE



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Tim Page (above right), as Father Matt Fulton, talks to Max Denler, a Bishop Kearney student playing Joey, a gang leader, in Camille Fadia's original drama, "Baptized in Love." The play ran Aug. 8-11 at the Freddie Thomas Foundation Center in Rochester.

Actor's own life informs role as priest aiding gang leader

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Tim Page went to Hollywood to become an actor, but wound up working with teenage gang members and prisoners.

Now, Page is acting again, and he can credit his work as a Catholic street minister in North Hills, Calif., with putting him back on the stage after a long hiatus.

"I think God will give you eventually what you want if you give him what he wants," said Page as he drank a soda in an Irondequoit restaurant booth on Sunday, Aug. 11.

Page shared the booth with Max Denler, a sophomore this fall at Bishop Kearney High School, and Camille Fadia, a parishioner at Irondequoit's Christ the King Parish.

Page and Denler starred in a play about a gang leader written and produced by Fadia. Titled "Baptized in Love," the play ran Aug. 8-11 at the Freddie Thomas Foundation Center on East Main Street in Rochester. The play will be staged again sometime in mid-October, Fadia said, adding that she is still working on getting a location.

Sponsors of the play included the parishes of Our Lady of Victory, St. Mary's and St. Bridget's in Rochester, St. Ambrose in Irondequoit, and Holy Trinity and Holy Spirit in Webster.

In addition to these sponsors, such companies as Eastman Kodak, Coca Cola and USAIR, helped pay for 300 city youths to see the play during its initial run.

The play centers on the relationship between Denler's character, Joey Cooper, a hate-filled teen gang leader, and Page's character, Father Matt Fulton, a Catholic priest. "Baptized in Love" traces Joey's initial resistance to Father Fulton's efforts to reach him, to his ultimate rejection of the savage life he had embraced.

It's a story that Page said he can directly relate to in his ministry, a career he could not have foreseen more than a decade ago when he went to Hollywood seeking fame as an actor.

Indeed, at first, things looked up for Page, who landed roles in the movie "The Best of Times" with Robin Williams and Kurt Russell, as well as on the TV series "Highway to Heaven."

Involved in his Catholic faith since his childhood, Page, however, gradually came to believe he was being called away from a

glamorous acting career to minister to young people in trouble in the Los Angeles area. Several years ago, he attended a workshop called, "For I was in Prison and You Visited Me," and began visiting with local young people who had been incarcerated. Six years ago, he incorporated his ministry as a not-for-profit organization called Total, Involvement Ministry (T.I.M.).

T.I.M. combines street counseling, sports activities, tutoring programs and prayer vigils designed to help teenagers and elementary-age children stay away from the lure of gang life and its attendant dangers, he said. Page said he regularly gives rosaries away to gang members whom he has befriended. He added that he does the bulk of the organization's work, although he can rely on volunteers for some events.

Young people often turn to gangs because they lack love and support in their homes, Page said. At the same time, he said, they often feel abandoned by their fellow gang members when they land in prison because no one from the gang visits them.

"That's when I think they can turn to God because they learn that God is true love," Page said.

Fadia, a writer and producer, met Page in February after she had learned of his ministry during a visit to California last fall.

"I thought he would fit well with the play," she said. "He has the heart for the kids."

Fadia said she is negotiating with a video producer to create a version of the play for cable TV broadcast. Ultimately, she wants "Baptized in Love" to become a feature film, she said.

"The goal is to reach out to youth throughout the country and, hopefully, to help them get off the street and out of gangs and into a productive way of life," she said.

But Denler pointed out that even kids who don't mess with the gang life could relate to "Baptized in Love."

"Even at a Catholic school, you can see a lot of people who are experiencing these kinds of difficulties," Denler said, pointing particularly to how divorce affects children. "I just had to look to my experiences with other people to get the character of Joey."

EDITORS' NOTE: Fadia is seeking sponsors to help put her play on video, and to stage it in San Fernando Valley, Calif. For information, call her at 716/342-1562.

Evil plotters target pope in Malachi Martin novel

Windswept House: A Vatican Novel, by Malachi Martin; Doubleday (New York, 1996); 645 pages; \$24.95.

Father John S. Hayes
Guest contributor

Malachi Martin, a former Jesuit, brings special credentials as the author of *Windswept House: A Vatican Novel*. Before leaving the priesthood in the 1960s, he was an associate of Cardinal Augustin Bea and a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Thus he is a former "insider," and he is able to make use of that expertise in this book.

However, his biases concerning the church show through in this book as they did in his 1972 study, *Three Popes and the Cardinal*, in which he described Pius XII as too "triumphal," John XXIII as a pontiff whose "gambles (Vatican II) failed" and Paul VI as the "First Unpope."

In the same vein, *Windswept House* concerns a "Slavic pope" who is another failed leader unable to bring unity to the church — a church that is described as divided and in conflict due to ideas spawned by Vatican II.

This lengthy book deals with a conspiracy to unseat the pope, a conspiracy euphemistically intended "to effect change at the uppermost level of the hierarchical structure." This conspiracy involves a group of world leaders and a clutch of cardinals.

This witches brew of the conflict and conspiracy includes graphic descriptions of devil worship and of Masonic rituals that touch high levels in the church through curial cardinals. The book also contains the luridly detailed

murder of three priests.

On the other hand, the book is graced by gentler touches coloring the "Old Catholic" family life of the Gladstones of *Windswept House*. The grande dame is reminiscent of Lady Marchmain in *Brideshead Revisited*. The family lives in a beautiful home complete with a private chapel in which the Mass is celebrated in Latin. The family has a reach that extends to the Vatican.

Not surprisingly, the two Gladstone sons are the principal protagonists of the story. Christopher, a Monsignor, begins his Vatican career as a pawn under the direction of a cardinal determined to eliminate the pope.

The other brother, Paul, a layman, secures a high position in the European community.

Both are manipulated by world-class power people.

Christopher in particular finds himself caught in a web. But well-advised by the most fleshed-out character in the novel, the Dominican Master General, he develops deep loyalty to the pope. He could never be a double agent. He ultimately cannot conspire to remove the pope he admires.

This Vatican novel seems especially timely in light of the fact that church organizations are coming under constant scrutiny these days. Witness Archbishop John R. Quinn's recent lecture in Oxford during which he described the Roman Curia's encroachment on the authority of bishops as a denial of collegiality.

Still, separating fiction from fact in *Windswept House* is no easy task. One is well advised by the novel's Milan Kundera's warning: "Things are not as simple as you think."

Or as complicated.

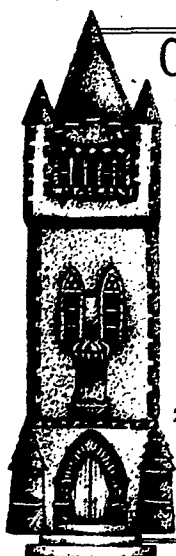
Father Hayes, rector emeritus of Sacred Heart Cathedral, earned an M.A. in English from the University of Rochester after studies there and at Oxford University.

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