

'Life Without Me' an emotional drain

Anne Navarro/CNS

NEW YORK — A young wife and mother examines her life in the face of death in the tearjerker "My Life Without Me."

Death is never an easy issue to deal with, especially when it comes to the death of a young person who will also leave behind a husband and two young daughters. Such is the premise of writer-director Isabel Coixet's unflinching and heart-breaking story about 23-year-old Ann (Sarah Polley), who is diagnosed with terminal cancer which leaves her only a couple of months to live.

Instead of sinking into a pool of self-pity, Ann decides to take action, making a list of all the things she wants to do before dying, including recording birthday tapes for her two young daughters Penny (Jessica Amlee) and Patsy (Kanya Jo Kennedy) and visiting her estranged father (Alfred Molina) in prison. She also chooses not to tell anyone, which means keeping husband Don (Scott Speedman) and her mother (Deborah Harry) in the dark.

Ann begins an affair with Lee (Mark Ruffalo), the handsome, emotionally-scarred stranger she meets at the coin laundry, who demands nothing except to let him love her.

Although the film is predictable in the sense that viewers know Ann



Sony Pictures Classics/CNS

Mark Ruffalo stars in a scene from the movie "My Life Without Me."

will die, it is more about what she does with the time she has left. Her death is a nonevent. The movie's strength is that it does not revert to mawkish sentimentality or turn into a disease-of-the-week telefilm. However, watching working-class Ann try to continue on with her life in her tiny trailer park, kissing her girls' foreheads or making them special pancakes, is nonetheless a dismal experience.

This is part of the problem with

the film. As Ann grapples with her imminent death, the film becomes more and more morose, leaving the viewer drained as the sadness of the situation becomes unbearable. Rarely is one relieved of this misery by some uplifting sentiment. It also makes one reflect on how dismal the prospect of death is in the absence of faith. For Ann, there is just blackness after life is over. And while death is almost always difficult, Catholic faith in eternal life offers

some comfort in the face of such pain.

Depressing yet uncompromising, "My Life Without Me," executive produced by Pedro Almodovar, will leave one sapped, but will give one much to think about as well.

Because of an extramarital affair and sporadic rough language, the USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

Navarro is a part-time reviewer in the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

CAREGIVER AWARD TO BE GIVEN ON OCT. 15

As part of its 20th-anniversary celebration, Mercy Center with the Aging will present its new Celebrating Family Caregivers Award during a noon luncheon Oct. 15 at Oak Hill Country Club.

A panel of judges selected finalists in four categories: Beverly Ewald for Caregiver for Relative Other Than a Parent; Kathleen Gefell for Caregiver for Parent; William A. Sawyer for Caregiver for Spouse; and Judith Ann Schimp for Caregiver for Friend or Neighbor. All finalists will be honored during the luncheon, and one of them will be presented with the award.

To make a reservation for the luncheon, which is \$40 per person, call Mercy Center with the Aging at 585/244-5190 or e-mail mca@mercyrochester.org.

MOTHER OF SORROWS MARKS ANNIVERSARY

Mother of Sorrows School in Greece will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the dedication of its school building Oct. 16 with a 9 a.m. Mass of Thanksgiving.

Following the Mass there will be a blessing of the school with receptions in the classrooms. All former students, faculty, administrators and friends are invited to attend.

For more information, call the school at 585/663-1100.

For Women Who Make a Difference!

At Mercy, the door is always open.

Explore enrollment at Our Lady of Mercy High School. Discover our long tradition of excellence in helping young women reach their potential by fostering intellectual and social development, physical and spiritual growth, independence and vision.

Come to our Fall Open House and help us celebrate 75 years of helping women to make a difference

Our Lady of Mercy
HIGH SCHOOL
Grades 7-12

A Ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

1437 Blossom Rd., Rochester
For more information call
(585) 288-7120



OPEN HOUSE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23rd
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Our Lady of Mercy High School
1437 Blossom Road

185 movie reviews on line at www.catholiccourier.com.

Just click on the Features tab, then select Movie Reviews at left.

Ste
is e
car

To the

The
issue c
er "Ex
versity
to buil
lifting
blesse
parish
so ver
them
talents
for oth
what o
brothe
other?
nected

Refli
cles, I
being
us to s
ents, a
I'm su
time o
financi
grandc
ly men
helped
disease
was in
parish
gather
for one
brother
are the
indeed
The