

# Actor stays true to role as priest

Mark Pattison/CNS

WASHINGTON — Catholic actor George Dzundza plays a priest on the CBS drama "Hack." And, while not the central character in the series, he's grown to like the job and the character, Father Tom "Grizz" Grzelak.

"You wear a collar, that doesn't make you a saint. As a human, there are frailties that all of us are working on," said Dzundza in a telephone interview from Philadelphia, where "Hack" is filmed.

"Redemption is a main theme throughout this series," he said, "and it's the goal we're trying to put together for the American people."

"Hack," which airs 9-10 p.m. Eastern time on Saturdays, stars David Morse as Mike Olshansky, a taxi driver — hence the title — who had been a cop until he was kicked off the police force for taking money from a crime scene.

He finds he's still able to help people as a cabbie, and often enlists his former partner, Marcellus Washington (Andre Braugher) — who was just as guilty in the money scandal but was never implicated by Olshansky.

Dzundza's Father Grizz is Olshansky's confidant: a blue-collar parish priest with a taste for liquor and the occasional wager.

Despite his own character's imperfections, Dzundza says he hasn't had to do something that would go against his own sense of Father Grizz's dignity.

Differences have come up with the California-written scripts, he said, but "I try to go directly to the top" — executive producer Bob Singer — with any concerns, Dzundza said. "Understanding that my position is as a servant, I am there to serve the show," he added, noting it is a responsibility he accepts to stay true to the character.

As a result, "I haven't had a situation where I've said, 'I can't do this,'" he said.

Dzundza said he hasn't received much unsolicited advice from priests about Father Grizz. To the contrary, "I solicit advice all the time. If there's something I don't know about, I have no problem going to someone who does," the actor said.

Because each episode is filmed in its entirety in Philadelphia, Dzundza had to find his own apartment. And, having found the apartment, he then

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set about finding a parish. He goes to St. Brigid in the East Falls section of Philadelphia.

"I just love that church. I'm so grateful that it's there. The homilies and the services have been just the best," Dzundza said. "I just feel blessed that I'm able to participate."

"It's a vibrant community. George certainly enhances it," Father John Kelly, St. Brigid pastor, told Catholic News Service. "I think it's terrific that a person in his position would think of integrating his faith like that. That doesn't happen enough."

Father Kelly noted that Dzundza is the most recent celebrity parishioner. Past high-profile parishioners included Princess Grace, the Oscar-winning actress once known as Grace Kelly; her father, Jack, an Olympic gold-medal rower; and her brother, John, also an Olympic gold medal-winning rower and Philadelphia city councilman. Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, when he was Philadelphia's mayor, also lived in the parish.

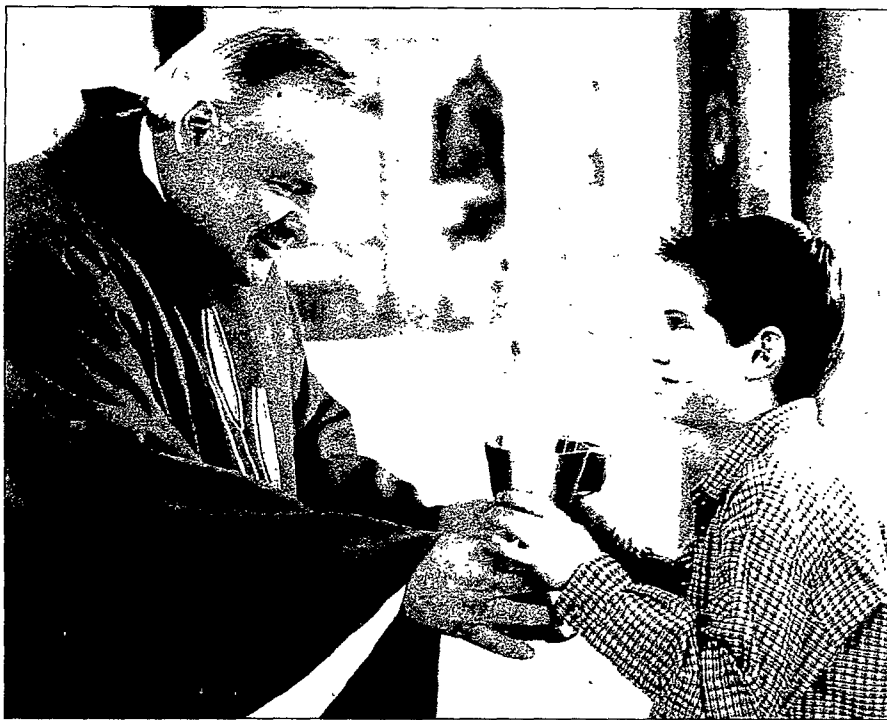
Filming for so long and so far away from his Los Angeles-area home is less difficult now that his youngest child is 12 years old. Dzundza and his wife have two college-age children as well.

"This wasn't as hard as when I was doing 'Law & Order,'" which films entirely in New York City, Dzundza said. At that time, he added, "My wife was pregnant and she had two little ones at home. I had to go back."

Prior to "Hack," Dzundza's last regular TV role was as Christina Applegate's father on the NBC sitcom "Jesse." When the series' focus shifted from Jesse and her multigenerational family to a romance with the Chilean neighbor next door, "it upset the applecart," he said.

"Looking at a family, even in all of its dysfunctional aspects, can be fun. But if it's just boyfriend-girlfriend, you're only going to repeat 'Friends.' And we came on right after 'Friends,'" Dzundza said.

Even so, the sitcom shooting schedule, with workdays that end at 5 p.m., meant that "it was the first time in my life I was able to make dinner plans," he noted. On "Hack," by contrast, "there have been some scenes that we've shot late at night. I just put on some long johns and act."



CBS/CNS

George Dzundza stars as Father Tom "Grizz" Grzelak in the CBS dramatic series "Hack." The priest plays a confidant to the lead character, former police officer and vigilante taxi driver, Mike Olshansky.

## Join us this November & December

### Nov. 19 *Father-Son Twilight Retreat*

"As I Have Loved You" This special time is offered to fathers and their sons to spend together, enjoying a wonderful meal, an inspiring talk and some reflection/prayer time together. Our presenter will be the Rt. Rev. Gladstone B. "Skip" Adams III Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York. 6:00 (dinner followed by presentation). \$35 per father/son.

### Nov. 20 *A Day of My Own*

This special opportunity is offered on the third Thursday of each month and will provide a sacred space for you to "take time out" just to be with God - a time to reflect, pray and be refreshed in any way that will nourish your spirit. Come when you want to just "be"! Lunch will be provided. Offering: \$12

### Nov. 21-23 *"Reaching Out - Emerging from the Darkness into the Light"*

A retreat weekend for the separated and divorced. The keynote speaker for this event is Dr. Alan Andrews, noted counselor and speaker on healing hurting relationships. Friday - registration 5:00 - 6:30, dinner at 6:30. Retreat closes on Sunday morning. Offering: \$125 before November 2, \$140 after November 2. For further information call Cindy at 315-363-2972. For registration form call Dick at 315-363-7876

### Dec. 7 *Open House at Stella Maris*

Add a special joy and beauty to your Christmas preparations by visiting our Open House. You will be treated to the sights of the lavish decorations, the sounds of Carolers, the taste of Christmas cookies and punch and the delight of a visit from the Dickens Characters. All are welcome. 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

### Dec. 10 *"Walking with Jesus from Bethlehem to Jerusalem"*

This two-part presentation, co-sponsored by Church Women United will be given by Nancy Ring, Ph.D., former chair of the Religious Studies Department and presently interim Dean of Arts and Sciences at LeMoyne College. Relying on the Scriptures, Dr. Ring will focus on the humanity of Jesus as he makes the journey from birth to resurrection; and the significance of that journey for us today. This particular presentation will center on the birth of Jesus and the presentation on March 10th will center on the Resurrection. Registration from 9:30 - coffee and snack available. First session - 10:30; lunch at noon, second session - 1:30, departure - 3:00 p.m. Offering: \$15. Call to register.

### Dec. 12-14 *Noel Retreat for Women in Recovery "Dancing in the Dark"*

How can we sue the Twelve Steps to help us live joyfully even when we can't see the way ahead? Often the times of unknowing can be the most fertile for our personal growth, just as a seed is preparing in the dark earth for the gorgeous flowering to come. As we approach the darkest day of the calendar year, we will explore what the Steps can teach us about living with the questions with an open heart, rather than trying to force the answers with "grim determination"! Presenter Mary Gleason is an educator and naturalist. She has designed and facilitated numerous workshops for adults and children in libraries, schools, nature centers, retreat centers and other organizations, and has been an active member of several 12-Step programs for many years. Friday evening 6:00 (dinner) to Sunday noon. Offering: \$100

### Dec. 16 *Advent Day of Reflection*

This year take a day to prepare spiritually for the coming of the Lord. We will reflect on the beautiful antiphons that we pray the last seven days before Christmas. The "O Antiphons" These seven ancient prayers recall the prophecies of the coming of Jesus, for example, "O Wisdom! O Holy Word of God! You govern all creation with strong yet tender care, Come!" Presented by Sister Mary Lynch, SSJ, Retreat Facilitator and Spiritual Director. 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (Includes lunch) Offering: \$15.



Stella Maris Retreat and Renewal Center

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