

Hollywood's Sins So Well Publicized That Religious Virtues Often Ignored

RELIGION TODAY
By GEORGE W. CORNELL
NEW YORK — Despite its reputation for worldliness, Hollywood today gives forth with some of the country's most open-handed religious impulses.

Outsiders get all the lowdown on the film celebrities' sins, but it takes an insider to know their virtues.

"So many of them are noble, noble people, who love God and fulfill His commands and wishes," said the Rev. Patrick Peyton, who probably has worked with more of them than any other clergyman.

As for the headline-engendered impression of Hollywood as a realm of hard hearts and loose living, Father Peyton shook his head ruefully. "To me, that's wrong. I've found the opposite to be the case."

"You can't make these blanket condemnations on the basis of isolated, highly publicized incidents, when so many, many of the stars are God's dear blessed friends, who love and serve Him despite all the pull and drag to be indifferent."

Father Peyton, leader of a worldwide "Family Rosary" movement to reestablish daily group prayer in the home, has been dealing closely with film notables for eight years, getting them to donate their talents to religious programs.

No Rejections
"I can't recall a single turn-down," he said.

"Their wonderful generosity, often at inconvenience to themselves, is a beautiful thing. I'll praise them forever."

With phenomenal success, Father Peyton since 1947 has recruited leading movie players — some 350 altogether — to appear, gratis, on his weekly, non-denominational "Family Theater" over the Mutual radio network.

To anyone buying this talent, it would cost millions. Father Peyton said he doesn't know of any other profession that has given more bounteously, in value of service. How does he get them to do it?

God's Help
"It's not for me to take the credit," he said. "It's God's beautiful, powerful help."

Father Peyton, a towering, 6-foot-3 Roman Catholic priest with an infectious warmth and a soft, all of native Ireland in his voice, also has produced a series of television films and is working on more.

His unusual career has made him an intimate of many screen actors and actresses, often a guest in their homes and friend of their families.

He said the conduct of a few, who deserve condemnation, has sullied the many who are "good people."

"They stand with the best in the whole of the earth," he said.

Free Appearances
Some of the stars — Catholics, Protestants and Jews — who have appeared free on his shows include:

Gregory Peck, Irene Dunne, Edward G. Robinson, Loretta Young, Ann Blyth, Maureen O'Hara, Margaret Sullivan, Jane Wyatt, Jimmy Durante, Jack Benny, Robert Young, Bob Hope, James Stewart, Maureen O'Sullivan, Tyrone Power, Charles Boyer, Rosalind Russell, Jack Haley, Ethel Barrymore, Charles Bickford, Margaret O'Brien, Joanne Crain and Bing Crosby.

Although the big names donate services free, Father Peyton is kept hopping to raise around \$100,000 a year to pay other costs of the shows. This comes from individuals, business firms and organizations.

Heavy Schedule
Father Peyton, 46, maintains a heavy schedule of speeches, conferences and rushes hither and yon to conduct regional family-prayer drives. Where does he live? "In a plane seat."

He recently got back from a series of "Family Rosary" campaigns in Africa, and early this year, is off to Spain to make "his film dramas" in Spanish and English — about the major events in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

The leading players: "Some good friends" — Spanish movie stars.

Back in 1942, Father Peyton was a chaplain at the Vincentian Institute for Boys in Albany, N.Y., when he began his work to stimulate family prayer that has since swelled into an international movement.

Homes Catapulted
Five-week crusades — in which parish laymen canvass homes to get whole families to sign pledges for daily prayer — have been conducted in 18 states, just this fall in Kansas, and in 64 foreign countries.

Approximately 14 million people have signed pledges, about two million in this country.

John Wayne Films Offered To Television
HOLLYWOOD — Republic Studios Thursday offered television 76 movies including seven starring John Wayne.

In the group are 24 features that cost from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 to make. Besides Wayne, they star such performers as Susan Hayward, Claire Trevor, Gail Russell, and Vera Ralston.

Among the Wayne pictures offered for lease to TV are "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" and "Fort Apache."

Daily Variety said that Republic had not planned to release the big budgets to TV "at this time" but with RKO and Columbia already starting a big sales push for their backlog it was decided to "move fast."

The reason given was that the studio was concerned about other exhibitors unloading old pictures and "flooding the market."

States covered so far include North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, parts of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Minnesota and Florida, Delaware, Rhode Island, Maryland and Kansas, with parts of Oregon and Washington coming up next year.

To Father Peyton, group prayer is the thing that makes families aware of the greatest truth — that "God is alive for us."

It was his own vivid memory of the family prayers in his boyhood home of County Mayo, Ireland, that stirred his intense belief in the devotion as a key to spiritual wholeness and solid, happy home life.

"This is the crying need today," he said.

Helped by Prayer
Before he became a priest, his own prayers helped him through a serious illness, and he promised afterward to give himself to some great cause for Christ. His answer: The prayer crusades.

"It's so easy, once it's tried, to get over the embarrassment and self-consciousness that so many

people have about family prayer nowadays," he says. "Our grandfathers didn't have it."

Father Peyton's activities are handled out of two offices — a "Family Rosary" headquarters in Albany, and a "Family Theater" office in Los Angeles, plus the

whirl of information and plans he carries in his head and briefcase.

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