

Kempf, Placidus
Grace

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GOSPEL

MOVIES

by
P.K.

GRACE

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FIRST
SERIES

*GOSPEL
MOVIES*

by

Placidus Kempf, O. S. B.

*THE GRAIL
ST. MEINRAD, INDIANA*

PRICE TEN CENTS

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Deacidified

PREVIEW

The GOSPEL MOVIES are being shown just for you. You may often have been "put on the spot," but, perhaps, never before "on the screen." Well, here you are. Your true self has been filmed nineteen hundred years ago in the various persons that came in contact with Jesus during the thirty-three years that he "went about doing good." From your double, appearing on the screen, you may learn how you should or should not act.

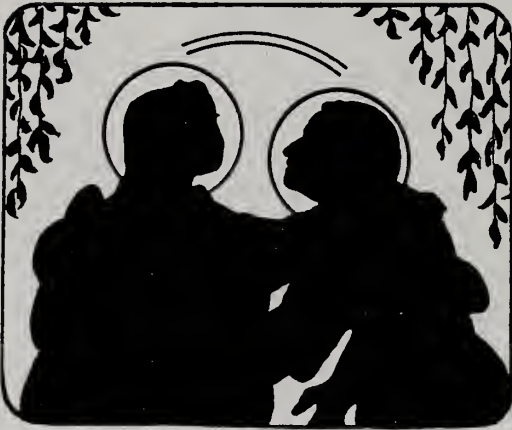
From the persons who came in contact with the unborn, the newborn, and the growing Savior you may learn an important lesson on GRACE. You may learn that grace works quickly in your soul, but that it also demands of you disinterestedness, simplicity, generosity, fidelity, patient expectancy, esteem, interior and exterior works, in order that it may produce its effects, all the time leaving your will free to cooperate with or reject it.

St. Luke tells us of our Savior that "power went forth from Him and healed all." If you are not healed after so many sacramental contacts with the life-giving, life-preserving, and life-perfecting streams of supernatural life flowing from the boundless ocean of Life, Christ Jesus, then there is evidently something wrong with YOU. Perhaps the spiritual sparkplugs or points of contact in your soul need cleaning and closer adjusting.

Placidus Kempf, O.S.B.

Operator

Godspeed



“Elizabeth was filled with the holy Spirit.” —St. Luke 1:41

GOD HAD promised to come to earth to reinstate Adam’s disinherited children. During four thousand years the curse-laden earth had offered

its loftiest peaks as His lowliest footstool, whilst penitent man had implored the Savior to rend the heavens and step down.

A flash of light! Heaven contacts earth. Gabriel makes known God’s plan. Mary consents to become the mother of God. The Eternal leaps down from heaven—God and a particle of Mary’s stainless flesh become

the God-man, the Savior. For nine months His Sacred Feet will not touch our sinned earth. *But He cannot be inactive.* He has come to bring redemption and salvation. From his hidden sanctuary He radiates grace and life. He moves Mary, His Mother, to *go with haste*, with God's speed, over the mountains to greet her cousin Elizabeth. Ave! Hail! Elizabeth's child, the unborn John, chosen to be the herald of the Savior, comes within the radius of the source of grace. He is touched, moved, enlightened by a ray of streaming grace. He leaps for joy in his mother's womb as he recognizes and greets His Master, and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Ghost. The first ring of saving grace has been set free. Its saving effects have not ceased their activity to this very moment.

The Child's Hour



"They went with haste."
—St. Luke 2:16

THE stage is set. The midnight hour, the hour for the long-awaited broadcast is fast approaching. The attentive audience looks up with

awe to the starlit dial of the sparkling heavens. Heaven and earth are in tune. A dazzling figure, God's announcer, suddenly steps forth from the invisible ether before the astonished gaze of the few simple shepherds keeping watch over their flocks. Using the rolling hills as his microphone and amplifier he broadcasts his strange yet

joyful message over the sleeping world. "A Child is born in Bethlehem. To *you* He is a Savior." To us? Yes, to you and to all simple souls. The new-born Savior, a Babe wrapped in simple swathing bands, seeks simple souls. His grace can easily contact a simple soul, because it sees only God, seeks only God, and always tends towards Him.

Simplicity is the virtue of childhood (and, according to the Christ Child, we must all become children to enter heaven). An unspoiled child speaks and acts with uprightness, frankness, and sincerity. It knows nothing of affectation, deceit, cunning, flattery, hypocrisy, and the opposite of simplicity—duplicity. The child has boundless trust in its parents and elders. It believes what they say and is easily led by their words and admonitions.

Simplicity is the straight road to God. It reads and understands the posting along its way—WISDOM 1:1: "Seek the Lord in simplicity of heart." It does not wait till break of day to set out on this straight way to God. It travels immediately, even by night. The shepherds "came with haste . . . and found the Infant lying in a manger."

The Crowded Caravansary



“We have come.”
—St. Matth. 2:2

ALL Jeru-
salem is
astir. A
strange caravan
has arrived
from the East.
Liveried ser-
vants bustle
about in search
of suitable lodg-
ing for their

masters and quarters for their beasts. Richly caparisoned camels, with the odor of spices clinging like incense to their gorgeous trappings and desert sands still in their nostrils, give evidence of the rank and native land of their royal riders. Each night these had read the unrolled, purple scroll of the measureless heavens until they knew all its golden letters by heart.

Now a new illuminated initial, a massive "J," danced before their eyes and enticed them to follow it through trackless, boundless deserts to the Jewish capital. Generously they had accepted the invitation to follow what might prove to be a will-o'-the-wisp, a mere mirage.

They leave the compact city for the open plains of Bethlehem. In an open stable they find the object of their laborious search, the reward of all their generous sacrifices. At the feet of the Infant King they deposit their royal gifts, but only to the treasury of His Sacred Heart for safe, yea, eternal keeping, do they consign their most prized possession—their selves. That is true generosity. Philanthropy says: "Give till it hurts." Christian charity suggests: "Give and do not count the cost." True generosity counsels: "Give until there is no more to give."—The Infant King will make that the motto of His earthly life. To each of His generous followers He says: "Open thy (soul's) mouth wide, and I will fill it (with grace)."—Ps. 80:11. Grace can work unhampered in generous souls. Hence every generous soul can say: "I have *run* the way of the commandments when thou didst *enlarge* my heart."—Ps. 118:32.

Waiting for The Zephyr



“He came by inspiration of
the Spirit into the temple.”

—St. Luke 2 27

A MAN in the ultra-modern waiting room pulled out his watch. Why, it had stopped! Oh, yes he had forgotten to wind it after last night's gay

party. And, oh, what a party! He would not have missed it for anything in the world. True, he had lost several hours of sleep, but he could catch a few winks now whilst waiting for “The Zephyr,” which would not be due for half an hour. The twitching elbow of the man dozing beside him nudged him, and acted as a crowbar to his leaden lids.

With a start he awoke and glanced, then stared at the clock, which seemed to have run amuck. Its hour hand seemed to be pointing a telltale finger at him, whilst its minute hand appeared to point down the track over which The Zephyr had sped half an hour ago *without him*.

In the temple at Jerusalem Simeon had waited for "the Consolation of Israel" years without number, recorded in the snow-white strands of his flowing beard. He had received an answer to his prayers from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the "Anointed of the Lord." The "Spirit" that "breathes where he will," coming as a gentle zephyr in the evening of his life, had whispered to his ever-open ear that now at last his longing should be stilled. All the eager, pent up longing of the Prophets gleamed in his breaking eyes. The centuries of mankind's watchful, prayerful waiting seemed to culminate in his uplifted, trembling hands. He took the Child Jesus into his quivering arms. He had contacted grace and redemption. He was now ready to depart in peace.

God's swift-acting grace, His "Zephyr," runs on an eternally planned, unerring schedule. Sacred seasons, places and actions are its stopping places. It picks up all passengers that have learned from aged Simeon *watchful waiting* for God's free gift.

Graceful Anna



“And coming up at that very hour.” —St. Luke 2:38

THERE is a thrill in store for the interested hunter who, equipped with the proper arms, good eyesight, and a goodly supply of leisure and

patience, tracks down and bags the origin and meaning of family names. This is true especially of the names that occur in Holy Scripture, many of which were selected by God Himself and conferred for a special purpose. Such is the case with the “star” that appears on our screen today—the Prophetess Anna. Anna means “Grace.” She was the daughter of Phanuel (Face of God), who belonged to the tribe of Aser (The Happy One). In these three names the Holy Ghost gives us a complete sermon. By *grace* we see God and thereby

become *happy*. By leading a life of faith we prepare ourselves to see God face to face.

But lest we be content with mere words, and as God wants doers, not mere talkers, the Holy Ghost proceeds to show how Anna lived up to her name by telling us how she prepared herself to receive God's grace. She was married at the age of fifteen, and lived with her husband seven years in virginal and conjugal chastity. The remaining sixty-two years she spent in widowhood near the temple, "by fastings and prayers serving night and day."

On the two wings of prayer and mortification her soul flew upwards to God. Fasting disposes for prayer, prayer obtains the gift of purity of heart, the pure soul sees God. Thus "pure" Anna prepared herself for God's grace, and *was on hand* to receive it. She came to the temple at the right time. What she would have missed had she failed to heed the gentle call of grace! If it was aged Simeon's privilege to take Jesus into his arms, we may expect that he gave the Divine Child to her also to fondle and kiss. She made *contact* with the Author of Grace, and used *tact* in speaking of Him only to those "that looked for the redemption of Israel."

Blind Man's Bluff



“Blind guides they are of
blind men.”

—St. Matth. 15:14

SITTING in a semicircle in the court of the temple at Jerusalem, a group of hoary doctors are poring over an unrolled scroll in search of the spirit shrouded

in the letter of the Mosaic Law and the writings of the Prophets. Unnoticed, a Boy of twelve joins the group and listens attentively to the heated discussion of their knotty problem. Personal opinion, and the arguments advanced to bolster up the same, make the riddle more insolvable. They are on a blind path. The Lad now puts a few simple questions, and the ban-

dage falls from their eyes, as the mist is rolled away by the rising sun. After eighteen years these same doctors will again listen to the error-dispelling words of this same Youth, grown to manhood, and be eyewitnesses of His many miracles—but they will *refuse to believe* His divine doctrine, for “they are blind and leaders of the blind.”—St. Matt. 15:14.

Children play “Blind Man’s Buff.” Grown-ups often play “Blind Man’s Bluff.” The second type of blindness has more serious results. The first type is play: the second is a disease of the soul. It is a cataract formed by pride on the eye of the mind. Despite their better knowledge, yes, just because they seem to be better informed than the all-knowing God Himself, some men refuse the grace to believe His word.

Grace is a free gift. It can not be merited, but a place can be prepared for its reception into the soul. Water seeks its level, and fills the depressions in the land. Esteem of grace is such a depression in the soul. To esteem means to *look up to* with respect and appreciation. To look up we must first descend from pride’s high pedestal to the lowland of humility. Mary sank deepest in her own estimation; hence she was also most “full of grace.”

Free

Tools



“Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

—2 Cor. 3:17

GOD'S grace is ever active. It produces its God-intended effects if there is constant contact with the soul and disinterested cooperation. There

can be constant contact if the soul wishes it. But there must be more. *There must be unselfish cooperation.* A rapid check on how we serve God will reveal much selfishness. With St. Peter we often say: “Lord, we have left all to follow Thee—what therefore shall we have?” True love seeks God as God, not as a re-

ward. We are *children* of God (*liberi*), but we are not *free* (*liberi*).

Grace wants a free tool—one does not resist. St. John the Baptist was such an instrument. Grace contacted his soul at Mary's visitation. Its effect was a conscious spark of love and a leaping for joy. As a child he grew, and was strengthened in spirit; and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel." (St. Luke 1:80) He longed to see the Saviour to enjoy the sweetness of His presence. But he yearned still more to do the duty that God had imposed on him. He did not visit Jesus, but waited until Christ saw fit (according to His Father's plan) to come to him.

St. John points out the Redeemer to his expectant audience. He baptizes the Saviour. He sends his disciples to follow Jesus. But he himself remains behind to do his duty. His heart is so disinterested, so disengaged from everything, *even from God Himself* here, that he gladly foregoes all the spiritual profit he might reap from Christ's company and presence, merely that he might do God's will and attend to His service.

Dinner For One



“Martha was worried about much serving.

—St. Luke 10:40

MARTHA is bustling about her favored home at Bethany which today is to welcome Jesus as guest to a course dinner.

The food must be the best, the dishes and linen spotless, the silver stainless to honor Him Who, by assuming our human nature, condescended to require our services and to receive His food from us. Whilst Mary is refreshing the Master's hungry, thirsty, and weary soul with her love and silent adoration, Martha is busy putting the finishing touch-

es to the well-planned and well-prepared meal that is to refresh His Body and restore its vital energy. She pauses a moment in her work to complain of Mary's seeming inactivity, only to hear the gentle rebuke that "*one thing* is necessary."

Grace demands of us not merely the restful activity of Mary, but also the busy serving of Martha. Both have but one end—to serve the Master. Both soul and body have duties to perform, some separately, some jointly. But a soul motivated by grace will not merely transmit its energy to the body and cause it to perform works that are willed by God, but it will also direct all the varied external works to one end. Whilst the soul renders its service of worship to Jesus, the body, according to its own nature and duties, is also busy serving Him all day long. Through the soul and grace the body is joined to the Master everywhere and at all times. It offers Him refreshment at every step. Without any house-keeping worries it is busy all day long doing the one thing necessary—God's will. No man-made appliances can make being the Master's housekeeper easier and more profitable than that.

Spinning

Tops



“Mary, who also seated herself at the Lord’s feet, and listened to his word.”

—St. Luke 10:39

MAN has been called a “little world.” At present this little world is revolving at a terrific rate of speed. Man lives fast and dies fast, and during

his speeding life we find him either working fast to keep his job, or on the run looking for another that will enable him to live even faster and to consume his vital energy ever more speedily. Then, like a spinning top, he gradually slows up and finally falls to the ground.

The earth into which this human top eventually sinks also revolves, but its motion is not perceived save by the markings of day and night. These are material worlds, whose speed and activity can be gauged by man-made meters.

But within us there is also a world of activity, the perpetually moving spiritual oil and power of sanctifying grace. Grace demands interior activity of the soul with which it comes in contact, the use of the soul's God-given powers in a God-willed way in order to reach a God-willed end.

Mary Magdalen is the perfect type of this restful, spiritual activity. She sits at the feet of the Master. Her body is at rest save for her repentant eyes that are riveted on the Face of the Light of the World, and her eager ears that drink in every life-giving word from the Mouth of Eternal Truth. Around the magnetic center of the Author of Grace, in ever narrowing circles, revolves the top of her soul with its three powers—her mind, her memory, her will. The point of this spiritual top is her will. As it is one with the point of contact—the Divine will, it will not fall, but will go on spinning forever.

In a Winding Sheet



“Lazarus, come forth.”
—St. John 11:43

LAZARUS was dead. A large stone sealed the tomb where his body, sheathed in a winding sheet, was awaiting its resurrection.

Where was his soul? Was it keeping its four-day vigil beside the lifeless body in order to be on hand when Jesus, the bringer of life, would command him (body and soul): “Lazarus come forth?” Lazarus heard the life-giving command and obeyed. “He came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands.” Then the Master of life and death gave His

second command: "Loose him, and let him go."

Jesus is still raising souls, dead in original or personal sin, to the life of sanctifying grace, but only if the soul be willing. He bids His representatives on earth loose the bands of sin, so that the vivified soul may walk to eternal life. The winding sheet of death, darkness and corruption, is replaced by the swathing band of life, light and immortality.

Though swathed in bands, Lazarus, at the word of the Master, could still walk to the door of the tomb. Although enveloped completely in Christ's death-knitted robe of sanctifying grace, man's soul still retains its power of motion towards or away from God—its free will. Grace helps to eternal life, but it does not hinder eternal death. Man must *choose* life or death. He does so by every action performed by the right use or the abuse of God's supernatural help. Grace becomes a guarantee of eternal life and future glory only if used, as Lazarus did his new-found life, to weld our heart ever more closely to the Author of all grace and life.

SPECIAL FEATURE

*MASS
DREAMS*

by

Placidus Kempf, O. S. B.

WHEN we say we are “going to Mass” we are often ignorant of just where we are going, at least in mind. As proof of this statement I can cite the following personal experience. Several days ago I signed myself with the priest at the altar as he began the Mass that I was attending—in body. My train of thought, of which God must have been the engineer, took me to the terminal station of all human desires—God Himself. It ran like this.

God can have no new thought. To have a new thought would imply that a perfection is being added to Him who is already limitlessly perfect. An implied added perfection would imply an existing imperfection, both of which are ruled out by God’s infinite perfection. Therefore from all eternity puny, insignificant, less-than-nothing “I” existed in God’s mind. He *always* saw me as I was, as I now am, as I shall be one day and forever. He saw and planned my creation, my redemption, my sanctification and ultimate salvation. My *ultimate salvation!* What goes to the saving of a human soul? What is involved in its being saved?

As answer to my question there was flashed on the screen of my memory, like the apparently moving panorama viewed from a train window, the significant tabulation of Father Faber. "In the first place, it was absolutely necessary that God should become man, in order that that soul should be saved, according to the dispensation of God. It was absolutely necessary that Jesus should be born, teach, act, pray, merit, satisfy, suffer, bleed, die, for the saving of that single soul. It was necessary that there should be a Catholic Church, faith, Sacraments, Saints, the Pope, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, for that one soul. It was necessary that there should be a supernatural gift, a marvellous participation of Divine Nature, called sanctifying grace, and that on this should be accumulated loving acts and impulses of the Divine Will, in the shape of manifold actual graces, preventing, accompanying, following, and efficacious; else that soul cannot be saved. Martyrs must die, doctors must write, Popes and councils must expose and condemn heresy, missionaries travel, priests be ordained for the safety of that single soul. When all these preparations are completed, and by an act of merciful omnipotence that soul is created out of nothing, then there

must be a Guardian Angel appointed over it; all through its life Jesus must be occupied about it; Mary must have a great deal to do with it; all the Angels and Saints must pray and interest themselves about it. To every good thought, pious word, and devout action, and, of course, they soon come to be innumerable, a participation of the Divine Nature, grace, must concur. Unseen evil spirits have to be warded off from it, and foiled in their attempts upon it. Hourly temptations have to cause more or less emotion among its advocates in heaven. Every attribute of God vouchsafes to legislate for its advantage, so that it plays upon them all like one who fingers the keys of a musical instrument. The Precious Blood has to be communicated to it through extraordinary Sacraments, which are full of mystery, and were invented both as to form and matter by our Lord Himself. All sorts of things, water, oil, candles, ashes, beads, medals, scapulars, have to be filled with a strange indefinable power by ecclesiastical benedictions in its behalf. The Body, the Soul, and Divinity of the Incarnate Word have to be communicated to it over and over again till it becomes quite a common occurrence, though each time it is in reality a

more stupendous action than the creation of the world. It can speak up to heaven, and be heard and obeyed there. It can spend the satisfactions of Jesus as if they were its own, and can undo bolts and bars in Purgatory, and choose by its own determinate will whom it will liberate, and whom it will pass over. Moreover, all the time it is so near to God, and its heart is a place so sacred and so privileged, that none but God Himself can communicate grace to it, not even the Angels, nor the Mother of God herself, blessed throughout all ages. All this goes to the salvation of a soul. To be saved it has to be God's child, God's brother, and to participate in God's nature."

My train of streamlined thought would have swished along to—had not the tinkling of a bell brought my wandering mind back to earth and recalled my attention to the progress of the Sacrifice on the altar. It was as though the Conductor had touched me gently on the shoulder and whispered into my ear: "You are not yet saved." I looked up into the Face of my Savior in the elevated Sacred Host. He seemed to repeat for my sluggish comprehension the ominous words: "You are not yet saved." So, that is the reason for Your daily mystic death, my good Savior! Your

death on the cross earned for me a passport to heaven and the means necessary to reach that happy haven. You have done Your part with divine liberality, yes, divine prodigality. Many graces have been wasted on my soul's salvation in the past. I have forgotten what You have done for me. I have forgotten, neglected, cared little about my only real duty on earth—to save my soul by serving You alone. Hence You give me this daily reminder of Your divine extravagance and my sinful negligence. At each Holy Mass you call out to me: "You are not yet saved." You will repeat Your sacrifice and this reminder until my soul passes from time into eternity. Shall I *then* be saved? I shall if I will. I WILL.

The End

This is the first of several series of GOSPEL MOVIES. The others will be published soon. 10¢ a copy. 3 copies for 25¢. 12 copies for \$1.00.

THE GRAIL
ST. MEINRAD, INDIANA

A hand-drawn illustration featuring a crowd of people in silhouette at the bottom. Above them is a large, light-colored sign with a dark border. The sign has the word 'ADMISSION' written in a tall, thin, hand-drawn font at the top, and '10¢' written below it. The background behind the sign is filled with dense, dark, diagonal hatching lines.

ADMISSION

10¢

THE GRAIL
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