

For more than two years already our parish has been using an untraditional method of work with drug addiction rehabilitants, i.e. watching and discussing films with them. Motion pictures have become an integral part of modern life. Motion pictures have definitely become an art, the most influential one of all modern arts. It is impossible to prohibit parishioners, especially young ones, to watch films. This means we should teach them to choose films of artistic value, teach them how to watch them, and understand. Unfortunately nobody studies cinematography at secondary schools. If the school system 'lost' belles-lettres and fiction as a subject from the curriculum, no doubt impact would reduce dramatically, which world literature exerts on people's education and the formation of their Weltanschauung. However an urgent need to study cinematography deeply at the secondary school has not been realized yet. Films could help in studying history and other cultures, could contribute to raising and comprehension of many world outlook issues. It is a field that can yield a fruitful dialogue with the youth.

Traditionally our parish organizes film discussions the following way. Once a week members of the parish and our patients would watch a film that was specially selected by the father superior of the parish, and then discuss it two or three days later. Participants to the discussion would suggest their questions on the film, and then each person would share his/her understanding of the issue. Having answered one question they would move to the next one. At first the floor is given to the patients, then to the parishioners, and it is the father superior who sums up the discussion. A uniform 'correct' opinion is not the goal of such discussions, but rather a free exchange of opinion and learning from somebody else's understanding. Such discussions reveal difference between the points of view of those present; they give space for profound interpersonal encounter. This form of work is very constructive for drug addicts as they can learn about another perception of the reality and other solutions to different life situations. They perceive this kind of conversation as a safe contact since nobody intrudes rudely into their personal lives. When the talk is over the adolescents leave with food for thought as serious defects of their own stereotypical vision of the world around become evident to them. They learn to think, express their ideas, listen to others, and respect somebody else's opinion. Besides, they begin to develop artistic taste.

There can be some other forms of work with the youth with the help of cinematography, public lectures on motion pictures, to begin with. Prior to the film, the 'lecturer' speaks on the theme of the film, its creators, issues raised in the film, and draws attention to certain episodes. However the lecturer should not retell the plot of the film, neither should he impose his own point of view. A brief introductory lecture of 10-20 minutes - only talented lectures can keep people's attention for a longer time - is followed by the film. This approach is applicable when there may be no subsequent meeting with those who watch the film.

There can be still another variant of lecturing on cinematography: the lecturer shows some fragments of a film, usually the most important episodes, and can retell the plot of the film. So the lecturer tells, shows, comments, and launches brief dialogues with the audience. The lecture may take from 30 to 90-120 minutes, and can be very captivating for the audience. It is not advisable to show the film right after the lecture; some people may choose not to watch the film at all in full after such a lecture. Those who wish will be able to watch the film later, at the time of their choice; however is there sense in discussing a film, which you do not wish to watch once again?

Finally, the lecturer can share his/her vision on a film, understanding of the raised issues a day or two after it was shown to the group of young people, and answer questions asked by the audience. There is no sense in postponing the talk to a later period since the content of the film will stop being of interest to the young people, they will begin to forget its significant details. However it does not worth discussing the film as soon as it is over, since the young people have to analyze their first impressions and, so to say, to digest them. Sometimes you can discuss in this way a film, which has become kult for them, which nearly all of them have seen, sometimes several times, and which they argue about in the their milieu. This will close my brief description of three options for cinematographic lecturing.

As I have written earlier, we prefer film discussion to lecturing on films in our work with the youth. Why? We believe it more important for participants to look for answers rather than receive already made 'correct' ones. They get involved in a creative process. However here we run a high risk of getting lost, or taking a wrong path. It is important both to listen to and hear young people, and give them freedom, and be their true leader who will softly introduce a different understanding of the reality in response to their interpretation of problems. Along with that the leader must beware of offending somebody from the audience; for this reason it is important to create a safe space for open conversation. You should not play into their hands: the youth sense this immediately; however you cannot lose to them. The worst possible situation is when discussion turns into a regular controversy or argument, especially between the moderator and the rest of the participants. A good discussion always unites the participants at a deep spiritual level, whereas an argument may lead to mutual insult and resentment, and to the unwillingness to participate in something like that next time. A discussion may turn into a lecture on the film in question, which is all right, but means either mutual reticence, fear of the participants, or that the moderator fears to put him/herself on a par with the others and thus lose control of the situation. The status of the lecturer allows him/her dominate the audience and make them take his/her opinion into consideration, whereas the moderator should not make him/herself anything more than the first among equal when discussing a film.

Our own children are the dearest category of young people to us. They are of the greatest concern to us. Many parents would like to pass their life experience to their children, share their understanding of life, warn without pressure their children of fatal flaws. Many children would love to discuss their own love or everyday problems with the parents, yearn for understanding and respect by the adults, and want to get in touch with the inner life of their parents. Yet very few families manage to find a mutually acceptable form of such relationship and have a confiding dialogue between generations. Why not use the discussion of films interesting to the whole family or at least to the children to close the gap of estrangement and to reach a desired mutual understanding? Let the person who is currently the best in dealing with the rest of the family be the moderator. While discussing a film, both the children and the parents would be able to speak openly in front of each other on such issues on which they would never dare or will not be able to speak in different circumstances. Successful experience in establishing relations through the use of films may contribute to the beginning of new sincere and comforting for all interfamily relationships. The method of arranging a discussion may completely coincide with the one described here, or be adjusted with the account of peculiarities of a particular family.

Each person who once takes the decision to work with the youth in the form of lectures on films or discussions, irrespective of the form the work will take, will have to decide on the filmography appropriate for an Orthodox Christian film library. Strictly speaking there are no 'Orthodox Christian' theatrical films, but we can advise on a large number of films created at different times by different directors for ethic and aesthetic rearing of the youth. Below I suggest a filmography compiled at my parish. How was it arranged?

The original list for the parish film library was suggested by Prof. Rev. Priest Georgy Mitrofanov, a professor of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, who has been lecturing on films for a number of years already. While compiling a list of films to purchase, we received recommendations from the young clergy, friends of our parish whose judgment we trust. We also used reminiscence of the father superior of our church who in his student years used to attend lectures on films at the Illusion cinema theatre, the USSR State Film Fund. We also took into account the list of films, which the staff of the rehabilitation centre for drug addicts Melnichny Ruchey, St. Petersburg, discussed with their patients. While looking for necessary films we read many reviews on films, which had been awarded at international filmfests. Finally, when the positive effect of our film discussions had become evident for independent observers, they also began to recommend some remarkable films from their point of view. Sometimes they would merely purchase this or that film for us.

Now let me say a couple of words about the films we recommend. There are no weak films among them. Acting and the reality of what is happening on the screen should not cause doubt - I mean, justifiable behaviour of characters in a given situation: the truth of a good tale or fiction well-thought by the authors is accepted without objections. There can be a view on the events in the film descending from that of the film creators, we can judge them differently but the film should not cause a desire to change something in it, accepting some episodes and denying the truthfulness of the others, accepting the performance of some actors and wincing at the others. If this happens the film is poor, and you should look for another film on the topic; and if there is

no such film it may be better not to raise the topic at all rather than discuss it through an evidently weak film. At least weak points of the film should not catch the eye.

The main figure in the shooting area is the director of the film. There are quite a few directors whose creative work can be accepted as a whole, and a lion's share of their films can be recommended for watching, namely S. Soderberg, A. Kurosawa, S. Spielberg, early F. Fellini, O. Stone, L. Visconti, R. Bresson, V. Todorovsky, P. Chukhrai, N. Mikhalkov, and A. Tarkovsky. However there are just a few films that deserve attention among the works by the majority of prominent directors. There is still another group of directors with a typically anti-Christian trend in work, but some films by them are of great interest since they can be watched from an opposite point of view - our understanding of the events shown in the film may differ from that of the director's: *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by M. Forman, *Dancer in the Dark* by Lars von Trier, *Taxi Driver* by M. Scorsese, and others.

The filmography is divided into several categories and I shall briefly comment on them.

**Costume Films.** It may be useful to familiarize oneself with the events, which have become the subject of the film so that during the film discussion you could tell more about them or correct some inaccuracy if necessary in the presentation of the historical material by the authors of the film.

**Film Adaptation.** Usually such films are thorough, and if the audience are familiar with the book

you can discuss the original source as well. However it is not advisable to blend the discussion of both, since the book and the film belong to different arts and are always two different works. It is preferable to speak about the film and the book at separate meetings.

The films on the list do not belong to the erotic category, but some of them may have a couple of scenes which should better be omitted while watching - which depends on the audience. This refers to such films as *Angel Heart*, *Queen Margot*, *Elizabeth*, *Last Emperor*, *Requiem for a Dream*, *Burnt by the Sun*, *The Thief*, and some others.

Not all films will be of interest to an unprepared audience, especially films shot before 1970's. There are some films that are very difficult for understanding, and they require a brief explanatory commentary. When selecting a film for another demonstration, you should bear in mind the age of a particular audience, their educational and cultural background. Certain films may be of no interest for discussion for the moderator him/herself, then there is no sense in discussing them, unless it is the target group that insisted on discussing a film which has become cultic in their milieu.

I have compiled the filmography for my own work, having not included a number of films in it, which were drawn to my attention, such as *Devil's Advocate*, *The Muslim (Musulmanin)*, *City of Angels*, *Cross of Iron*, *Siberian Barber (Sibirsky Tsyulnik)*, etc. There can be no single opinion on the list, but it holds true that only a scintilla of motion picture works can be recommended to young Orthodox Christians. When compiling the list, I learnt from other people's experience and tried to avoid films of poor quality and of adverse influence on soul; nevertheless I have been disappointed more than once. I wanted to guard others against such disappointment, to spare them a lengthy ramble in search for films that are necessary for their work, and a sad encounter with alien spirit in the world of cinematography. For these reasons I have prepared exactly this list. It is nothing more than a starting point for a person who would like to arrange his/her own collection.

Filmography:

Feature Films on Religious Subject:

Joseph Sargent, Abraham

Roger Young, Joseph

Wyler William, Ben Hur

Roland Joffe, The Mission

Ingmar Bergman, The Virgin Spring

Ingmar Bergman, The Communicants, or Winter Light

Ingmar Bergman, Through a Glass Darkly

William Freidkin, The Exorcist

Robert Bresson, Diary of a Country Priest

L. Covani, Francisco

Fred Zinnemann A Man for All Seasons

Fred Zinnemann The Nun's Story

Costume Films:

Mel Gibson, Brave Heart

Luc Besson, Jeanne d'Arc

Eric Till, Luther

Patrice Chereau, Queen Margot

Pete Travis, Henry VIII

Shekhar Kapur, Elizabeth

Sergei Bondarchuk, Waterloo

Steven Spielberg, Amistad

B. Bertolucci, The Last Emperor

Rodger Donaldson, Thirteen Days

Oliver Stone, JFK

Films about War

E. Karelov, Two Comrades Served

Wolfgang Petersen, Das Boot / The Boat

Andrei Tarkovsky, Ivan's Childhood

Joseph Vilsmaier, Stalingrad

S. Rostotsky, The Dawns Here are Quite

L. Shepitko, Ascension

Steven Spielberg, Schindler's List

Roberto Benigni, Life is Beautiful

Steven Spielberg, Saving Private Ryan

Francis F. Coppola, Apocalypse Now

Oliver Stone Platoon, Saviour

D. Tanovic, No Man's Land

Oliver Hirschbiegel, Bunker

On Psychological Consequences of War:

Martin Scorsese Taxi Driver

Valeri Todorovsky My Step-Brother Frankenstein

Film Adaptation:

Andrei Konchalovsky, Odysseus

Uli Edel, Ring of the Nibelungs

G. Kozintsev, Hamlet, King Lear

M. Redford, The Merchant of Venice

Akira Kurosawa, Ran (adaptation of King Lear)

Akira Kurosawa, Throne of Blood (adaptation of Macbeth)

Mikhail Shveytser, Malenkie Tragedii (The Avaricious Knight, Don Juan)

A. Zarkhi, Anna Karenina

Sergei Bondarchuk, War and Peace - 1,2,3,4;

L. Kulidzhanov, The Crime and the Punishment

V. Bortko, Idiot - serial

Ivan Pyrjev, The Karamatzov Brothers

Nikita Mikhalkov, A Few Days in the Life of I.I. Oblomov

Nikita Mikhalkov, An Unfinished Piece for a Player Piano

Vladimir Basov, The Days of the Turbins

Vladimir Bortko, Dog's Heart

A. Alov, V. Naumov, The Flight (Beg)

Sergey Gerasimov, Quite Flows The Don

Mikhail Shveytser, The Golden Calf

G. Cukor, My Fair Lady

Milosh Forman One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest

Luchino Visconti, Le notti bianche (White Nights)

Gleb Panfilov, The First Cycle (V krughe pervom) - serial

Films on Drug and Alcohol Addiction:

Darren Aronofsky, Requiem for a Dream

Scott Kalvert, Basketball Diaries

Steven Soderbergh, Traffic

Betty Thomas, 28 days

Films about the World of Crime and Counteraction to it:

Orson Welles, Touch of Evil

Francis F. Coppola The Godfather -I, II, III

Sidney Lumet Serpico

Sidney Lumet Dog Day Afternoon

Mike Newell, Donnie Brasco

Other Films:

O. Welles, Citizen Kane

Akira Kurosawa Rashomon

Akira Kurosawa The Seven Samurai

Ingmar Bergman Wild Strawberries

Lars von Trier, Dancer in the Dark

Ron Howard, A Beautiful Mind

Robert Zemeckis, Forrest Gump

Barry Levinson, Rain man

Steven Spielberg Minority Report, Munich

Steven Soderbergh Sex, Lies, and Video

Federico Fellini, La Strada / The Road, Le notti di Cabiria / The Nights of Cabiria, La dolce vita / The Sweet Life

James Titanic

James Cameron Terminator-I, II

Robert Benton, Kramer vs. Kramer

Adam Shankman, Walk to Remember

Francois Truffaut, Quatre cents coups / 400 Blows

Kevin Costner, Dances with Wolves

Peter Weir, Dead Poets Society

Wong Kar-wai, Hua yang nian hua / In the Mood for Love

Terry George, Hotel Rwanda

Rober Bresson, Mouchette

Claude Lelouch, Un homme et une femme / A Man and a Woman

Cher, If These Walls Could Talk (on abortions)

Joel Schumacher, Phone Booth (2002)

Martin Brest, Scent of a Woman (1992)

M. Night Shyamalan, The Village (2004)

Joseph Losey, Monsieur Klein

Fred Zinnemann From Here to Eternity

Clinton Eastwood, Unforgiven

Robert Altman, Gosford Park

Werner Herzog, Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes / Aguirre: The Wrath of God

Wim Wenders, Der Himmel über Berlin (Wings of Desire)

Wim Wenders, Paris, Texas

Jean-Luc Godard, A bout de souffle / Breathless

Luchino Visconti, Gruppo di famiglia in un interno (Conversation Piece)

Luchino Visconti Rocco and His Brothers

Luchino Visconti, La caduta degli dei (The Damned)

Woody Allen, Match Point

Marcel Carne, Les Enfants du paradis / Children of Paradise

Mary McGuckian, The Bridge of San Luis Rey

Takeshi Kitano Dolls

David Lynch, Elephant Man

David Lynch, Straight Story (for people involved in palliative nursing)

Spike Lee, 25th Hour

Oliver Stone Wall Street

Jean-Jacques Annaud, Seven Years in Tibet

Feature films by Russian Directors:

Andrei Tarkovsky Andrei Rublev

Nikita Mikhalkov Burnt by the Sun

A. Proshkin, A Cold Summer of 1953

Andrei Tarkovsky Mirror

Andrei Tarkovsky The Sacrifice

Pavel Chukhrai Thief, Driver for Vera

A. Zviagintsev, The Return

Valeri Todorovsky The Country of Deaf People

Valeri Todorovsky The Lover

Comedies:

Charles Chaplin The Kid, The Gold Rush, City Lights, Modern Times

Harold Ramis Groundhog Day

James Orr, Mr. Destiny

Stephen Frears, Hero

Eldar Riazanov Beware of a Car, The Irony of Fate

Francis Veber, Jouet / Toy

Penny Marshall, Big

W. Wyler, Roman Holiday

Fairy Tales:

Rob Cohen, Dragonheart

Steven Spielberg E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial

A. Rou Morozko (Father Frost)

N. Kosheverova, Old, Old Fairy Tale

L. Nechajev Red, Honest, and in Love

Andrew Adamson, The Chronicles of Narnia: the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

Cartoon Films:

W. Disney: Alice in Wonderland, The King Lion, Beauty and the Beast, Pinocchio

Russian Cartoons: Twelve Months, The Tale of the Golden Cockerel, Through the Looking Glass, Dwarf Nose, The Tale of Tales, Hedgehog in the Fog, Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish, The Scarlet Flower, and Maugli - serial.

In conclusion I would like to share an example of a film discussion in my parish. Naturally it should be a film known to the majority, and raised issues should also be of interest to the majority of participants in such a discussion. I believe that the discussion of Groundhog Day by Harold Ramis satisfies these requirements. It has been for two years already that we make

audio records of our discussions, and we edit those that have turned to be the most meaningful: we delete idle phrases, noise, pauses, etc. The edited tapes have turned out to be of demand. The phonogram of the Groundhog Day discussion has made it possible for me to reproduce both the questions, which are always written down, and variants of answers to them. The digest of the answers is given below.

Are the events of the film real?

Groundhog Day is a tale for the adults. A good tale corresponds with the reality at a more profound level, at the level, which is not good for day-to-day realism. The film is a very good, deep, and kind fairy tale.

Is it a coincidence that the main character and the groundhog share the name, Phil?

Casting a glance at its shadow the groundhog Phil decides when winter will be over. Phil Collins also paid attention to the 'shadow' he casts in this world. Phil's attitude to his own 'shadow' will determine whether he makes another step and whether the 'winter' will ever end for him.

Stages of the motivation behind Phil's behaviour. What is the progress in his behaviour, order of his preferences, and his last choice?

Phil's behaviour follows an internally truthful pattern well thought by the film creators:

Aggression towards the situation and those involved in it;

Orientation in the situation, becoming aware of it;

Complete impunity provokes lechery, obsession with money, and criminal behaviour;

Attempts to take over Rita ('negative' love);

Crisis, attempts to break the circle (suicide);

Rejection of ego-centrism;

Growing trend to sacrifice ('positive' love).

There are two stages, first, everything is aimed at self-assertion (a - e), and then, at self-sacrifice. At the first stage Phil makes every effort to force others satisfy his every whim; at the second stage he begins to take care of others to the extent of self-oblivion.

A self-centred life becomes boring very soon, as passion driven behaviour does not satisfies a human soul; to crown that, there is virtually nobody to whom he can brag - eye-witnesses remember nothing the 'next' morning because their 'yesterday' does not coincide with Phil's. Attempts to conquer Rita's love fail. Phil refuses to accept the world on such terms and makes the last choice of an egoist. He commits suicide: the world is poorly created, the situation does not satisfy me, I leave it, I bang the door. But it turns out that he cannot leave at all: next morning he wakes up in his bed. Then Phil tries another life principle, not that of self-preservation, but of self-denial. He likes the new principle; his life begins to fill with sense. Phil finally understands that we have what we have given to others, rather than what we have consumed.

Why Phil began to change to the better?

Nothing can force a person change his way of life. It is always his free choice. Even God cannot force man. Phil loves Rita, and finally he begins to realize what kind of man she needs. This helps him make a pivotal choice. He chooses the way of life harmonious to that of Rita's. His love energy remains as it was, but he chooses a dramatically different principle of life.

How is love shown in the film?

Love is shown in different ways. At first it is a substitute of love, nothing but sex (relations between Phil and Nancy). Then, begins mutual liking of the main characters for each other. Phil's egoistic love, his desire of Rita are shown clearly. Such love cannot and does not want to take the neighbour's freedom into consideration. Phil intends to 'buy' Rita with his talents, courting, apparent coincidence of their preferences, and thus make her fall in love with him. But love is always a free gift. Phil loves her for his own sake and tries to abolish Rita's freedom; and Rita cannot agree to that. As soon Phil brushes aside his petty ego-centrism, his feelings transfigure and begin to combine harmoniously sacrifice, ability to preserve freedom both of his own and his lover's, and openness to the neighbours.

How did Rita manage to fall in love with Phil within one day?

Rita has sympathized with Phil since the day they first met, she has taken interest in him. During that last day she sees him as a man of an amazingly noble soul, a dream of any woman. During his long relations with Rita (it is only for her, not for him, that everything happens within two days) Phil has comprehensively learnt Rita and deeply fallen in love with her. The quality of his attention to her has changed. He says little, but deep feeling needs no words. It is not the length of relations, but rather the extent of revelation about the neighbour, and the depth of meeting and cognizance each other that contribute to the conception of love. History knows cases when love to Christ woke up in martyrs within split seconds, and those people were ready to give their lives for Christ. Sometimes one day is very long.

Why does Phil fight for the old man's life?

Here we deal with an example of what is called palliative help. We still live on former Soviet stereotypes: if there is hope for the patient to recuperate, then doctors spare no effort to restore his health, if there is no hope then - take him, he is hopeless, it is useless to take trouble over him. However we are all hopeless in some sense, we shall all die. The matter is not in death itself, but how we shall meet this death. Phil makes every effort for the old man to survive that day, but all in vain. Nevertheless Phil does not leave the man alone, makes his last day joyous, and stays with him till the very last moment. It makes difference whether to die in the street forgotten by everyone, or with a loving soul attending you.

How does the film raise the issues of freedom and conscience?

The miracle of freedom is in the fact that man can act differently in one and the same situation. In this sense nobody is free in the film: all characters find themselves in the same situation again and again, and act exactly as the previous time; it is only Phil's that changes their actions. It is not one and the same day for him; it is a new day because he remembers all previous days and he matures with every new repetition of the groundhog day. It is not quite clear though whether he is free in a full sense of the word. The audience believe that he is free. Any way they experience this miracle of freedom, it gets to their heads, they become aware of an enormous treasure in their life: they are the masters of their own fate being in the place and with the people that have been granted to them by God.

It is not clear what is happening with Phil Collins' conscience. According to the plot of the film he does many wrong things, and his conscience should suffer as he experiences each of the sins in reality. On the other hand, there are no injured or hurt the next day for nobody has lived yesterday's groundhog day yet. If Phil hurt somebody the day before, does he feel remorse and shame the next day when he meets that person again? Or Phil experiences something that happens to us when we suddenly wake up from a dream in which we did something very bad, and we are horrified - What have I done?! Then we realize that that was just a dream and we sigh with relief - our conscience has been reassured. Has Phil's conscience got reassured likewise every morning?

Why has the vicious circle broken? How this should be interpreted correctly?

The film is a tale, like *The Scarlet Flower* by the Russian writer Aksakov, or Goffman's *Nutcracker*, or the American animated cartoon *Beauty and the Beast*. The main character - an extreme egoist in the past - was bewitched and turned into a beast; but the spell will be broken as soon as a wonderful kind girl falls in love with him. This will return him his former look. The girl will fall in love with the beast only if she sees that the ugly appearance disguises a kind heart. Then the evil spell will lose its strength. That is what happens in the film as well: the magic stops when the main character Rita falls in love with Phil. So a new morning has arrived. Life goes on.