

# New Virgin Mother Picked in Play

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1976

On Saturday, December 20, the play "Miss Virgin Mother" was presented at the Grand Circus Exchange by a group of individuals calling themselves "Somebody Else." Although non-professionals in the strict sense of the word, originality and creativity sparked their performance, and with an unusually relaxed atmosphere, the play provided a bright spot in an otherwise bleak Detroit day.

The play begins with the Corporate Board of Heaven confronting the problem of false prophets appearing on earth ripping off heavenly royalty fees and violating scripture copyrights. To resolve this problem, a second coming of Christ is planned and a gala pageant to find a new virgin mother is staged.

The corporate board, God the father, and God the son (dressed as trendy but seedy executives) and God the holy ghost (an incredibly silent parakeet in a cage), send the angel Gabriel to earth to find another virgin mother just like the original.

Through the extensive use of contemporary nonsense "Miss Virgin Mother" points out how religion has used the image of the Madonna for 2,000 years to perpetuate sexism. In one instance, a caller on a local talk show states that the Blessed Virgin should be a model for women ("meek and mild; chaste in word and deed; servant of her husband and family") the roommate of one of the new Virgin Mother-to-be candidates yells "Mary, will you turn that God damned shit off. It reminds me of Mother Theresa back in the sixth grade."

However, in attacking sexism, the play does not give support to liberal feminism. Rather "Miss Virgin Mother" contends that women fighting within the system simply serve to perpetuate the system, just as any other reform movement.

This point is made when Mary, the original virgin mother, attains a position as an equal power on the corporate board. After attaining the prize, her character promptly changes. The new virgin mother tries to convince the old virgin mother not to imitate the authoritarianism of her male cohorts in the Trinity: "... No one has the right to control another person's life." But the original mother's response: "You must be joking. Do you seriously think I'm going to give all this up when it's taken me 2000 years to get here?"

The end of the play leaves one wondering: Does it make a difference that the new virgin mother is not as willing to obey without question as her predecessor, or has she too been co-opted by working within the system. The end was somewhat flat due to this lack of definitiveness, but all minor flaws aside, the play was a pleasure to all who participated, both actors and audience, and is now being packaged with bright bows and ribbons as a Xmas present to the Vatican.

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