

## **Roll the credits**

Fr. Michael Tracey

When I go to a movie, like everyone else, I never wait for the credits to roll. By then, everyone has seen the movie, understood its plot and discovered its end. Why bother to wait for credits that seem insignificant. After all, none of the people mentioned in the credits are famous people. One would not stalk them to obtain their autograph. One would never see their name or face gracing the latest gossip or entertainment magazine.

Yet, I often wonder who these faceless people might be. They are usually listed by the job description. They are grip handlers, riggers, members of a construction team, transportation persons, flower arrangers, make-up persons, wardrobe handlers and the list goes on and on.

Sunday evening while watching “60 Minutes,” I noticed that credit list rolling again. I noticed that the names were written much smaller and that they scrolled past the TV screen at breakneck speed. Of course, on “60 Minutes,” there was no musical score to give them a more fitting last farewell.

Deep down, I know that, without that roll of credits, the movie or the show would not be possible. With each “60 Minute” episode, I realize that a mountain of research is needed before even the first interview or story takes place. I realize that such research is carried out by unknown but very important faces working behind the scenes in order to make the presenter appear professional, knowledgeable and with fingertip accuracy.

I look at such shows as “The Tonight Show” or “The David Letterman Show” and the hosts entertaining their audiences with opening monologues. Hidden out of view is a cue card holder whose dexterity keeps the jokes and comments on track. I wonder about the warm-up act or person who gets the audience ready for the taping of the show. They are a kind of John the Baptist pointing the way to the real star to come.

In the context of such rolling credits, research persons and warm-up acts, I have been thinking of how this is also at work in our church.

In our church, especially in the super-bowl events like the ordination of a bishop, the election of a pope, the celebration of the ordination of a priest or deacon, the graduation ceremony; the same thing happens. Behind the scenes, countless people in different capacities after long hours of preparation, allow the celebration to proceed flawlessly. These people, too, become the nameless and faceless people, without whom the celebration would not be possible.

On the local parish level, we think about sacristans and their helpers. They work diligently behind the scenes with the same gusto, irrespective the occasion, to make sure that what happens during the Mass or other church event goes off smoothly. The vestments are ready; the books are open to the correct places; the candles are lit; sufficient hosts and wine are set out to be consecrated; purificators and corporals are ready and in the right place. These items do not appear magically in their proper place but are readied and placed by people who not only care for but also love their church.

Another group who work behind the scenes are the people who clean the church. They appear when no one is around. They are armed with mops and buckets, vacuum cleaners, dust rags, toilet cleaners, polishing cloths and electrical cords. Like a colony of busy bees, they create an environment that oozes with the honey of cleanliness in anticipation of weekend services.

So the next time I am at a movie or watching a TV documentary or celebrating a Mass, I will try and remember the nameless and faceless people who constantly work behind the scenes, contributing their talents to make the finished product complete.

Every day, unknown people do historic things without looking for accolades, top billing or recognition. They may not have star power. But without them, others would not be stars. So, let’s appreciate, respect and be grateful to them as we roll the credits.