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NEWS RELEASE

CAMPUS VISIT BY FAMED POLISH DIRECTOR COULD BE FIRST STEP IN EFFORT TO BRING INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL TO THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

DAYTON, Ohio — Sister Angela Ann Zukowski, M.H.S.H., is on a not-so-secret mission. The associate professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton believes the University is ripe to join the ranks of Cannes, New York, San Francisco and other sites that are home to prestigious international film competitions. She also believes that screening some of the world’s best films at UD can lead to positive action related to the social justice messages of many of these films.

It’s all a matter of getting started.

On Monday and Tuesday, April 23 and 24, Zukowski and the University’s Institute for Pastoral Initiatives, arts and human experience cluster and minor in film studies committee will host a visit by Polish film director and producer Krzysztof Zanussi. Zukowski is hoping Zanussi’s visit will serve as the first step in bringing to Dayton an international festival offering films that address issues of human rights and human dignity.

During his visit, Zanussi — whose 30 films have challenged the issues of morality, political corruption and social justice — will speak about his life’s work and goals in a free and public discussion from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Monday, April 23, in Sears Recital Hall in the Jesse Philips Humanities Center.

In conjunction with his visit, Zanussi’s most recent film, Our God’s Brother (1997), will be screened at 7 p.m. Sunday, April 22, in the Mathias J. Heck Courtroom in the Joseph E. Keller School of Law. Zanussi created the film from the play of the same name written in 1949 by Karol Wojtyla — now known as Pope John Paul II — to call attention to the often inhuman living conditions of the poor and underprivileged.

“It’s been my hope to bring some of the international experts in film and media that I have been associated with in the past 10 years to UD so our students and faculty and

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community members can experience these people,” said Zukowski, director of the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives at UD. “There are Catholic communicators around the world who are doing excellent work and we want to bring that reality to campus. As a Catholic Marianist University we need to be familiar with the outstanding work of Catholics in the media and film field.

“It’s also been a goal to bring an international film festival to the University,” Zukowski said. “It’s important that our students become comfortable and more familiar with international films. Many of these films offer different genres, tones, textures, philosophies and techniques that we in the United States aren’t always comfortable with. We need to come to understand, respect and engage in conversation about the profound message of these films.”

Zukowski said she’s hoping Zanussi will serve as a link to other renowned international producers, directors, actors and script writers. “My goal is to begin an annual or biennial film festival in 2002 or 2003,” she said. “I’ve participated in these festivals in other parts of the world for the last 10 years, and I think it’s possible for us to be bold and realize a future film event on the UD campus.”

Zukowski said the festivals will feature films that emphasize and reflect issues concerning human dignity, the development of cultures, and social justice issues emerging around the world.

“There are so many good films out there that address cultural issues and concerns,” she said. “We in the U.S. need to become more aware of these productions and stories so that we become not only more sensitive to the issues but more proactive in social justice reform.”

Before he leaves campus, Zanussi will meet with a small group of faculty from religious studies, film studies and other disciplines to discuss the realities of bringing a film festival to Dayton.

“We’ll also talk about how we can become a partner in and benefit from the current formation of a new international talent center that will be located in Namur, Belgium,” said Zukowski, who serves as world president of the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television, which is merging with another existing Catholic communication organization to form the Catholic World Association for Communication. “This new center will educate the world’s future talent in film and media production. It will be for very serious students who demonstrate talent and dedication to the filed. Who knows, perhaps one or more of our UD students could find themselves in Namur with an internship with Zanussi and others like him.”

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