

## Document Citation

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# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

1964 136 min.

*Directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini; original title: "Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo;" produced by Alfredo Bini; screenplay by Pasolini, based on the New Testament Book of Matthew; photography by Tonino delli Colli. With Enrique Irazoque, Margherite Caruso, Susanna Pasolini, Marcello Morante, Mario Socrate. Italian dialog with English subtitles.*

Also available in English dubbed version; please specify version desired.

One of those rare achievements appreciated by widely varying audiences, **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW** has received acclaim from church groups, the public, critics and film festivals (including the Special Jury Prize of the Venice Festival). Pier Paolo Pasolini (**ACCATTONE**, **THE HAWKS AND THE SPARROWS**, **TEOREMA**), Italy's controversial writer-poet-director, has avoided the spectacular over-dramatization so characteristic of films on Jesus' life. "I haven't put the Gospels together," he has stated, "and written a scenario of the life of Christ; no this is precisely the Gospel according to Saint Matthew."

Pasolini's unconventional approach is reflected in his use of rugged southern Italian landscapes, hill towns, costumes of coarse material and faces without make-up. There are no "stars;" all of the performers are non-actors whom Pasolini selected for their natural, unglamorous quality. Pasolini's Christ is a man who preaches with urgency; feels deeply for the afflicted people around him; experiences anguish, impatience and anger. The film is basically a simple recreation of a human drama, set against the everyday life of the times.

The director employs a variety of visual techniques: cinema-verite (hand-held cameras, journalistic coverage of the action); expressive close-ups reminiscent of Dreyer's **THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC**; images inspired by great works of art (by Masaccio, Giotto, Piero della Francesca and others). Pasolini also uses music boldly — included are Bach, Mozart, black spirituals and the Congolese *Missa Luba* — to expand the scope of the story. He has stated that the eclecticism of music and pictorial styles serves "to get a synthesis of art and popular culture — all profoundly part of the Christian tradition."

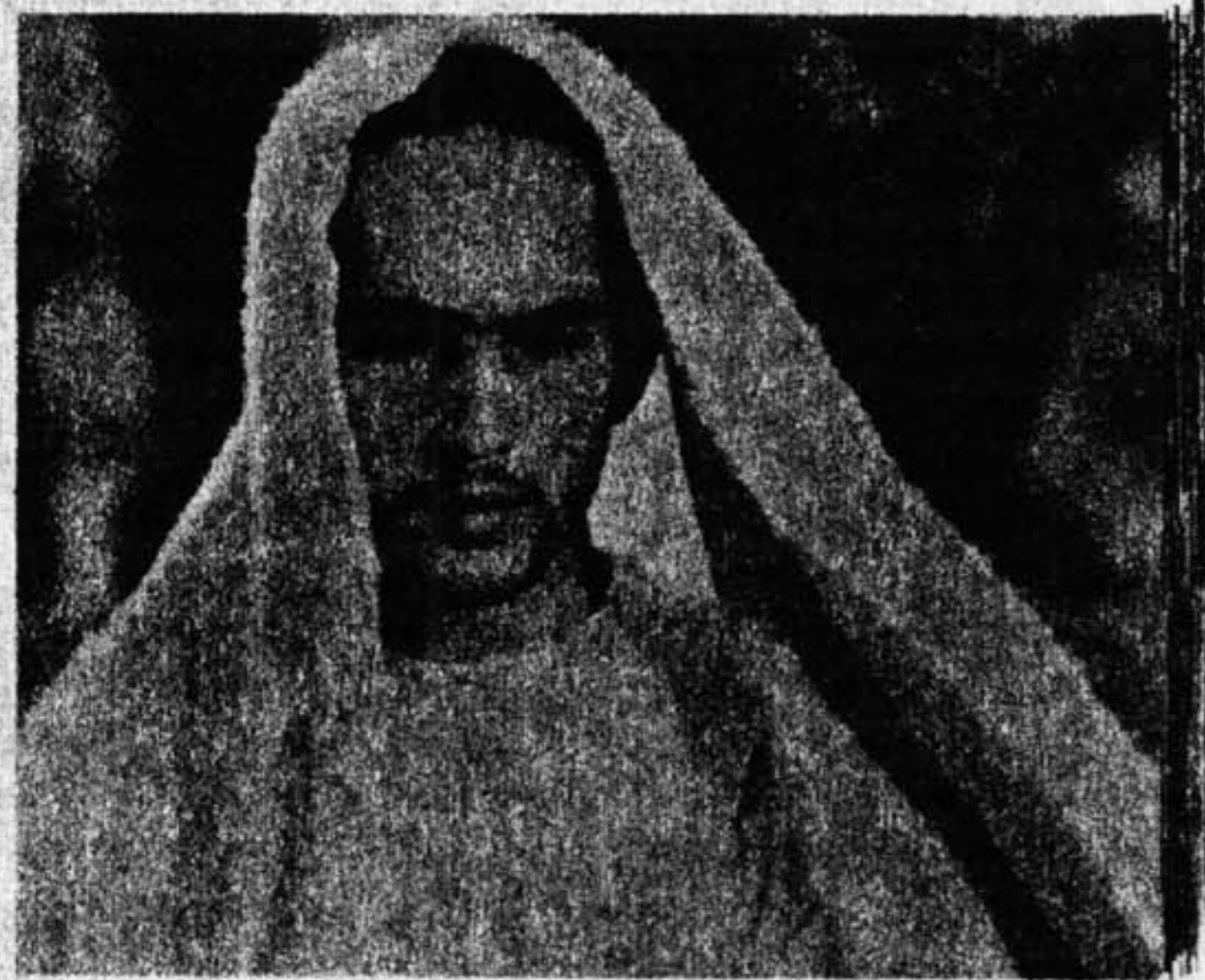
*"Certainly the best life of Jesus ever placed on film and probably the finest religious film ever made as well. Indeed, it may come to rank, as the years add to our perspective, among the great movies of all time, regardless of subject."* —*Life*

*"The film's most impressive aspect is its relentlessly literal portrayal of the familiar text. Every viewer has his own well-formed ideas of how Christ looked and how he acted. Yet the film constantly makes the viewer feel that what he sees is the way it must have been. Image after image is so natural but so striking that it is as if Matthew (and the viewer) were seeing it all for the first time. . . ."*

—*Catholic Film Newsletter*

*"The picture was dedicated to the memory of Pope John XXIII, one of the plainer, simpler, less ornate Popes, and that is entirely fitting and proper. In a way the picture is like him, direct, strong, without intricacies."*

—*Archer Winsten, New York Post*



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