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METRO DETROIT

Film on Father Solanus to debut

It will be on TV, at visitors center

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FREE PRESS RELIGION WRITER

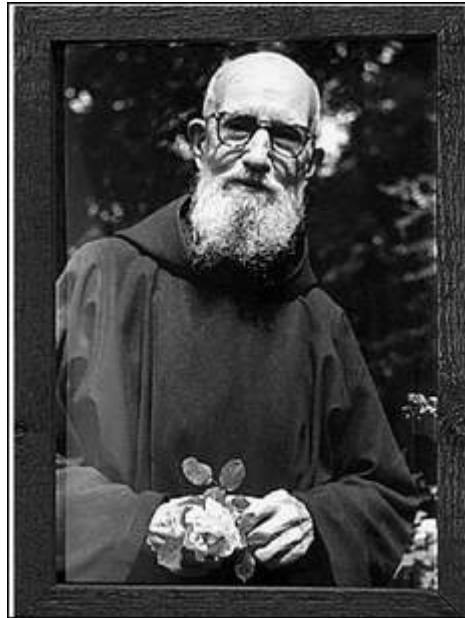
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A new documentary film on the life of Father Solanus Casey, Detroit's leading candidate to be declared a Catholic saint by the Vatican, will debut soon on local television and in a special big-screen showing at the Capuchin center he once called home.

In announcing Wednesday that the long-awaited, hour-long movie is ready to be shown, Brighton-based filmmaker Audrey Geyer said, "With so much division in the world right now, I think ... we all can use a reminder that we need to unite people and focus all of our energy on helping people who are struggling."

For decades, that was the mission that led Father Solanus to organize the city's most famous soup kitchen and offer prayers and spiritual counseling to thousands of visitors to the Capuchin monastery on Detroit's east side. Over the years, many visitors reported that they found miraculous assistance after prayers and blessings from Father Solanus.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II declared him "venerable," a major step toward canonization as a saint by the Vatican.



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Over the years, many people reported miraculous assistance after prayers and blessings from Father Solanus Casey. He died in 1957. (Solanus Casey Center)

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On Wednesday, Geyer announced that the local Catholic cable channel CTND is scheduled to begin showing "The Healing Prophet: Solanus Casey" later this month. The channel is likely to rerun the film a number of times, she said.

In late December, the film is to air on Detroit's PBS affiliate, WTVS-TV (Channel 56). After that, it will be scheduled on various PBS stations across the country, including one in the Boston area.

In January, the national Catholic network EWTN will begin airing the film.

But the most unusual opportunity to see the film is a big-screen showing at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Dec. 16 at the Solanus Casey Center at 1780 Mt. Elliott on Detroit's east side. That's the visitors center established to celebrate the ministries of Father Solanus, who was born Nov. 25, 1870, in Wisconsin and died in Detroit on July 31, 1957.

"We're very happy that people can go see the film at the center dedicated to carrying on Father Solanus' work, because just like Father Solanus himself, the center welcomes all people, wherever they find themselves on their spiritual journeys," Geyer said.

Geyer worked on the film, which includes interviews with Detroiters who knew Father Solanus, with her husband, filmmaker Kevin Lindenmuth.

"Kevin and I were raised Catholic, but Father Solanus has so much to offer people, whatever their faith," she said. "His most important message is how we should approach each person, whether their life is full of light or darkness, looking for a way to bring hope to them, and then to encourage them to help others."

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