

ARTS & Entertainment

7 Picks

June 12-25

Times Eastern

aniel J. Engler

AY, June 12, noon

Performances at the Met:
lot

amatic soprano Nina
e sings the title role, and
Carignani conducts Franco
lli's 1987 production.

AY, June 12, 6pm

from Light

In this episode, "Anger
ement," Father George
supplies practical Christian
ies to overcome anger.
5am Saturday.

DAY-FRIDAY, June 14-17,
m

all: Stories of Late
ons

In this four-part series,
ic author, speaker and
phy professor Ronda
n asks priests and
rians about their call to the
ood, their pursuit of their
id their tips for discerning a
m God. Re-airs 2:30am.

ESDAY-FRIDAY, June
9:30pm

Spotlight

In this new three-part
ries, Franciscan Friars of the
al Brothers Angelus and
nt Montgomery, who are
interview young Catholic
icons": a man who helps
ss people, a couple who
d a baby with special needs
woman who assists newly
legal immigrants.

AY, June 21, 7pm, live

ig Mass of the Fortnight
igious Freedom

The theme of this year's
shops' fortnight against
mental anti-life pressure is
sses to Freedom." The
ance opens in Baltimore,
l of the feast of the
s Sts. John Fisher and
s More, with Mass from the
of the National Shrine of
umption of the Blessed
Mary. The fortnight will con-
n Independence Day,
midnight.

ESDAY, June 22, 9pm

azi Attack on America

arting in 1942, German
ines sank 609 American
ff the Eastern seaboard and
f Coast. Undersea explorer
llard interviews historians
rman navy veterans, and
pe of the wreck of a World
German sub off New
proves that a captain
l of duty by the Navy did
e vessel after all.

ESDAY, June 22, 10pm

for All Seasons

R CLASSIC MOVIES This
assic about St. Thomas
marturdom for standing

'Basque to the Future'

'21st-Century Michelangelo' Paints Floor-to-Ceiling Murals in Spanish Church

BY ROSANNE SKIRBLE

Painter Xabier Egaña didn't ask for the job, but when the pastor of a small church in the Basque region of Spain offered it, he couldn't turn it down. The *Iglesia de San Miguel de Antezana* would become his canvas.

The 16th-century church is the only building in the tiny pueblo, a 45-minute drive east of Bilbao. *Pinturas para la Vida* ("Paintings for Life") is putting Antezana on the cultural map of Spain.

About five years ago, Antezana's 91 residents pooled their money and rolled up their sleeves. They stabilized walls, sealed centuries of cracks and installed a new roof.

Working with bright colors and broad brushstrokes, in a style reminiscent of Picasso and Chagall, Egaña, a Catholic and former Franciscan monk, began with the church atrium in 2013. Taking an event from town history, he created a festive scene showing neighbors carrying the Virgin of Armola to an airport construction site just a few meters from the church. The year was 1976, and the townspeople had feared the new runway would overtake their chapel. The Virgin saved the day, and San Miguel remained unscathed by the new development.

The project got the go-ahead from Bishop Miguel Jose Asurmendi, then-bishop of the Diocese of Victoria-Gasteiz, which is also the capital of the Spanish Basque country. "Included are reflections on war, peace and social justice that people from all faiths can claim as their own," the painter says. The narrative includes upended towers from a nuclear power plant and tombstones from a Jewish cemetery in Prague, positioned alongside Jesus in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Last Supper with Roman soldiers as ominous shadows and Christ appearing to fall and rise simultaneously from the cross.

From his perch on the scaffolding more than 50 feet off the ground, Egaña gets a bird's-eye view of the church constructed in the shape of a Latin cross, 115 long and 45 feet wide.

The 72-year-old muralist works largely alone, with his brushes and pots of paint, although volunteers



help prepare the walls.

Egaña, who receives no payment for the work, lives with families in Antezana during painting seasons, including spring 2016.

"It gives me great satisfaction at my age to do such a work at this grand scale," says this "21st-century Michelangelo," so dubbed by the way he works on scaffolding, reminiscent of Michelangelo.

"It is gratifying that the humble townspeople value all that I am doing and make it their own."

Antezana Mayor Jose Luis Alonso welcomes visitors to see the work in progress.

Egaña reflected on *Pinturas de la Vida* in an interview with the Register:

Why did you want to do this project?

It never occurred to me to do this. People familiar with my murals in the monastery of Arantzazu and in churches in Germany and Puerto Rico thought I would be a good fit for the task. I have to admit, the challenge was very appealing. At first, I devoted a lot of time to sifting and sorting through images and symbols from poetry, film, music and novels that describe today's cultural conflicts. I filled eight notebooks with free-flowing ideas, which, over the course of a year, emerged as a compendium of sketches for a narrative. With the town's approval, I started on the atrium, which I finished in two months. They saw what I could do and were pleased and sought permission from the bishop for the work inside.

This is a project on a grand scale.

Please talk about how your thoughts evolved.

The intent is to present themes that are quite open and speak on religious, cultural, social and spiritual grounds, while appealing to the human condition. The color and figures and forms serve as a path for the spirit toward one's individual beliefs within the religious, cultural and spiritual crisis that we are living [through] today.

There is an intimate connection between the religious icons — the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, symbolizing conquest, war, famine and death, for example — and the people who see these images in the mural, triggering an emotional response. The iconography transcends the mural and speaks to universal themes, such as mass migrations, hunger, poverty and political and social instability in our world today.

I see that boats are a prominent symbol that touches you personally.



GREAT UNDERTAKING. Basque muralist Xabier Egaña (left) has been spiritually rewarding and physically demanding, h his pots and brushes along the narrow scaffolding, covering t Iglesia de San Miguel de Antezana like a contemporary Miche the three-level scene follows Jesus in the Garden of Gethsema the Last Supper (middle) and Christ ascending the cross. Jose L

I grew up in a heavily industrialized area near Bilbao, famous for its iron and steel works. The pollution was so great that smoke filled our sheets when we hung them out to dry. To this day, I can still hear the sirens from the barges carrying the freight. And those boats come to the mural as a modern symbol of the tragedy of the Western world, where many thousands of people cannot receive help or aid as they flee their countries, often dying at sea or encamped behind barbed wire in the attempt to find a new life.

With the narrative on the walls, you are doing what church painters have always done: telling and retelling biblical stories. We see Adam and Eve — and Christ at prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and with his disciples at the Last Supper. We also witness the great sadness of the Virgin Mary observing the descent of Christ from the cross and the Resurrection. What is next?

Women will appear in 2016, based on three Virgin Mary — the I mysterious embodiment ceived in Mary's won Jesus in the flesh; an oped woman in all ser sinned and within wh the Gospel. ... Those will appear alongside like solidarity, man through life and th Veronica] who feels watches Jesus go tow carrying the cross. W she discovers his fa imprint on the cloth. present these themes can in some small wa transformative and en every person can lend interpretation.

Rosanne Skirble
Silver Spring, Md.

INFORMATION
Facebook.com/pintura.

JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY PILGRIMAGE TO ROME AND ASSISI

October 28 - November 6, 2016



Home Video Picks & Passes

By Steven D. Greydanus

Hail, Caesar! (2016)

Zootopia (2016)

A couple of offbeat films are among the latest home-video offerings, one a fond spoof of

scene that he doesn't really understand — a sly commentary on the power of art to outstrip the cluelessness of artists.

Zootopia, from Disney, is an original tale about a world of