

### **Lights, camera, action, prayer**

#### ***Young man starts Catholic production company***

by KATIE MOORE

staff writer

GASTONIA — On paper, Zachery Brakefield is an entrepreneur. But perhaps a better word to describe him is visionary.

Within the past year, he single-handedly started his own production company with the goal of creating quality Catholic films.

It all started about a year ago when he made a 30-minute film on the American Revolution for a school project.

Brakefield, a parishioner of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Gastonia, enjoyed the project so much that he thought, “Maybe this is what God is calling me to do.”

He took the necessary steps required for opening a business, acquired a tax ID number and designed his own Web site.

Now he is head of operations for his production company — Divine Intervention Films. And he did all that before his 18th birthday.

Brakefield is currently working on his first major production — a film about Maryknoll Father Vincent Capodanno, a Medal of Honor recipient and military chaplain who was killed while performing last rites for dying soldiers in Vietnam.

### **Patriotism and prayer**

Deciding on the subject for his first major film required quite a bit of research on Brakefield’s part.

“Zac is a very energetic and intelligent boy who has an interest in the visual arts and the media, and wants to be able to serve the church by using that interest,” said Father Roger Arnsparger, pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Church and vicar of education for the Diocese of Charlotte.

From the beginning, there were two themes Brakefield wanted to incorporate into his film: Catholicism and war.

“I knew I wanted to have a hero in the movie,” said Brakefield, who began by researching Medal of Honor recipients.

When he discovered Father Capodanno, Brakefield said he knew “this is the guy I want to make a movie about.”

The film will chronicle the last three weeks of Father Capodanno’s life during the Vietnam War.

“I want people to know how much this man of God was willing to sacrifice for others and how we should all strive to be like that,” said Brakefield.

“Zachery has a drive and a passion for anything that he feels called to do,” said Theresa Webster, faith formation director at St. Michael the Archangel Church and script writer for the Father Capodanno film.

“Last summer I was talking with Zac and his mother,” said Webster, recalling how she got involved in the project. “They were looking for a writer and they wanted to try me.”

In terms of research, Webster said she read “The Grunt Padre,” a biography about Father Capodanno, and did research on the Vietnam War. But for the most part she relies on prayer.

Brakefield relies heavily on his faith, as well.

“During my first production, everything kept falling into place and I just knew God was looking out for me,” said Brakefield. “We all kept saying it is divine intervention.”

“He prays over everything,” said Webster. “It seems that God places the right people in front of him.”

### **Divine direction**

One such person is Dave Jordan, military technical advisor for the film.

Brakefield met Jordan through the South Carolina National Guard, 178 Engineering Battalion, in Rock Hill, S.C. They were there to welcome returning military veterans from Afghanistan.

“Dave had about 100 flags for people to hold,” said Brakefield. “So I went up and asked him for a flag. He gave me one and we began talking.”

Another instrumental person in the project is David Rabideau, composer of the soundtrack and score for the Father Capodanno movie.

The two met through homeschool activities and are involved with the youth group at church. Like Brakefield, Rabideau is only 17 years old.

“Zac has a great leadership ability that stems from his maturing in the faith,” said Father Arnsparger. “He is able to organize the generosity of these other young people and adults around him.”

“He’s so charismatic about everything that he just draws you in,” said Webster. “It’s a pleasure working with him.”

Brakefield estimates that he spends about 30 hours a week working on film-related tasks. That is in addition to keeping up with his schoolwork and working part-time at a bagel shop in Rock Hill.

Brakefield also occupies his time talking to Vietnam vets about Father Capodanno.

One goal of the Father Capodanno film is to pay tribute to these men and women of the armed forces for the great sacrifices they make.

“I want to be able to show them that new generations support them and what they did in giving their lives for our country,” he said of his presentations to Marine Corps Leagues and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Brakefield hopes also to bring recognition to Father Capodanno and further his cause for canonization.

While the Father Capodanno film is in the fundraising and pre-production phases, Brakefield is occupying himself with a smaller project — a series of educational DVDs on the seven sacraments.

Father Arnsperger will narrate the films, which will be used during Catholic faith and culture camps at the church this summer.

“He is producing these to help with the theme of the Eucharistic Congress, ‘The Word Became Flesh and Made His Dwelling Among Us,’” Father Arnsperger said, and to show that “God dwells with us through the sacraments.”

“His effort with all of this stems from a very deep and growing spirituality,” said Father Arnsperger.

Brakefield turned 18 on May 10. In the fall he will begin classes at Belmont Abbey College and will continue to work on the Father Capodanno film.

In terms of what is in store for the future, Brakefield said he plans to continue relying on faith.

“If God wants me to make this film, it’s going to happen,” he said.

*Contact Staff Writer Katie Moore by calling (704) 370-3354, or e-mail [kmmoore@charlottediocese.org](mailto:kmmoore@charlottediocese.org).*

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