

CATHOLICISM TARRED BY CHRISTIAN FILM

On December 7, Gener8Xion Entertainment, a prominent Protestant film company, released "Noëlle." The film, which is a story about two dissatisfied priests questioning their vocations, was promoted as "a parable of forgiveness and grace."

In the synopsis provided by Gener8Xion, it accurately describes Jonathan Keene as "a young Catholic priest seemingly devoid of genuine human emotion"; his job is "to do what he does best: shut down a failing parish." Then there is "the child-like Fr. Simeon Joyce, a faithful but disillusioned priest who blatantly disregards church regulations, uses church monies to pay an old fisherman's medical bills and spends most of his time drinking at the local pub."

Viewers learn that the only reason Fr. Keene became a priest is because he felt guilty about getting a girl pregnant, when he was in college, and pressured her to have an abortion. Fr. Joyce, the alcoholic, has serious reservations about celibacy and his idea of heaven is the local Christmas party. Fr. Joyce tells Fr. Keene he wants to marry a woman named Marjorie so he can help raise her illegitimate child, saying he 'made a vow to God not to the Church.' But Fr. Keene is also in love with Marjorie: he is shown bolting in the middle of Midnight Mass to be with her, knocking over a filled chalice and ripping off his vestments.

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented on the film stating:

"We've seen the movie and it's a gem. Both priests are portrayed as losers. Throughout the film, confession is trivialized, celibacy is ridiculed, the Virgin Mary is

disrespected, nuns are belittled, last rites are mocked, and priestly vocations are caricatured. In short, that which is uniquely Catholic is trashed. However, the plot and the acting are so deliriously absurd that it is impossible for us to get too worked up about this flick.”

“Stereotypes about Protestant ministers abound, raising the question, why didn’t Gener8Xion choose to mock one of their own clergy? Similarly, given that the film’s writer, David Hall, has said that his primary interest was in ‘dealing with hypocrisy,’ why didn’t he consult with Sen. Charles Grassley about all those ‘prosperity church’ pastors being investigated for ripping off their flock? We know why, and that’s why the Catholic League exists.”