

# NUNS GET TRASHED IN “NOVITIATE”

There is a reason why “Novitiate” opened in only two cities recently, New York and Los Angeles, even though it has Sony money behind it: the appetite for Catholic-bashing movies is greatest in those two cities.

Hollywood, fresh off a sex scandal involving women and children, is a bastion of liberalism, a place where stereotypes of blacks, Hispanics, Indians, homosexuals, Jews, and Muslims are universally condemned. But Hollywood does make one exception: Catholics. Ditto for New York.

A story about young nuns would not be tolerated in Hollywood unless it trashed them. This explains why “Novitiate” scored big time at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. The *New York Times*, no stranger to anti-Catholicism, offered a preview of the movie for those who belong to its Film Club.

Stereotypes about nuns *always* involve sexuality and cruelty. “Novitiate” does not disappoint. Naturally, all the nuns are in habit—a film about progressive sisters in skirts wearing makeup and earrings will *never* be made; there is no audience for it. Unlike the “Sound of Music,” this film is rated R for language, sexuality and nudity.

Maggie Betts is the genius behind the movie. Neither Catholic nor religious, she says she read a book about Mother Teresa and was impressed. So what did this director and screenwriter do next? Read more about the saintly nun? No, she decided to read one book after another written by embittered ex-nuns who bolted after Vatican II.

The movie centers on two nuns, Cathleen and the Mother Superior. In the movie, Cathleen’s mother is an agnostic who is not too happy about her daughter becoming a nun. Betts

chose Margaret Qualley to play Cathleen. It was a good choice—Qualley is an atheist.

Cathleen desperately wanted to become a nun, but unfortunately for her she entered the convent at a time when Vatican II reforms left many parts of the Church in crisis. Not only did poor Cathleen get caught up in the changes, so did Sister Evelyn, Sister Emily, and Sister Margaret.

Hollywood cannot make a movie about young nuns without portraying them as sexually repressed, and on this measure, “Novitiate” is a home run. Not only are the gals horny beyond belief, they all suffer from sexual impulses during the consecration. That’s right, at the most sacred part of the Mass, the nuns are depicted as orgasmic. The fact that virtually all the reviewers missed this only proves their ignorance of all matters Catholic.

“Novitiate” wouldn’t fulfill stereotypical expectations unless it featured a wicked Mother Superior. This one is a grand slam: the tyrannical nun is easy to hate.

Some of the early reviews are precious. Proving once more that even Catholic-hating liberals do not want to be called a bigot, they bend over backward to show how sophisticated they are. One lout said the movie “isn’t anti-religion but it certainly doesn’t pull its punches when showcasing how cruel its leaders can be.” Another wizard said, “This isn’t an overly-religious film, nor does it attempt to proselytize or convert the viewer.”

Notice that they do not say it is a movie about Catholicism—it’s merely a “religious film.” The latter reviewer wins first prize. But it is debatable whether it should be for stupidity or lying: In actual fact, “Novitiate” strains in its attempt to proselytize and convert. It’s just that its goal is to get the audience to hate the Roman Catholic Church.