

# “THE RITE” STUFF

From the perspective of the Catholic League, the most interesting aspect of the hit movie, “The Rite,” was how the media treated a film on exorcism.

Unfailingly, whenever there is a television show or movie that touches on subjects like Transubstantiation—the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus—the Virgin birth, apparitions, the stigmata, even confession, it is the subject of ridicule and insulting commentary. But not when it comes to the phenomenon of exorcism.

Several Catholic League staffers reviewed over 600 movie reviews of “The Rite” that appeared in mainline media outlets. Aside from a few snotty remarks, the subject of exorcism was given a respectful hearing: none was derisive.

The cast of “The Rite” was also respectful: none lambasted the idea that demons could be purged by a trained Roman Catholic priest. This was especially true of the lead actor who played the priest who performed the exorcisms, British actor Anthony Hopkins. Raymond Arroyo, a member the Catholic League’s board of directors, had a particularly insightful interview with Hopkins on his EWTN show, “The World Over.”

This is good news. Evil exists, and everyone save for a fringe minority, admits it. More important, the belief that the devil can be conquered also exists. That the Catholic Church has a mechanism to deal with it is hardly surprising. After all, it was founded by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.