

Film Review: 'Silence' is an Overwrought View of Religious Faith

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 11, 2017 - 11:25am

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CHICAGO – For gosh sakes, someone call the Vatican and make Marty Scorsese an honorary priest. He is overtly fascinated – in this work and his other films – with the notion of religious faith, particular within his Catholic roots. He approaches the subject again in the intense “Silence.”



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

Based on a novel from the 1960s, “Silence” is a story about Portuguese priests in an missionary zone, in this case Japan in the late 1600s. It is filled with the “testing” of these priests’ faith, as the Japanese were ruthless in their prosecution of these pastors. Basically this is Scorsese obsessing about the tests of faith that were outlined in the novel, and visually bringing the torture of this moral dilemma to life. The film actually gets better after a slow start – and has an electric atmosphere of dread and honor – but really does nothing to resolve the matter of man versus the breaking point. However, it is a worthy addition to the Scorsese religious canon, which includes “Last Temptation of Christ” and “Kundun,” even if...in its redundancy...this expression of faith’s challenges is not breaking any new ground.

In late 1600s Portugal, a missionary Jesuit priest named Father Ferreira (Liam Neeson) has sent a worrisome last letter from Japan, and there are rumors that he has committed “apostasy” (a disaffiliation from his religion). This troubles two of Ferreira’s students, Father Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield) and Father Garupe (Adam Driver). They decide to travel to Japan to find the errant priest.

Upon their arrival, the priests find underground Christians through the help of their contact Kichijiro (Yosuke Kobozuka). With the Japanese alerted to their presence, the two priests split up to resume their search for Ferreira. Rodrigues is the first to be captured, is tortured in various ways and is asked to grind his heel into the image of Christ as a repudiation of his faith. He will eventually encounter both Father Garupe and Ferreira again, in the midst of overwhelming torment, ordered by an old Samurai (Issey Ogata).

“Silence” opened in Chicago on January 6th, and will have a wider nationwide release on January 13th. Featuring Andrew Garfield, Adam Driver, Clarán Hinds, Issey Ogata, Tadanobu Asano, Yosuke Kobozuka and Liam Neeson. Screenplay adapted by Martin Scorsese and Jay Cocks, from the novel by Shusaka Endo. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Rated “R”



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Priests Garupe (Adam Driver) and Rodrigues (Andrew Garfield) in 'Silence'

Photo credit: Paramount Pictures



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