



**A chance to watch films together.
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

4th Dec	Nativity!
8th Jan	The Adjustment Bureau
5th Feb	Grace is Gone
4th Mar	Tokyo Story
1st Apr	<u>He who must die</u>
6th May	The Help

**Films start at 5:30pm
Followed by food, coffee and conversation**

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Some thoughts on watching films

Stories are the stuff of life. They allow us to reflect on all sorts of issues at a safe distance as we engage with the characters, cry with them, laugh with them, get cross with them and generally share their experience. How they deal with the issues they come across may frustrate us, or give us new insights; cause us to laugh or cry; result in us hurling abuse at the screen or willing there to be a happy ending. And through it all we can encounter God in all sorts of unexpected places if only we take time to look.

Questions to ask yourself

- ▶ What did you think of the film? What do you like most? Least?
- ▶ Which incidents made you think or feel most strongly? How well did you think the film treated those incidents?
- ▶ What issues did the film raise for you?
- ▶ What character(s) do you most identify with and why?
- ▶ Does the film have any echoes of Christian beliefs or stories from the Bible? Does it support or challenge Christian values?

Some facts about the film

- ▶ Martinů wrote an opera in four acts, also called *The Greek Passion*, based on the novel, with a libretto by the composer.
- ▶ The director, Jules Dassin, was named as a communist before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952. This caused Dassin, who had quit the Communist Party in 1939 after a brief membership, to be blacklisted and forced him to move to France where he became more famous and successful than he ever was in the United States.
- ▶ Dassin also directed *Rififi* (1955) and *Topkapi* (1964).
- ▶ In 1966, Jules Dassin married Mercouri (who plays Mary Magdalene in the film), an ardent anti-fascist who lost her Greek citizenship for opposing the junta. After 1974, the couple returned to Greece where Melina Mercouri became a member of the Greek Parliament and, eventually, Culture Minister.
- ▶ The film was nominated for a BAFTA (Best Film) in 1958.
- ▶ Kazantzakis, also wrote *Zorba the Greek* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and was nominated for a Nobel Prize for Literature on more than one occasion. His work was condemned by the Greek Orthodox Church, who excommunicated him.

ways. Have you ever been surprised by the way certain choices have turned out?

Being Needed

The disciples were simple people - fishermen, farmers. But they became very great. Ordinary men who became apostles. What did they have that was so special?

They were needed!

At one point during the film, there is a discussion about what turns ordinary people into extraordinary ones. The conclusion is that they respond to being needed, just as someone may respond to a house on fire and dash inside to save the occupants, and by so doing become an instant hero. Throughout the Bible, God chooses all sorts of people to do all sorts of things, some of whom seem initially to be quite inadequate to the task. Yet the task needs to be done, and God enables people to step up to the mark. Looking back, what needs around you has God called you to respond to? And what might he need you to do now?

Finding a Voice

Some of us have been studying the film *The King's Speech* during Lent and drawing parallels between George VI finding a voice and our need to find our own authentic Christian voice. What parallels do you find between that situation and this film?

Resurrection

They cannot kill Manolios.

Manolios is what's best in us.

And what's best in us can never die.

Resurrection on film is always a tricky topic. Some films (eg. *The Gospel According to Matthew*) simply embrace the miraculous but others explore the theme in other ways, whether it is through transplantation in *Jesus of Montreal* or by "the vision" living on in Jesus' followers, as here or in the film *Son of Man*. How do you respond to "life after death"? How important to you is a physical resurrection? Or does the Easter Story point to a more fundamental truth?

Finally ...

Which character did you sympathise with most? Why? Are you happy with the way your character behaved, or do you wish they had done something else? Would you have done the same?

Celui qui doit mourir (He who must die)

This film, made in 1957 and based on a novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, is set in Greece (Crete) in the 1920's, during the Turkish occupation. The country is in turmoil with entire villages being uprooted, and the film opens with one such village being razed to the ground. The focus of attention then moves to a second village which is just about to put on its regular passion play, something it does every seven years. The leading citizens of the town, under the auspices of the Patriarch, choose those that will play the parts in the Passion. A stuttering shepherd is chosen to play Jesus. The town butcher (who wanted to be Jesus) is chosen as Judas. The town prostitute is chosen as Mary Magdalene. When those from the first village arrive looking for shelter, they are spurned by the priest and the wealthier citizens who do not want to share what they have with a bunch of strangers. However, the shepherd Jesus and the others cannot reconcile this cynical behaviour with the characters they have been asked to play and an inevitable conflict ensues.

Christ Recrucified

The film is based on the book "Christ Recrucified" (also known as "The Greek Passion"), in which Kazantzakis explores the question of what would happen if Jesus came amongst us in our own time and place. Would the result be the same? Watching from a distance, both in terms of time and space and because we are the "other side of the screen", it is easy to cheer on Manolios and his friends and condemn those in authority as being blinkered, but are we really any different? How much do we really take Jesus' teaching to heart? Do we truly hear his challenging words? Or do we continue to domesticate his teaching in our own way and find excuses not to share the things we have?

Vocation

The characters for the passion play are appointed by the priest and those in authority. There are no auditions, and you may get a part you don't want. God also chooses the people he wants to do certain tasks, again, sometimes without much consultation. However, being chosen and identified for a particular task can be very energising and liberating as it is a vote of confidence in your ability. How good are we, as a church community, at appointing people? Or do we rely too much on people putting themselves forward? What do you think of the choices made in the film? Some of them might have been rather cynical - a tongue-tied Jesus to prevent him doing too much damage. But God can use even our faulty decisions in surprising