



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

<b>6th Jul</b>	<b>Ruby Sparks</b>
<b>3rd Aug</b>	<b>Hedd Wyn</b>
<b>7th Sep</b>	<b>12 Years A Slave</b>
<b>5th Oct</b>	<b><u>Jimmy's Hall</u></b>
<b>2nd Nov</b>	<b>The Railway Man</b>
<b>7th Dec</b>	<b>The Fault in Our Stars</b>

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

**10 Bletchington Road  
Islip**

**Further details from Jonathan (Ox 842214)  
Email: [info@spiritualityonscreen.org.uk](mailto:info@spiritualityonscreen.org.uk)  
Web: [www.spiritualityonscreen.org.uk](http://www.spiritualityonscreen.org.uk)**

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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**

- ▶ The film was nominated for the Palme D'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival, an award Ken Loach won in 2006 with "The Wind That Shakes The Barley", a film about the Irish War of Independence.
- ▶ Unlike many directors, Ken Loach likes to shoot the entire film in sequence, something which the actors find tremendously helpful.
- ▶ Many of those involved with the film were untrained actors. Ken Loach is known for making everyone feel like that they belong and that their contribution is valued, an atmosphere that goes a long way to bring the best out of people, whether experienced or not.
- ▶ Script writer, Paul Laverty, and Ken Loach have collaborated on many projects over the years including films such as "The Wind That Shakes The Barley", "Looking for Eric" and "The Angel's Share."
- ▶ The hall for the film was built in Scotland, flat-packed to Ireland and erected outside Dromahair, in the north of County Leitrim. It was used for filming for six weeks, before being razed to the ground.
- ▶ Paul Laverty, who came across the story three years ago, has said it is no coincidence that Jimmy's story is not more widely known. When he visited the historical records office to do research for the film, no records exist. The paper trail is simply not there.

## Memorable Quotes

- Woman** Our opposition is still the same. The masters and the pastors.
- Sheridan** Gralton ... who the hell do you think you are, running classes in my parish without my permission?
- Jimmy Sheridan** No permission required. That's the point. We built the hall ourselves. Education is the exclusive reserve of Holy Mother Church, not semi-illiterates. I will not have a communist on my turf defy the Church.
- Sheridan** Gralton, you pay attention to me. You sow nothing but conflict in a peaceful community.
- Seamus** Well, with respect, it's probably best to just ignore it. Repression breeds belligerence, isn't that what they say?
- Sheridan** "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." The Communist Manifesto. Quasi religious. It's like "Love thy neighbour as thyself." The language of brotherhood. It spreads like wildfire in a world of rampant greed. Do you realise who attractive that is in the slums? To the poor, to the unemployed? The landless? Misery breeds desperation, and it only takes a handful of communists to set the fuse.
- Seamus** I think we're doing more harm than good.
- Sheridan** What is this craze for pleasure? This fascination with the materialist? The pagan, the Anglo Saxon? And most recently, the Los Angelisation of our culture? What is wrong with being true to ourselves, to our deepest roots, to our own true Irish values? ... But there is something even more evil hatching in that hall. Gralton and his crew are communists. They are atheists. They deny the existence of God, the Trinity, and the Virgin Birth. So our community faces a choice. Is it Christ ... or is it Gralton?
- Jimmy** I believe in my neighbour, my fellow man, my class. Meeting up and struggling to understand our lives as best we can. On our own, in isolation, we perish. The hall is a safe space where we can think, talk, learn, listen and laugh and dance. It's a good place. If I were a believer like you, I'd call it a holy place. It brings out the best in us.
- Jimmy** We need to take control of our lives again. Work for need, not for greed, And not just to survive like a dog, but to live and to celebrate. To dance, and sing, as free human beings.
- Seamus** I suspect if Christ was here today there are several members of this parish who would have Him crucified again.
- O'Keefe** Look what the communists are doing in Belfast. This is incredible. Read that. "The Falls and Shankill Unite." Stirring up fraternity between poor Catholics and unemployed Protestants.
- Mother** Why is an old tin hall so dangerous?
- Sheridan** Please, please! Show the man some respect. He has more courage and decency that all of you put together.

# Jimmy's Hall

*Jimmy's Hall*, directed by Ken Loach, tells the story of Jimmy Gralton, a 1930s political activist, who returns to his native Ireland after ten years self-imposed exile in New York. To meet the needs of the young people of County Leitrim, Jimmy, in spite of his reluctance to cause upset to his old enemies (the Church and the local landowners), decides to reopen "the Hall", a place at the centre of the community where people can meet to dance, study and talk. However, despite its popularity, the hall, and the things that go on there, are not to everyone's liking and tensions mount as "the establishment", and particularly the Church, seeks to bring an end to the hall and Jimmy's radical ideas. In so doing, the church and state, fearful of what they have seen happen in Stalinist Russia, risk themselves becoming the dictatorial demon they fear.

## **Being in control**

One of the reasons lying behind Father Sheridan's actions is the lack of control he has over what goes on in the hall. How easy to do you find it to be not in control?

## **Freedom of thought**

How important is it for the human spirit to be free? And what do you understand by that freedom? Are there things that we need to be protected from? And, if so, who decides what those things are?

## **Sheridan vs Seamus**

Whether you agree with him or not, Father Sheridan is a man of strong principles and sticks by them. Father Seamus comments from the sidelines, though never seems to do anything to back up his words. Meanwhile, Jimmy, despite his disagreements with Father Sheridan, still claims that he prefers Sheridan to Seamus because at least he knew where he stood. What do you think of the contrast between the two priests?

## **Tolerance and conflicting visions**

At the heart of the tension between the two sides in the film is a conflicting vision of how the world should be. Such conflicts can happen over many things, whether it is the scandal of jazz and "lewd dancing" or gay marriage. How, as a community, should we deal with such tensions? How far does tolerance go? And when should we make a stand?

## **Is it right to be reactionary?**

The film portrays the church as a rather backward institution and we are encouraged to cheer on Jimmy and his friends. After all, what is wrong with a wonderful community resource in which people can talk, dance, learn and be themselves? And, historically, the church has often been reactionary, resisting. Remember, it took centuries before people were trusted to read the Bible in their own language. The church, on the other hand, will claim that it is only doing its best to guard the central message of the gospel from being corrupted and has people's best interests at heart. Regardless of what you might think about this particular case, is the church right to be cautious? If so, why, and in what circumstances? Or can the gospel look after itself?