

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 we only take time to look.

Questions to ask yourself

What did you think of the film? What do you like most? Least?

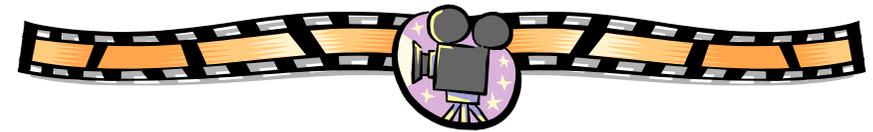
Which incidents made you *think* or *feel* most strongly? How well did you think the film treated those incidents?

What issues did the film raise for you?

What character(s) do you most identify with and why?

Some trivia about the film

- The commercial interest expressed in the United Kingdom was initially much lower than in other European countries and only 30 prints of the film were planned for distribution in the UK, compared with 300 in France. However, after winning the Palme d'Or at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival, it went on to appear on 105 screens in the UK.
- The title derives from the song of the same name by 19th century author Robert Dwyer Joyce. The song made the phrase "the wind that shakes the barley" a motif in Irish Republican song and poetry. The song is written from the perspective of a doomed young Wexford rebel who is about to sacrifice his relationship with his loved one and plunge into the cauldron of violence associated with the 1798 rebellion in Ireland. The references to barley in the song derive from the fact that the rebels often carried barley oats in their pockets as provisions for when on the march. This gave rise to the post-rebellion phenomenon of barley growing and marking the "croppy-holes", mass unmarked graves which slain rebels were thrown into, symbolising the regenerative nature of Irish resistance to British rule.
- All the soldiers in the film are played by people who had previously been in the army. During filming, they were simply encouraged to act in the way they were trained to deal with a hostile civilian population. Although the atrocities we see are no longer part of army practice (though we still have occasional incidents whether at Guantanamo Bay or elsewhere), there remains something about how soldiers move and act which only comes through military training.



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

2nd Sep	The Wind That Shakes The Barley
7th Oct	I, Robot
4th Nov	The Terminal
2nd Dec	Tsotsi
6th Jan	Star Wars
3rd Feb	Into Great Silence

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

**10 Bletchington Road
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The wind that shakes the barley

It is Ireland in 1920. Workers from field and country have united to form volunteer guerrilla armies to face the ruthless "Black and Tan" squads that are being shipped from Britain to block Ireland's bid for independence. Driven by a deep sense of duty and a love for his country, Damien abandons his burgeoning career as a doctor and joins his brother, Teddy, in a dangerous and violent fight for freedom. As the freedom fighters bold tactics bring the British to breaking point, both sides finally agree to a treaty to end the bloodshed. But, despite the apparent victory, civil war erupts and families, who fought side by side, find themselves pitted against one another as sworn enemies, putting their loyalties to the ultimate test.

Fighting for what you believe in

Throughout the film people's beliefs and loyalties are tested to the limit. How do you respond to brutality and violence? How do you shake off an "oppressor"? Is the better world you believe in so strong that it is worth fighting for? Dying for? Killing for? Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers" but what does it mean to make peace? What does it mean to believe in a world of justice and peace for all? And if that is God's vision for the world, what role are **we** called to play as disciples of Christ?

Loyalty

Any conflict, once started, takes on a life of its own. One act of violence leads to another in retaliation and the cycle continues. People become locked in to their perceived, original goals for the sake of their comrades who may already have paid the ultimate price. To accept anything less, to compromise with the other side, would mean their friends had died in vain.

Jesus said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even his own life, he cannot be a disciple of mine. No one who does not carry his cross and come with me can be a disciple of mine." (Luke 14: 26-27).

How do we cope when our loyalties are torn in many directions? Is such brokenness part of being human? And how do we then find wholeness and redemption?

The church and the state

The church's position in the film is very ambiguous. At times, we see individual priests very much supporting and encouraging the rebels. Towards the end of the film, the church is very closely identified with the state, condemning Damien for his stand and promoting the status quo. How should the church behave in situations of civil conflict? Should God take sides? And what happens when both sides claim him for their own?

Forgiveness

We preach a gospel of forgiveness. In such a polarised situation, what does it mean to forgive?

Memorable quotes

Teddy: [*looking around Hamilton's study*] Such a beautiful room, it's hard to imagine a man's scream from here. Ever seen fingernails ripped out with a rusty pliers, Sir John, hmm? All your learning, and you still don't understand.

Sir John Hamilton: Oh, I understand perfectly, Mr. O'Donovan. God preserve Ireland if ever your kind take control.

Damien: [*trains his gun on Hamilton*] Well you'd better start getting used to the idea.

Damien: Micheail was killed because he wouldn't say his name in English. That what you call a martyr, is it Teddy?

Damien: I tried not to get into this war, and did. Now I try to get out, and can't

Damien: The Treaty does not express the will of the people, but the fear of the people.

Damien: And once again, with honourable exception, the Catholic Church sides with the rich.

Damien: Strange creatures we are, even to ourselves.

Teddy: It's not too late Damien.

Damien: For me or for you?

Damien: [*loading revolver*] I studied anatomy for five years, Dan. And now I'm going to shoot this man in the head. I've known Chris Reilly since he was a child. I hope this Ireland we're fighting for is worth it.

Chris: Promise me, Damien. Promise me you won't bury me next to him [*pointing to Sir John*].