

Celluloid Saints



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Celluloid Saints looks at fundamental issues in the lives of saints and explores them in ways that are complex and nuanced, yet accessible. Topics such as martyrdom, miracles, evangelism, asceticism, saints in the Holocaust, and saintly mental illness have found diverse treatments in film. This book examines that diversity and explains some of the reasons for it. The book is written with two goals in mind. The first is to give film viewers some background and context for evaluating what they see on screen. By and large, Hollywood is not conversant with theological issues; occasionally, movies reveal an appalling ignorance about religion. More often, however, the approach movies take is simply flat-footed and unsophisticated. Giving readers the tools they need to interpret and critique cinematic portrayals of sanctity is one goal of this book. The second goal is to show students of theology how the ideas that they encounter in often highly technical language might play themselves out on the big screen. Any worthy theology begins in human experience. If a theology cannot be translated into the language of events and emotions, dreams and love, despair and

fulfillment, then it has lost its way. Revelation is always revelation to someone. To be meaningful, it has to be able to render itself in a language that people understand. Film is one such language. Used wisely and intelligently, it can be a powerful tool for expressing theological insights.

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