

'Most Blasphemous Film of the Year' Based on the Life of a Saint

Typically, a film based on the life of a saint doesn't involve blatant blasphemy. However, *The Ornithologist* has decided to break every single boundary while relating the director's version of "the legend" of St. Anthony of Padua.

In a review of the film, Daily Beast contributor Nick Schager calls the movie "equally pious and profane" that should be approached as a work of art. As he puts it, the plot is "best experienced with an open mind and a willingness (if not eagerness) to get lost inside its strange, beguiling world."

Why would the Daily Beast be enthusiastic about something based on the life of a Catholic saint? Well, naturally, the plot "takes a more bizarre turn" than something that would be considered more traditional. It follows an ornithologist who is lost in northern Portugal, who ends up in several compromising situations.

The main character, after witnessing the cult sacrifice of a wild hog, runs into a shepherd named Jesus, who is supposed to represent the actual figure of Jesus Christ. The two have homosexual intercourse, and then the main character kills him by stabbing him in the side. Schager enlightened his readers about the real purpose of this scene: "it's clear that Rodrigues' aim isn't to offend or titillate so much as to cast Fernando's rambling journey in terms that symbolically relate to his own individual life." Ah yes, the real purpose of the artist is so very clear.

It's not exactly clear how St. Anthony plays into this movie, other than apparently an introductory montage about the saint's life. Perhaps the director is using the idea of St.

Anthony to find some level of morality in the plot, which is clearly lacking. Maybe he should start praying more.

Schager told the readers the film was a “winding, haunting reverie about a lost outsider searching for acceptance and companionship.” Through blasphemy and sex, apparently. In the same breath, Schager praised the film, saying “intrepid moviegoers would be wise to fall under its spell.” {eoa}

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