Henry Poole is Here

Presented by:
Sr. Nancy Usselmann, FSP
Sr. Sean Mayer, FSP
Sr. Christina Wegendt, FSP
Media Mindfulness/Deep Viewing

“I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10).

Be attentive. Pay attention to what’s happening outside of you, as well as inside of you as you interact with media (radio, music videos, etc.)

What do I see? What do I hear? What do I feel—what attractions, repulsions, inspirations? What emotions are stirred in me? Why?

What character(s) do I relate with most? Least? Tell Jesus about these things. Allow Him to look with you at all the positive and negative things you see, inside and out.

Be Intelligent. What do I think about what I have just seen, heard, felt?

Try to articulate the philosophies present or the underlying assumptions and values. What do I think about the characters, personalities, choices, behavior, etc.? About the plot? What bits of information or new insights have I received? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you Knowledge and Wisdom to see things clearly and understand them more deeply.

Be Reflective. Ponder with God what you have seen, heard, read, felt. Allow questions to surface. Wonder about the things that still don’t make sense. Take time to marvel and appreciate the things that seemed good and true and beautiful. Has it faithfully reflected the reality it attempted to portray? What good did I find in it? And in what way was it good? (artistically, intellectually, emotionally, morally, socially, scientifically, etc.) What was bad? What values and non-values did I find? How do they compare with the values taught in the Bible and in my Catholic Faith? Has this program, song, article, etc., changed my way of looking at things? Has it broadened my understanding and my imagination? Has it raised new questions in me? Has it made me more sensitive to others’ needs and sufferings? Has it made me less sensitive?

Be Responsible. What will my response be? What change in my own life might God be calling me to through this song, movie, article, etc.? In what way might God be inviting me to love and serve Him and my fellow human beings more selflessly?

Theology & Spirituality of Film

Reasons why Christians should be willing to enter into theological/spiritual dialogue with film:

- God’s common grace is present throughout human culture.
- Theology should be concerned with the Spirit’s presence and work in the world.
- God is active in the wider culture and speaks to us through all of life.
- Image as well as word can help us encounter God.
- Theology’s narrative shape makes it particularly open to interaction with other stories.
- The nature of constructive theology is a dialogue between God’s story and our story.

Blessed James Alberione, the Media Apostle of the 20th Century and Founder of the Pauline Family, wrote in 1944:

“The range and efficacy of this discovery of human genius (film/cinema) are renowned. Its range...embraces the whole of life: individual, familial, social, intellectual, moral and religious, literary and artistic, economic and political.... Its efficacy extends beyond any other form of spreading ideas and of educating people, both young and old....[Catholics need] to work towards bringing Christian values into the already existing public movie industry.”


*inspired by Method in Theology, Bernard Lonergan, S.J.
A Moviegoer’s Reflections
By: Fr. Malcolm Boyd

Sitting in a theater, I can scarcely wait for the lights to dim.

—Here I am in my anonymity. I feel shut off from every distraction. The screen is remote, up there, and I’m down here, able to relate or not relate to it as I choose.

—The film has begun. It is telling a story, and concerns persons. Now I recognize myself. I’m up there, too, Jesus, involved in trying to make a decision. It’s painful and I’m suffering.

—I feel the closeness of other persons near me in the theater. I’m not suffering alone. We are so naked, Jesus, sitting here together and seeing ourselves (and each other) up there. Only the story isn’t up there anymore. It’s here.

—When the lights come up, and the movie has ended, will we remember anything of our closeness, Lord, or will we all be sitting quite alone? At first I wanted both escape and communion inside the theater. Now I know I can’t escape, Jesus, and also how much I need communion.

HENRY POOLE IS HERE
(2008; Comedy/Drama)

Changing his attitude will take a miracle.

Henry Poole moves in to a house in his old neighborhood, to spend what he believes are his remaining days alone. The discovery of a 'miracle' by a nosy neighbor ruptures his solitude and makes him discover that he cannot escape the forces of hope.

Director: Mark Pellington
Writer: Albert Torres
Stars: Luke Wilson, George Lopez and Radha Mitchell

Lectio: Scripture
Luke 8: 40-56

On his return Jesus was welcomed by the crowd, for they were all there waiting for him. And suddenly there came a man named Jairus, who was president of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded with him to come to his house, because he had an only daughter about twelve years old, who was dying. And the crowds were almost stifling Jesus as he went.

Now there was a woman suffering from a hemorrhage for the past twelve years, whom no one had been able to cure. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak; and the hemorrhage stopped at that very moment. Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, it is the crowds round you, pushing." But Jesus said, "Somebody touched me. I felt that power had gone out from me." Seeing herself discovered, the woman came forward trembling, and falling at his feet explained in front of all the people why she had touched him and how she had been cured at that very moment. "My daughter," he said, "your faith has saved you; go in peace." While he was still speaking, someone arrived from the house of the president of the synagogue to say, "Your daughters has died. Do not trouble the Master any further." But Jesus heard this, and he spoke to the man, "Do not be afraid, only have faith and she will be saved." When he came to the house he allowed no one to go in with him except Peter and John and James, and the child's father and mother. They were all crying and mourning for her, but Jesus said, "Stop crying; she is not dead, but asleep." But they ridiculed him, knowing she was dead. But taking her by the hand himself he spoke to her, "Child, get up." And her spirit returned and she got up at that very moment. Then he told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Contemplatio & Collatio:

- What choice is before Henry when he finds out he has a terminal illness? What would you do?
- What is significant about the power of touch? The woman in the Gospel is healed because she touched Jesus’ cloak. Is it the touch of the face of Christ on the wall that heals people in the film or something more? What is that more?
- What does it really mean to have faith, to believe? Who in the film exemplifies this description? In the Gospel? Why is it so hard to believe sometimes?
- How do we discover hope in the midst of a life crisis? What or who gave Henry Poole hope even after he said, “Hope can’t save you”? Why would he say that? What would you say to someone who does not have hope?
- How does the Word that “chose” you at the beginning of the Lectio apply to this film? How will it affect your life?

Oratio: Prayer

Lord of the unexpected moment, Christ the surprising, why do we always try to own you, mistake reality for dream, shut the door on the impossible? Calm our fears, shatter the walls we build to keep you out. Confront our hypocrisy. Catch us when we fall Son of God, save us from ourselves.

By: Kate McIlhagga