



FILM: **CALVARY**

FDG RATING: 2.2

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

John Michael McDonagh: *Director, writer*

Brendan Gleeson: *Father James*

Chris O'Dowd: *Actor: Jack Brennan*

DATE: September 21, 2014

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **CALVARY**

Only a handful of our film group saw *Calvary* and after our discussion, the rest will probably steer clear of this dark, depressing film. Praised by film critics as a masterful who-dun-it that explores faith and forgiveness in the midst of religious sins and silent suffering, even the profoundly powerful performance by Brendan Gleeson as Father James, couldn't sway all but one of our resident film critics. With a sordid flock of characters revealing a broad range of less than desirable morality, the one we are introduced to first, puts the story into motion as he explains to Father James, during confessional, that in 7 days he will murder Father James as restitution for the sexual abuse he received as a child from a now deceased parish priest.

Thought provoking and compelling but too grim and painful to watch for some of our critics, the strong emotional reactions are probably a testament to the film's success in portraying the suffering and emotional struggles of Father James and his flock. The title is the immediate clue that the film is going to be difficult spiritual journey: *Calvary* the place just outside the walls of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. The religious symbolism is hard to ignore: Father James has 7 days until he is to be murdered; possibly each of the visits he makes to his parishioners could represent stations of the cross; and ultimately, the willingness of Father James to die for the sins of all the others.

Viewers who recognized the brilliance of the film, will agree with our solo avid supporter who gave it a 4.5, applauding the beautiful cinematography of coastal Ireland, the quirkiness of the characters, the suspense as the story interweaves all the players, the healing of Father James relationship with his daughter, and most of all, the warmth and sheer strength of Gleeson's performance.

The single high score tipped the scales from the other lower ratings, resulting in a tepid 2.2 on a scale of 1-5, (5 is the best.)



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See you at the movies!

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