

# Cramer: 'The Two Popes' shows a singular friendship and mission

I have been wanting to see *The Two Popes* since I saw the trailers several months ago. It intrigued me to see how they would portray both Pope Francis and Pope Benedict XXVI. Would it be one-sided? Would it be preachy either from the right or from the left of the spectrum? Would it be accurate or unfair? How would it portray the Church? As a Catholic and a Catholic priest, I am always sensitive to that.

All I have to say is: "Wow!!". It was an outstanding movie! Keep in mind that this is a fictional account about people who are still living. It's not an easy movie to act in, write or direct. Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce give amazing portrayals of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

*The Two Popes* is a sweeping project manifested in a stage play, a book and a movie playing theatres in limited release since Nov. 29 but available on Netflix beginning Dec. 20.

The movie is told over two days before Pope Benedict shocked the world by his resignation on Feb. 28, 2013. The two of them come together and they have a real conversation. They are both honest with themselves. Their conversation is something more than just two people yelling at each other and only arguing their own point of view. It ends up being real, human, and inspiring.

We live in a world where we seem to be constantly yelling and accusing each other of all sorts of heinous things in our politics, in our churches and especially on the Internet. There is so much anger, so much hate and so much blaming.

Watching *The Two Popes* reminded me of what it means to set differences aside and be friends. Both men have dedicated their entire lives to serving God, His Church and His people. They just come at it in very different ways.

The movie portrays very clearly that following Jesus, especially for those in leadership, is not easy. It's not always clear which way we should go. It is on the journey that we encounter Christ and find the best way we can follow Jesus as truly broken people; human people.

By the way, as a priest, this is the Church that I have grown to know and love. I have come to realize that in our human brokenness, there is no person who is completely balanced. We all lean one way or another on all sorts of issues. It is easy for us to only want to be with people who agree with us. And when we do that, we remain broken, divided and lopsided.

The Church is just one big tent that houses a multitude of people striving to

live the Gospel in radically different ways. When we listen to those who are different than us and when we see Christ in how they live, we have an opportunity to be whole and balanced together. It is in our different, yet authentic, ways that we can together truly follow Christ together and be a Church of real disciples.

*The Two Popes* brought all this home and it was delightful to be in on the journey even it was for just a short time. You will be challenged, you will laugh, you will cry, and you will see the presence of God in a broken world through this wonderful movie. That is always worth the price of admission and it certainly is in this case.

*-Father Cramer is the vocations director of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, a huge movie buff, and a co-host of Left Footers, Grandin Media's online talk show*