

Horror Movies Are Good for Your Soul

I'm not a fan of the horror genre. By "horror genre" I not only mean horror movies, but also haunted houses, supernatural hayrides, scary books, gross Halloween costumes, and "hey, I heard a noise downstairs can you che—" No. The answer is no. Not a fan. Thank you and goodbye.

The one thing that quite recently changed my whole perspective on "scary" movies was watching John Krasinski's, *A Quiet Place*. (Granted, this film fits more into the "thriller" category than anything else, but my virgin heart was plenty more than "thrilled" when Emily Blunt stepped on a nail with an enormous demon-spider hiding in the dark at her elbow). And yet, this film proved to me that human fear can be utilized – not only to teach, but to inspire, refresh, and revivify your spirits.

Fr. Dwight Longnecker, a Catholic priest, expresses this idea much more beautifully than I ever could in his [article](#) for *The Imaginative Conservative*. Evidently, Longnecker mentally equates demonic horror films to some of the best spiritual and psychological nutri-supplements. While I personally plan continue my fast from these particular spiritual mud-masks, I did notice that Fr. Longnecker had two great points about why demonic films are so good for you:

1. Through fear and shock, they teach spirituality to those who willfully refuse goodness. **"For those who do not believe in the Christian Sacraments – where the spiritual realm infuses into the physical – exorcism provides the one chilling and convincing evidence of the existence of non physical intelligent beings. As such, exorcism movies make the darkness visible."** Just like sometimes you have to jump-start a person's heart with electrically charged medical pads (as opposed to

simply shaking them awake); sometimes you need to reawaken a person's heart to the light by first shocking them with the darkness.

2.They teach two important things about the nature of evil itself.

First, that it has no motive or human rationale. Longnecker says, **"The Fr. Mendoza character in *Deliver Us From Evil* tells Sarchie that he has witnessed plenty of human evil, but this is 'secondary' evil... In human evil there is always a mixed motive. So when we see cop Sarchie pound a pedophile murderer to death with his bare fists we understand he does so in a seemingly justified vengeful rage. Fr. Mendoza says that the primary evil knows no such rational."**

So primary evil is unjustified – it is chaotic and unpredictable. This is probably what makes it so horrifying to human beings, who would rather twist themselves through any moral gymnastics rather than simply perform evil for its own sake. Evil, when done in the name of good, is far more relatable to the human soul than evil done in the name of evil itself.

Secondly, Longnecker implies that this chaotic evil is far below you. **"Without truth and rational capacity the possessed persons become sub human...They snarl, bite, and scratch. The lie forces human beings into a sub human bestial condition."**

As a human being, you are far more than just electrical brain impulses that jerk around your body. You have a free will that comes from your soul, and when that free will (and self-restraint) is momentarily suspended by the demonic in horror films, the truth about the nobility of the soul is revealed.

Be that as it may, I still don't plan to become a connoisseur of horror movies – particularly those with a demonic theme. Delving farther into the nature of evil in the name of any entertainment medium is just not something I can stomach.

Besides, Martin Luther says that, “The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn.”

I posit that the best way to approach the horrific and demonic is to simply laugh at it and walk away. Nothing more is needed.

Do horror movies (especially the demonic) have a rational purpose in our society?

Do you personally find them edifying, or are you just there for the “thrills”?

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