

MCN Columnists

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It isn't often that the words, "porn" and "priest," can be used in the same movie review and not induce nausea in readers. That's exactly what happens, though, in "**For Christ's Sake**," a nifty indie comedy in which a priest is duped by his brother into financing the production of a XXX movie. Jed Rees plays a dedicated parish priest who borrows money from his church's emergency fund to finance what he believes to be his sibling's cancer treatment. Father Robert hails from a small town, where everyone is in everyone else's business and the biggest event is the annual church fair. He fully expects to be paid back, despite his brother's known tendency to tell lies and exploit other people's kindness. He doesn't discover the truth until he pays him a visit in his surprisingly lavish Hollywood Hills home, where, he's shocked to learn, a porn movie is being shot. Desperate to recover the church money, Father Robert is coerced into performing behind-the-camera duties on the set. It's not something he enjoys doing or intends to hide from his confessor. In fact, he nearly derails the production by innocently engaging in religious discussions with the film's voluptuous female lead (Sara Rue). When she takes the message to heart, the priest faces a new dilemma. Either he finds a way to convince her to finish the shoot or he'll lose the money. Another crisis erupts when a mobster repossesses the camera equipment and he accepts an offer from a fellow priest – and porn aficionado – to lend him the money his brother will need to finish the production.

There's more, but it would spoil the pleasantly surprising ending. I credit freshman director Jackson Douglas with understanding the difference between irreverent and offensive, sexy and lurid. There's nudity, but it isn't particularly erotic or gratuitous, especially within the context of a comedy targeted at mature audiences. Moreover, the actors avoid caricature by being extremely likeable and secure in their work. The movie received almost no distribution beyond a festival appearance, but that shouldn't discourage people looking for a ribald comedy from picking up "For Christ's Sake." If nothing else, it will look good on Rees and Rue's clip reel.