

# Faith & Film Viewing Guide: *Conclave*

*A Political and Spiritual Thriller About Power, Conscience, and the Weight of Leadership*



## How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you **watch *Conclave* with intention**, noticing the film’s deeper themes and their resonance with faith, leadership, and justice. Consider this an invitation to **pay attention to symbols, power dynamics, moral dilemmas, and the unseen forces shaping decisions**.

You may choose to reflect on these questions **before, during, or after watching** the film.

We hope this guide ensures you can engage with *Conclave* on multiple levels—personal reflection, theological and ethical questioning, and faith-centered discernment.

Hope to see you at the Faith and Film Discussion on Sunday, March 23 (6:00 - 7:30 pm) online. Get Access here: <https://sanctuaryucc.org/event/faith-and-film-conclave/>

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## For more about the film:

- [Official Trailer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX9jasdi3ic): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX9jasdi3ic>
- [Spirituality and Practice Review](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/29285/conclave): <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/29285/conclave>
- [Rotten Tomatoes 93%](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/conclave): <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/conclave>

## Before You Watch: Themes from *Spirituality & Practice*

The *Spirituality & Practice* review highlights **key spiritual themes** in *Conclave*. Keep these in mind as you watch:

- **Discernment** – What does true wisdom in leadership look like?
  - **Secrecy & Transparency** – When does confidentiality serve the greater good, and when does it become a form of corruption?
  - **Doubt & Faith** – Can uncertainty strengthen faith rather than weaken it?
  - **Grace & Justice** – How do we balance accountability with forgiveness?
  - **Power & Conscience** – What happens when religious institutions prioritize stability over moral reckoning?
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## What to Watch For: Key Themes & Symbolism

### 1. The Weight of Leadership

- How do the cardinals navigate the **pressure of choosing a new pope**?
- Who seems most concerned with **political maneuvering** vs. genuinely called to serve?
- Notice moments when characters reveal **internal conflicts**—what do these tell us about leadership?

### 2. The Role of Secrecy and Transparency

- What information is hidden, and who controls access to it?
- How do secrecy and revelation function within faith communities?
- Consider the spiritual and ethical consequences of **withholding truth to protect an institution**.

### 3. Shadows, Doubt, and Certainty

- The film visually portrays doubt through **shadows, lighting, and silent moments**—how do these add depth to the story?
- What is the relationship between **doubt and faith**? Can doubt be an act of faith itself?

### 4. Justice vs. Mercy

- Should a spiritual leader's past always be considered when evaluating their worthiness?
  - When is **justice** necessary for accountability? When is **grace** the right response?
  - How do these questions extend beyond the Church—into politics, workplaces, or even our personal lives?
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## Wanna go Deeper? Here are some Reflection Questions

Take time to sit with these questions, journal about them, or bring them to the online discussion circle:

### 1. Leadership and Morality

- Did your views on leadership change throughout the film?
- How does the film challenge or affirm your expectations of who should lead?
- What qualities are most essential for a leader in a faith-based institution?

### 2. Faith and Power

- Where do you see faith being upheld in the film, and where do you see it being used as a tool of power?
- What does the film suggest about human limitations in representing divine authority?

### 3. Shadows, Secrets, and Truth

- Were you surprised by any of the revelations in the film?
- How do we balance honesty and discretion in leadership?
- What happens when institutions value secrecy over truth?

### 4. Grace and Justice

- Did the film push you to reconsider how forgiveness, accountability, and justice interact?
- What happens when justice is denied in the name of institutional preservation?
- Where does grace fit into power structures?

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### Closing Thought: A Prayer for Discernment

As you reflect on the film, consider this prayer:

*God of wisdom and light,  
You call leaders not to power, but to service.  
Teach us to recognize integrity, courage, and humility in those who seek to lead.  
May we hold space for doubt, for truth, for difficult grace.  
And may we never mistake power for righteousness, or silence for faithfulness.  
Amen.*

**Contact: Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, [revwdmiller@gmail.com](mailto:revwdmiller@gmail.com)**