



## *“Know Before You Go”*

Film & Video Reviews from a Christian Perspective

### **Jesus, Mary and Joey.**

The cast includes Vincent Pagano, Marley Shelton, Charles Durning, Tess Harper, Olympia Dukakis, Melissa Joan Hart, and Stacy Keach. Written by Vincent Pagano.

D-James Quattrochi. 104 min.

A light-hearted romantic comedy about an aimless twenty-something Italian-American who meets and falls for a girl who survived cancer and became a devout Christian, the story concerns Joey, from a Catholic family, who begins to question his own religion and is so moved by his girlfriend's devotion that he also becomes born again. In his newness to a solid faith, he mistakenly believes that all will go well now that he's a Believer. When stumbling blocks begin to upset his naïve view of faith and life, he starts questioning his conversion.

In my younger days, I was involved in the making of perhaps twelve "church" films designed to promote the Gospel and the saving grace of Jesus Christ. While I was privileged to be a part of those productions, none were able to honestly portray three-dimensional people. Because these films were being shown in churches, there could be no swearing, no drinking, no smoking, no this, no that. This gave an anemic view of society and tended to paint the converted as saintly, devoid of earthiness. *Jesus, Mary and Joey* allows for earthy humor, jokes made at the expense of hypocrites, thought-provoking discussions about religion, and portraits of fleshed out Christians.

Though some may not like seeing Christians smoking a cigarette or going into a nightclub, the film never undermines the true Christian experience. The girl is an honest Christian who loves God and puts her faith into action. The boy ultimately finds this real experience.

The film is very funny, very touching and helps present a true picture of Christianity for those who narrowly think that all people of faith are represented by TV evangelists. This could be a very good film to show to non-Christian acquaintances as it may begin a dialogue that leads to a newness of life.

Not rated at time of screening (there are a few misuses of God's name and that of Jesus and two or three obscenities; one woman goes to a fortune teller; there are religious and sexual discussions that include some crudity; smoking; drinking; guys go to a club and see women mud wrestling – but this content reveals a lifestyle rather than merely being exploitive; when our young hero comes to Christ, he attempts to separate himself from worldliness by throwing out girlie magazines and separating himself from other destructive habits; while the film portrays the salty behavior of those who separate their faith from their daily walk, the film is also very explicit about faith and a true relationship with Christ).

- Phil Boatwright, The Movie Reporter