

Change Comes to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters

JOURNEYS IN FILM[™]
educating for global understanding



REBEL HEARTS



A DISCOVERY+ ORIGINAL A MERMAN/ANCHOR ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH LEVEL FORWARD AND QUIET "REBEL HEARTS"
DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY EMILY TOPPER CLAY WESTERVELT ANIMATION BY UNA LORENZEN MUSIC BY ARIEL MARX MUSIC SUPERVISOR TRACY MCKNIGHT
EDITED BY ERIN BARNETT YANIV ELANI PEDRO KOS ONDINE RAREY WRITTEN BY ERIN BARNETT SHAWNEE ISAAC-SMITH PEDRO KOS
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QUIET RICK ROSENTHAL NANCY STEPHENS PRODUCED BY KIRA CARSTENSEN SHAWNEE ISAAC-SMITH JUDY KORIN DIRECTED BY PEDRO KOS

Original Score Album Available on Node Records

www.RebelHeartsFilm.com

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About Journeys in Film

Journeys in Film is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that amplifies the storytelling power of film to educate the most visually literate generation in history. We believe that teaching with film has the power to help educate our next generation with a richer understanding of the diverse and complex world in which we live.

We transform entertainment media into educational media by designing and publishing cost-free, educational resources for teachers to accompany carefully chosen feature films and documentaries while meeting mandated standards in all core subjects. Selected films are used as springboards for lesson plans in subjects like math, science, language arts, social studies, and more. Our resources support various learning styles, promote literacy, transport students around the globe, and foster learning that meets core academic objectives.

In addition to general subject areas, Journeys in Film's programs engage students in meaningful examinations of human rights, poverty and hunger, stereotyping and racism, environmental issues, global health, immigration, and gender roles. Our teaching methods are successful in broadening perspectives, teaching for global competency, encouraging empathy, and building new paradigms for best practices in education. We seek to inspire educators, school administrators, community members, and home-schooling parents to capture the imagination and curiosity of their students by using our innovative curriculum.

We also develop discussion guides for films that don't necessarily lend themselves to academic standards but cover topics and themes that are valuable for classroom discussions and in other settings, such as after-school clubs, community screenings, and college classes.

Why use this program?

In an age when literacy means familiarity with images as much as text and a screen has become a new kind of page, 21st-century students are more connected to media than any previous generation. This offers educators unprecedented opportunities to engage students in learning about a variety of subjects and issues of global significance. Films, television, documentaries, and other media platforms can provide an immediate, immersive window to a better understanding of the world and matters affecting all of us.

We teach our students literature that originated from all around the world, but we tend to forget that what often spurs the imagination is both visual and auditory. Films evoke emotion and can liven up the classroom, bringing energy to a course. We believe in the power of films to open our minds, inspire us to learn more, provide a bridge to better understanding the key issues of 21st-century concern, and compel us to make a difference.

When properly used, films can be a powerful educational tool in developing critical thinking skills and exposure to different perspectives. Students travel through these characters and their stories: They drink tea with an Iranian family in *Children of Heaven*, play soccer in a Tibetan monastery in *The Cup*, find themselves in the conflict between urban grandson and rural grandmother in South Korea in *The Way Home*, and watch the ways modernity challenges Maori traditions in New Zealand in *Whale Rider*. Journeys in Film brings outstanding and socially relevant documentaries to the classroom that teach about a broad range of social issues in real-life settings, such as famine-stricken and war-torn Somalia, a maximum-security prison in Alabama, and a World War II concentration camp near Prague. They explore

complex and important topics like race and gender. Students tour an African school with a Nobel Prize-winning teenager in *He Named Me Malala* and experience the transformative power of music in *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma & the Silk Road Ensemble* and *Landfill Harmonic*.

Our hope is that this generation of youth will contribute to the betterment of humankind through kindness and understanding, together with scientific knowledge, to help solve some of the world's most pressing issues.

Our goal is to create relevant and engaging curricula and programming around media that encourages cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and knowledge of the people and environments around the world. We aim to prepare today's youth to live and work as globally informed, media-literate, and competent citizens.

Introducing *Rebel Hearts*

At the end of the 1950s, groups of Roman Catholic religious women lived in convents, worked as nurses and teachers, and lived lives of quiet, decorum, ritual, and strict obedience to custom. A decade later, the turmoil that shook communities in the United States over civil rights, the war in Vietnam, the position of women, and issues of justice had even penetrated convent walls, and no group was more affected than the sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) in Los Angeles.

The women had arrived with lofty expectations for a life of service and devotion. What they found was frustration when they were assigned to teach extremely overcrowded classes in parochial schools and denied opportunities to educate themselves further. Despite the strictures of the religious life, they wished to speak out on issues of injustice and war, and many joined protests and marches. Blockading their way was Cardinal James Francis McIntyre, a defender of patriarchy and a formidable opponent.

Rebel Hearts is the story of the struggle between the irresistible force (the desire of the IHM women for autonomy, education, and the means to serve the community) and the immovable object (the cardinal and the patriarchy he was defending). The viewer also learns the story of Sister Corita Kent, the talented artist and teacher, whose work took a new and highly original direction that led to such varied works as anti-war serigraphs, the Love Stamp for the U.S. Post Office, and even a design to decorate a gas tank in Boston.

In an era when social justice issues are at the forefront, students will find inspiration in this film about a group of women who demanded and eventually achieved the freedom to follow their ideals of peace, justice, and service.

**A Merman/Anchor Entertainment Production,
in association with Level Forward and Quiet Films**

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Change Comes to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters

Enduring Understandings

- Traditional religious orders for women set them apart by the way they dressed and lived.
- Women in religious orders traditionally lived in convents and worked in teaching and nursing.
- The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) opened new avenues for work and living for women in religious orders.
- When the ruling ecclesiastical figure disapproved of their activities, the IHM Sisters were able to move into new areas of work and become a secular community.

Essential Questions

- How did the cultural changes of the mid-20th century, and particularly Vatican II, inspire the IHM Sisters to seek change within their order and challenge the traditions and patriarchy of the Roman Catholic Church?
- How did the hierarchy respond to these changes?
- What did the IHM Sisters do in response?

Notes to the Teacher

The goal of this lesson is to explore with students the teaching conditions that left the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters frustrated, their motives for wanting change, the leadership of the community that helped shape the changes they adopted, the resistance of the Church hierarchy, and the establishment of a new secular community that continues to serve people in need while allowing its members to develop their own individual ways to be of help.

In Part 1 of the lesson, students research background information on religious orders and the changes brought about by Vatican II that inspired change in the IHM Sisters and their community. [Note: For a more comprehensive look at the context of the events in the film, you may wish to teach Lesson 1 first.] **Handout 1: Religious Orders and Vatican II** will provide students with a structure for their research. Students will have varying answers on the handout, depending on the resources they use, but the basic information is as follows:

Before Vatican II, most women in religious orders lived circumscribed lives in communities of women called convents. They were limited in the types of activities they could engage in. They wore distinctive clothing called a habit, much of it modeled after medieval styles, with long gowns covering arms and legs fully, and veils or other headgear covering all or most of their hair. Their work was generally in the traditional women's fields of teaching and nursing.

The Second Vatican Council, popularly known as Vatican II, was a council of ecclesiastical leaders brought together by Pope John XXIII in Rome in 1962, with the goal of *aggiornamento*, that is, of updating some of the Roman Catholic Church's rituals and customs in order to make it more relevant to modern Catholics. Despite resistance from some participants, many changes were made, including saying Mass in



the local vernacular rather than in Latin, beginning dialogues with other churches, and greater inclusion of lay people (non-clergy), including women. There were significant changes in the lives of nuns. Many moved out of convents to live in apartments; they learned the skills needed for coping in the modern world, such as driving; and they entered new careers, from social justice work to prison ministries. Habits were often abandoned for modest contemporary clothing.

If students need help with evaluating websites or a quick review of previously learned evaluation skills, the Brooklyn Public Library has a two-lesson unit you can download. The unit can be downloaded at https://www.bklynlibrary.org/sites/default/files/documents/Internet%20Research%20Lesson%20Plan_FULL.pdf. Pages 13 and 14 of this unit offer a useful checklist for students to evaluate an online source.

Part 2 of the lesson is the viewing journal, to be completed as students watch the film *Rebel Hearts*. This viewing journal will help students understand how events in the lives of the IHM Sisters in the mid-20th century led to their official separation from the Roman Catholic Church as a religious order; they will also see how these events inspired change on a greater world stage.

Some resources that may be helpful to you and your students include:

Sisters and Vatican II: A Generational Tug of War

<https://www.npr.org/2012/10/10/162650803/sisters-and-vatican-ii-a-generational-tug-of-war>

Why is Vatican II so important?

<https://www.npr.org/2012/10/10/162573716/why-is-vatican-ii-so-important>

Pope Francis is drawing on Vatican II to radically change how the Catholic Church is governed

https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/03/21/pope-francis-roman-curia-reform-242642?gclid=CjwK-CAjwu_mSBhAYEiwA5BBmf8Rfpcvr9x02ZAI5rM5X8hs-lo-JVGyOXu4_R59MxtDHEB0cZwW5k_BoCHXkQA-vD_BwE

50 years ago, Vatican II changed the Catholic Church _ and the world

<https://religionnews.com/2012/10/10/analysis-50-years-ago-vatican-ii-changed-the-catholic-church-and-the-world/>

Vatican II: A Half Century Later, a Mixed Legacy

<https://www.npr.org/2012/10/11/162594956/vatican-ii-a-half-century-later-a-mixed-legacy>

Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2**

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Duration of Lesson

4–5 class periods

Assessments

Completion of **Handouts 1 and 2**

Class discussion

Materials Needed

Access to film *Rebel Hearts*

Access to the internet or reliable print sources
about religious orders, Vatican II, and the IHM
Sisters

Copies of **Handout 1: Religious Orders and
Vatican II**

Copies of **Handout 2: *Rebel Hearts* Viewing Journal**
**Teacher Resource 1: *Rebel Hearts* Viewing Journal:
Suggested Answers**

Writing utensils and/or computer access for those
with computer accommodations

Procedure

Part 1: Religious orders and Vatican II

- 1.** Remind students to use smart internet search skills and to keep in mind the importance of the website's currency, reliability, authority, and purpose. If your students need to review these skills, you may wish to use the lessons from the Brooklyn Public Library site mentioned in Notes to the Teacher.
- 2.** As students engage in their research, prompt them to use keywords rather than typing in the entire question into the search engine.

3. Suggest to students that they take no more than 5–10 minutes per question, depending on the time allowed in the class.

4. Prompt students to come back as a full group.

5. The instructor will ask students to share their answers, reviewing one question at a time. Answers will vary.

Part 2: Change Comes to the IHM Sisters

- 1.** Distribute a copy of **Handout 2: *Rebel Hearts* Viewing Journal** to each student. Read the directions aloud and answer any questions students have. Tell students that if they feel they are really in need of more time to answer questions, they should raise their hands to get your attention.
- 2.** Tell students to complete the handout as they watch the film. Stop the film as often as necessary to allow students to complete their journals without losing the thread of the narrative.
- 3.** At the film's conclusion, arrange students in groups to discuss the reflection questions at the end of the handout.
- 4.** After students have had sufficient time to discuss the reflection questions, debrief on each question, asking students from each group to respond.



Handout 1

Religious Orders and Vatican II

Directions: In pairs or groups, conduct background research on the internet on the topics below. Use smart searching to evaluate your sources and the information contained in them. Be sure to fully answer each question.

1. Reflect: What is a religious order? What do you already know about these organizations?
2. Using reliable internet sources, conduct background research to answer the following questions:
 - a. Why might a woman choose to enter a religious order?
 - b. What distinguishing clothing did members of a religious order traditionally wear?
 - c. What kinds of work did members of a religious order traditionally do?
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
3. Use reliable internet sources to answer the following questions about the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II).
 - a. Who called the Council together? Who attended?
 - b. What was the purpose of the Council?
 - c. Name three significant changes in the Roman Catholic Church that came about as a result of Vatican II.
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
4. Based on your research, why do you think Vatican II was so groundbreaking?



Handout 2

Rebel Hearts: A Viewing Journal

Directions: As you watch the film, answer each question as the topic appears in the film.

1. Before you begin viewing the film, reflect on the title: *Rebel Hearts*. Based on the film's title, what do you think the film is about?
2. What were the 1940s like for women in the United States? What choices did women have for work?
3. What were the reasons Anita Caspary (Sister Mary Humiliata) became a nun?
4. What were three rules the nuns were expected to follow?
5. How did those who knew him describe James Francis, Cardinal McIntyre, the head of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles?
6. What were some problems faced by nuns teaching in the Los Angeles Catholic schools?
7. Why did Immaculate Heart College (IHC) allow for more freedom for those who taught there?
8. What types of things brought "excitement and publicity" to IHC?
9. What made Corita Kent's art unique?

10. Why did Cardinal McIntyre censor the IHC faculty?
11. How did the Mary's Day celebration change on the IHC campus?
12. Why did the "modern" actions of the IHM Sisters threaten Cardinal McIntyre?
13. What was Vatican II and what types of changes did it bring about?
14. How did Vatican II affect the IHC community?
15. In what kinds of social justice movements did various IHM Sisters involve themselves? Was this a good idea?
16. In 1967, what items did the IHM Sisters vote on?
17. What was one of the negative effects of the actions of the IHM Sisters pertaining to the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Schools?
18. What decision were the IHM Sisters forced to make?
19. What challenges did the IHM Sisters face after they left the formal structure of religious life?
20. How did the Immaculate Heart Community inspire change?



Directions: Work with your group to discuss the questions below. Use the space below each question to jot down notes about your group's ideas so that you can explain them to the whole class.

1. The opening lines of the film are “What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!” Thinking back on the film, why is this chant significant to the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary?
2. Now that you’ve watched the film, what is the significance of the title of the film *Rebel Hearts*? How did the IHM Sisters rebel?
3. What is one thing that you will remember about the film *Rebel Hearts*?



Teacher Resource 1

Rebel Hearts: A Viewing Journal

Students may have additional answers to suggest.

1. Before you begin viewing the film, reflect on the title: *Rebel Hearts*. Based on the film's title, what do you think the film is about?
Answers will vary.
2. What were the 1940s like for women in the United States? What choices did women have for work?
The 1940s tended to be very patriarchal (male-dominated) by today's standards. Employment choices for women generally fell into three categories: teaching, nursing, and secretarial work. A woman could also marry (often ending employment outside the home) or, for Roman Catholic women, join a religious order (and thus have an opportunity to obtain more education).
3. What were the reasons Anita Caspary (Sister Mary Humiliata) became a nun?
Anita wanted to get an education; she was inspired by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who were "full of life, energy, vitality."
4. What were three rules the nuns were expected to follow?
 - *All sisters must obey the prayer schedule.*
 - *Sisters must keep silence during the day.*
 - *All sisters must be in the convent by 6 p.m.*
5. How did those who knew him describe James Francis, Cardinal McIntyre, the head of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles?
Answers may include the following: the Cardinal was "very powerful..., big shots of the city and politicians would court him..., not into theology...he was a businessman..., was a runner on Wall Street..., he was a big help to the Church of L.A....as a builder..., called "The Education Cardinal...", a financial genius..."
6. What were some problems faced by nuns teaching in the Los Angeles Catholic schools?
Answers may include overcrowded classrooms, no pay/salary, no Social Security, and no actual college degree training.
7. Why did Immaculate Heart College (IHC) allow for more freedom for those who taught there?
Many went on to receive their college degrees, and its location was on the same grounds as the motherhouse convent, which allowed anyone from the order to experience cultural events.



8. What types of things brought “excitement and publicity” to IHC?
Answers may include the following: “highly trained, very bright, professionally ambitious women...The nuns who were college faculty had more degrees among them than all of the priests in the Diocese of Los Angeles.” The IHM Sisters were encouraged to be experimental. There were many famous people who came to campus to engage in the discussions and events taking place there. The Immaculate Heart Trio travelled all over the U.S. giving concerts and recording their music. The English department regularly published books, the science department received grants to conduct research, the drama department brought in directors from around the world. Perhaps most famous was Sister Corita and her serigraphs/contemporary art.
9. What made Corita Kent’s art unique?
Answers may include Corita’s interpretation of the traditional biblical stories and her use of color and calligraphy. (She was ultimately forbidden from depicting the Holy Family, so she ended up using more text and figures.)
10. Why did Cardinal McIntyre censor the IHC faculty?
Answers may include the ideas that the IHC faculty welcomed change, challenged tradition, and sought to stay relevant with the times.
11. How did the Mary’s Day celebration change on the IHC campus?
It became more visual and focused on various themes of social justice, which became a hallmark focus for the IHM Sisters.
12. Why did the “modern” actions of the IHM Sisters threaten Cardinal McIntyre?
Answers may include things like Cardinal McIntyre’s fear of losing control and his dedication to the staunch traditions of the pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church.
13. What was Vatican II and what types of changes did it bring about?
The Vatican Ecumenical Council produced 16 documents designed to modernize the Church. It brought about changes including Mass being said in the local language, women being allowed to be in the Church sanctuary and to play more of a part of the Mass. The changes wrought by Vatican II were very polarizing in the Roman Catholic Church.
14. How did Vatican II affect the IHC community?
Vatican II justified what the IHM Sisters had been doing in the mid-20th century. The Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life (Vatican II) encouraged experimentation with the rules and prompted those in religious orders to consider changes in the curfew, in how and when one should pray, and the ability to participate in social justice movements.
15. In what kinds of social justice movements did various IHM Sisters involve themselves? Was this a good idea?
Civil rights (such as the march from Selma to Montgomery), protests critical of the Vietnam War, support of farm workers’ rights, etc. Answers may vary about the advisability of their involvement, but most students will probably support it.

16. In 1967, what items did the IHM Sisters vote on?
Answers will vary.
The film states that the sisters voted on “Decent working conditions in schools...freedom to regulate [their] prayer life, [their] habit, [their] cultural life...and freedom for individual responsibility in civil and social causes” among others.
17. What was one of the negative effects of the actions of the IHM Sisters pertaining to the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Schools?
The IHM Sisters were immediately withdrawn from the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Schools, which had an especially negative impact on the lower-income Catholic schools of Los Angeles; some had to close as a result of losing their teachers.
18. What decision were the IHM Sisters forced to make?
The Roman Catholic Church asked the IHM Sisters to choose the new decrees by the Church or to leave the Church by signing forms for dispensation from vows and thus becoming secularized as the Immaculate Heart Community.
19. What challenges did the IHM Sisters face after they left the formal structure of religious life?
Answers will vary. The sisters had to leave the convent, learn how to live independently, and support themselves financially.
20. How did the Immaculate Heart Community inspire change?
Answers will vary as this is an opinion-based question.

Post-Viewing Reflection Questions

1. The opening lines of the film are “What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!” Thinking back on the film, why is this chant significant to the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary?
Answers will vary. The chant at the beginning of the film foreshadows the way the IHM Sisters challenged the longstanding traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. Now that you’ve watched the film, what is the significance of the title of the film *Rebel Hearts*? How did the IHM Sisters rebel?
Answers will vary but may include creating their own rules surrounding times of personal prayer and deciding to not wear the traditional habit.
3. What is one thing that you will remember about the film *Rebel Hearts*?
Answers will vary.



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