

COMMUNITY

PUC hosted their annual high school Basketball tournament this quarter. Anna Ramos talks about how this yearly event builds lasting connections in the Adventist Community.

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Basketball Tournament



Credits: PUC Marketing and Communication

By Anna Ramos

Every year, Pacific Union College (PUC) brings together high school basketball teams from all over Northern California—and even beyond—for an exciting four-day tournament. From February 22 to February 25, 2025, teams will hit the courts, connect with new people, and get a taste of life at PUC.

This tournament isn't just about basketball. It's also a big chance for students to meet PUC staff and current students

and get a feel for campus life. While the main event is the games, players also have the opportunity to attend Friday night vespers, Afterlight, and Saturday church services. Many teams stay through the weekend, making it a great mix of sports and spirituality.

Although formal academic meetings aren't a huge part of the event, some students take the chance to chat with faculty and learn about PUC's programs.

Some schools also sign up for campus tours, which give a nice overview of academics and athletics.

With approximately 400 students on campus during the tournament, the energy is high, and the competition is fierce. Schools love the event because it's well-run and provides a great opportunity for students to bond with others from different academics. On PUC's end, it takes a lot of work to organize, but everyone

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FROM THE EDITOR

As we enter the final stretch with the end of the quarter approaching, we all know how stressful it can be. The time of year is stamped by a flurry of exams, projects, and essays. Schedules are too packed even to find time to sleep, and stress levels are running at a quarterly high. As overwhelming as this may seem, it is important to note that you have made it this year - this is the final push.

Take a moment to breathe and try to break the workload into manageable pieces. Most importantly, do not forget to give yourself grace. Everyone knows how important studying is, but so is rest. Take breaks whenever you can and reward yourself.

You are not alone- there are people here to help you. You are almost at the finish line! Stay strong and use your resources!

Sincerely
Khalid Pal
Editor-in-Chief



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enjoys seeing the players give it their all and make new connections.

A highlight of this year’s tournament was welcoming a team from Lincoln, Nebraska, for the first time. They were blown away by how smoothly everything ran and, more importantly, how welcoming PUC was. The athletics department goes above and beyond to make teams feel at home, providing free snacks, drinks, and even special perks for coaches. Many visiting players and coaches said it was the best tournament they’d ever been to!

Over the past three years, the tournament has become increasingly organized, thanks to a hardworking team that continually improves the process. Faculty, staff, and student workers are proud of how far the event has come and love hearing all the positive feedback from attendees.

Every year, PUC’s basketball tournament gains more recognition, drawing in more schools and building stronger connections within the Adventist education community. It has become a major highlight of the school year, showing how sports have a special way of bringing people together, both on and off the court.



Credits: PUC Marketing and Communication

CONVERSATION

I Was Never Silent

By Keegan Malan



Credits: IMDB

Jesus speaks to Sebastião Rodrigues, played by Andrew Garfield, near the end of Martin Scorsese's 2016 film *Silence*, based on the novel of the same name written by Shūsaku Endō. Scorsese has often discussed his Catholic upbringing, his eventual separation from the Church, and his continual exploration of Catholic spirituality that shows up constantly in his films, whether that be directly or indirectly. In this film, he returns to those themes and tackles them head-on.

Silence follows Sebastião Rodrigues, a young Portuguese Jesuit priest who, with a friend, journeys to 17th-century Japan during a time of severe oppression for Christians when faith was declared illegal. He seeks not only to preach the word of God but also to find out what happened to a former mentor of his, Cristóvão Ferreira (Liam Neeson), who journeyed to Japan and went missing, with rumors swirling that he has committed the act of apostasy, renouncing his faith. For non-Catholics and Christians in general, the act of apostasy does not carry any real weight, but for those who have grown up in a Christian environment, renouncing one's faith is

perhaps the most insulting sin of all. A verbal act of spitting on the death of Jesus as it is. So, of course, Rodrigues and his companion Garupe (Adam Driver) cannot believe that their former mentor could do such a thing. They are young, idealistic, and naïve about the situation in Japan. They venture into dangerous land, accompanied by a Japanese guide, Kichijirō (Yōsuke Kubozuka), a miserable wretch who claims to be Christian, which he stringently denies.

Silence is, first and foremost, a long and slow film. The pacing is very deliberate, and there is much of the novel in it. However, the film is not held back by a faithfulness to the source material, and the slow movement produces a rather meditative state. It is sometimes too often said that a particular film can be likened to a religious experience, but "*Silence*" certainly warrants that label. There is nothing overly complicated with the plot, and the events are easy enough to follow along, but it is very dense and packed with symbolism and questions that penetrate to the very heart of Christian faith and require multiple viewings. Non-Christians might be dismissive of the film, and atheists will certainly scoff at the

issues at hand, but the questions broached in the film are universal: What is the nature of faith? Why is God silent during dark times? What is the nature of Christian love, which is the basis for so much of Western society? But of course, the source material is from the East, and Japanese writer in a country that to this day counts less than one percent of its population under that title.

Endō's bibliography is made up of works that attempt to reconcile Christianity with his identity as a Japanese man, making the faith more palatable for his people. By attempting to do so he does, and by extension Scorsese, two things. One, he forces all to look at the nature of Christianity in a radically different light. And two, he focuses on the love of God and allows for a greater exploration of love in a hostile environment. This is due to being a Japanese Catholic, but more so \ with the intense meditation of Christian faith that he was constantly under, leading to beliefs that Western Christians will raise an eyebrow at, and is displayed in his book *A Life of Jesus*.

Most people have heard tales of how the Romans would torture Christians during the great years of oppression at the

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Credits: IMDB

height of the Empire. How Christians were fed to lions and how Nero would dip them in oil and light them on fire, using them as light in his garden during nighttime parties. Tough times. Horrible times. But not as bad as it was in Japan. Not simply because of the torture method known simply as The Pit, but because of a far more horrific method for dealing with Christians, priests in particular.

In 2016 Andrew Garfield starred in two movies with a faith basis, this film and *Hacksaw Ridge*, where a young Adventist man joins the military during World War II as a medic and refuses to handle a gun, keeping firm to his beliefs in the face of overwhelming opposition. That film is a triumph of the will. Silence could not be further from that. It is a dark, often brutal film, both in terms of physical and emotional violence. Scorsese has said before that his film *The Age of Innocence* was his most violent in terms of emotion, but this film is even more so. One is rather shocked that Garfield chose to campaign his performance in *Hacksaw Ridge* for a best actor nomination rather than this film,



CONVERSATION

though the reasoning is clear: Hacksaw Ridge, having been a rather profitable venture that people had heard of rather than the box office bomb of “Silence.” Yet there is no question which performance was better, and that is found in Silence. Garfield is in every scene, and there is not a moment where you don’t see the brilliance. From the naivety to the slow growing darkness within his soul that leads him deeper into the depths of horror, sorrow, and confusion, to the final emotional state he reaches at the end. Pay particular attention to the quiet scenes, like his parting conversation with a Japanese man in the pouring rain or the contemplation with Kichijirō near the end of the film. The attention of the viewer will be drawn to the louder moments of his performance, filled with wailing and horror, and these are excellent as well, but the performance is made during the quiet moments where the deepest emotions shine brightest.

Everyone else is great in their respective performances, as is often the case with Scorsese, who gets the best out of his actors. Liam Neeson is particularly effective in portraying a man haunted and worn, who in later scenes reveals bitter truths. However, the performance that stands out most from the pack is Yōsuke Kubozuka as Kichijirō.

Kichijirō is someone who is representative of all we abhor in society. He is a miserable wretch who cannot be trusted and whose

actions are hateful. Yet, there is great pity to be found in this man. Rodrigues certainly cannot seem to shake him off, both in a physical sense and a spiritual one. Neither can we. On a first viewing, one may laugh at Kichijirō as he constantly comes to Rodrigues asking for confession. But on subsequent viewings, that laughter is choked down, and whatever smile may have shown vanishes as we realize that the state of Kichijirō is our own. Kichijirō hates himself and his weaknesses, yet he never can seem to shake them off. He is caught in a cycle of sin and repentance, never seeming to get the upper hand. Is that not our state? Aren’t we, like Sisyphus, doomed to roll the weight of our sins up a hill, only for our sins to overwhelm us and force us to start from the beginning again and again? Kichijirō sees this clear enough, much more clearly than most of us ever do. He recognizes who he is and wishes to change. Do we want to even talk about our sins? His interactions with Rodrigues are the heart of the movie. It is a throughline by which we come to better recognize Christ’s love. Kichijirō is Judas through and through. A betrayer, a sinner, a person we scorn, yet a person whom Jesus loved despite all this. A person Jesus certainly prayed for. A person Jesus would have welcomed back had he repented. Did not he say to forgive seven times seventy and beyond? Kichijirō, despite all his flaws, always comes back seeing forgiveness. Why

is that? What does that say about the nature of Christian love? Rodrigues certainly wonders this.

It’s this idea of Christian love that is at the heart of the film. All the other questions are wrapped up in it. Why is God silent in the face of evil? Does that question not often bear the face, “Why would a loving God allow such evil in the world?” How can faith be built on such a foundation? As Rodrigues sees the suffering of the Japanese Christians around him, he comes more and more to question the basis and nature of his faith. And it only grows worse as time draws on, and the torments he experiences and sees get worse, culminating in the ultimate punishment. It is an ingenious strategy devised by the Japanese whereby the priests are not turned into martyrs, gaining more following for their cause. The opposite in fact. Rather than killing the priests if they will not apostatize, they will have others die in their stead, lest they apostatize. One is therefore not the sheep being led to the slaughter, but one kept outside the pen while those within are.

With the recognizing that to deny Christ is to be cursed and be cast out of his love, at least this is the thought, the dilemma is understood. Rodrigues is tormented by this. If it was his own life, he would be fine dying, but it’s not. One comparison that immediately leaps to mind is the belief held by some that in Europe during the



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Credits: IMDB

Holocaust, when Jews were being rounded up, those who hid them and lied to the Nazis- denying they were hiding Jews- were sinning and should have trusted that God would deliver them from harm. Of course, this belief is entirely idiotic for obvious reasons, but the comparison is easily made, if not the same.

The stance of the Catholic church and many Christians is firm in this regard. To deny Jesus is for Him to deny you. It is against everything Rodrigues has ever been taught. The genius of Scorsese and Endō, of course, is to draw the viewer into understanding and feeling Rodrigues's predicament, even if one is not a Christian. I cannot imagine anyone watching this film and dismissing his concerns as trivial. It is treated with such weight that it is equivalent to a life and death situation for himself, though if he gives in, he will not die, at least not physically. Where is God in this time? Rodrigues wonders. Why can't he hear His voice? What would be the Christian thing to do? This all reaches a head in one of the most heartrending of moments in cinema where he must make a choice. Not to spoil things, but the film does not end with this

choice. It continues, at first in a way that you don't quite understand or see where it is leading to, but it comes to perhaps one of the best and most comforting revelations even as it is drenched in pain and sorrow, which then finally leads to the ending, and an auteur touch on Scorsese's part that is not to be found in the book.

In short terms, it is this: a makeshift crucifix in a closed palm. It is the image Scorsese ends on and that lingers in our souls, perfectly encapsulating the understanding Rodrigues has come to while also leaving us with a lingering thought: "But as to that, indeed, only God can answer." To Christians, a sour taste may be left in the mouth at this ending. Indeed, I felt much the same way. On subsequent viewings and much thought, I have reconciled myself to it and the conclusions reached by it. I cannot help but imagine myself in Rodrigues's shoes. What would I do? What would you do?

Silence is a great movie not just because it is wonderfully shot and acted, with all the ticks and minutia of filmmaking used to perfection, but because it invites Christians and non-Christians alike to experience something together. Most Christian media

is alienating and just plain bad because it is predicated on the belief that all non-Christians in the story must be evil to make their point, which is about belief in God. Silence is not a film about belief in God. The main crux of Rodrigues's story is not whether or not God exists, though he certainly questions this, but about the nature of the God he believes in and the nature of himself who holds to this faith. Whether or not you agree with Rodrigues's decision is beside the point. The point is the exploration of Christian love in a world where God often seems silent to our suffering.

Shūsaku Endō was a writer of many works. The last novel that he published before his death was *Deep River*, the title taken from an old Negro spiritual. "Deep river, my home is over Jordan; Deep river, Lord; I want to cross over into camp ground." In that novel, we the reader come to realize that the *Deep River* of the title is Christianity; and that deep river flows through all our hearts. And the river of the heart, that river of Christianity, contains God's voice. It is the sound of this deep river that Rodrigues and we learn to hear.

CAMPUS

Fire Drills On Campus

By Isaac Baek

Fire drills occur regularly throughout the quarter, yet they always seem to happen at the most inconvenient times. You might be in the shower when the alarm goes off or in the middle of a test. Some students have even been found in deep sleep. The point is, that the unpredictability of fire drills feels like an annoyance to all students who have ever lived in the PUC dorms.

I also wondered why PUC held fire drills so late at night. A look into the issue revealed it is California law. California Code Regulations, Title 3.13 Section 3 states, “When sessions exceed a 7 day period, at least 1 drill shall be held during night-time sleeping hours.” Essentially, this means that at some point during the year, Pacific Union College is required by law to do a fire drill when students might be asleep. PUC schedules these legally required fire drills around 10 pm, though the most recent one happened to be more around 11 pm.

Every time I would fumble out of the dorm in the dead of night, amid the mix of noises, someone was always complaining

that the deans always picked the worst times for a drill. However, the California law combined with upper administration working with Angwin Fire decides when fire drills happen. Or you can say: However, fire drill schedules are determined by California law and coordinated by the upper administration in collaboration with the Angwin Fire department.

So what about the other fire drills that have occurred late in the night? For Newton Hall, the first one that comes to mind happened around 1 am fairly recently. According to Dean Ringer, most of these incidents are caused by students, which could be due to faulty fire alarms, burnt food, or potentially other reasons.

If you happen to fall into the situation where you do set off an alarm, a few things could happen to you, depending on your circumstances. Dean Ringer explained that every non-drill fire alarm activation is treated as a learning experience. If your alarm was faulty, then you have nothing to worry about. The alarm will quickly be replaced, and that will be the

end of it. But if you intentionally activate the fire alarm, you could face a \$250 fine for your first offense and a \$500 fine for subsequent offenses. In addition to this, any heat-producing appliances or open flames in your room could cause a \$100 fine or a \$250 fine if it happens again.

Besides the fines, you also put other dorm students at risk and inconvenience them, especially if it happens in the middle of the night. No one wants to walk outside at two in the morning because someone was not watching their food. However, just because we don’t want to do it does not mean we should avoid following fire drill protocol. Residence halls have a \$250 fine with a subsequent \$500 fine for failure to evacuate. This policy is in place for student safety. It might not be a fire drill and could be an actual fire. As a result, it is always best to follow protocol and exit the building no matter the hour.

The main takeaway is not to blame the deans for the late hours. It is not their fault; they are legally obligated to enforce the law when it comes to fire drills.



Credits: @angwinfire

UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS
Thursday, March 13 Community 10 am
Thursday, March 13 Men’s Volleyball vs. UC Merced
Tuesday, March 18 Crossroads - Dorm Worship 9:15
Friday, March 14 ALIVE Vespers 8 pm
Thursday, March 20 Winter Quarter Ends All
Spring Break: Friday, March 21 - Sunday, March 30

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FIND THE ANSWER,
WIN FREE COFFEE



Find the answer hidden somewhere in the paper. The first person to DM us on Instagram @pucchronicle will win a free drink at the Grind!

This week’s question is:

What is the ammount of money charged the first time you fail to evacuate in case of a fire?