

Cinema, the winners of the 15th edition of the “Mirabile Dictu” Catholic Film Festival

**Silver fish to the film “La Sirvienta” by Pablo Moreno,
and ex aequo to directors Eddie McClintock for “Miracle at Manchester”
and Jan Sobierajski for “Called”**

Rome, 16 February 2024 – The XV edition of the International Catholic Film Festival “Mirabile Dictu” (<https://www.mirabledictu-icff.com>) concluded yesterday evening in Rome, with the awards ceremony at Palazzo Cardinal Cesi in Via della Conciliazione Conceived in 2010 by filmmaker and producer Liana Marabini to give space to producers and directors of films, documentaries, docudramas, TV series, short films and programs that promote universal moral values and positive models, the Festival was born under the High Patronage of the Pontifical Council for Culture, today the Dicastery for Culture and Education, represented at the ceremony by the undersecretary Father Antonio Spadaro S.J.

Over 2000 works were nominated this year, from which the finalist films were selected, coming from nine different countries: Argentina, China, Philippines, France, India, Italy, Poland, Spain, United States.

The Award for Best Film went to “La sirvienta” by Pablo Moreno (Spain); best Director Award ex aequo, for the first time in the history of the Festival, to Eddie McClintock for “Miracle at Manchester” (USA) and Jan Sobierajski for “Called” (Poland); best short film “Zatti, hermano nuestro” by Don Ricardo Campoli (Argentina); best Documentary “Arma Christi: a chronicle of dissent” by Victoria Darves-Bornoz (France).

The Capax Dei Foundation Prize was awarded to “New creation in love” by Huayu Yang (China).

To the winners decreed by the international jury - chaired by the princess and actress Maria Pia Ruspoli (Italy), and composed of the distributor and producer Norbert Blecha (Austria), the journalists Luca Caruso (Vatican) and Włodzimierz Redzioch (Poland), and the actor Rupert Wynne-James (UK) – was awarded the Silver Fish, inspired by the first Christian symbol. The awards ceremony was hosted by the journalist Armando Torno.

In his introductory greeting, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president *emeritus* of the Pontifical Council for Culture, which has granted High Patronage since the first edition and has always been close to the Festival, congratulated President Liana Marabini for having reached the fifteenth edition and quoted the great French playwright Antonin Artaud, according to whom "films represent only the skin of reality", that is, "only the surface and therefore they do not go deep. This, however, is precisely the function that Liana Marabini has always wanted: that of also representing the Transcendent", stated the cardinal. "If we want to say it with a great painter, Paul Klee, 'represent in the visible the invisible that is hidden in it' – continued Cardinal Ravasi -. That is, always trying to find this further and transcendent dimension in visible reality." "I believe this is the reality of great films,

of great directors. Artaud himself, becoming an actor in Dreyer's film about Joan of Arc, was also involved and understood that the film is not only an image of reality, but is also an in-depth excavation, in search, many times, of the great mystery of the human person, of history and, if you want, also of Transcendence, of divinity", concluded the cardinal.

The president of the Festival, Liana Marabini, thanked those present, the jury - in particular the president, Princess Maria Pia Ruspoli, for the dedication and professionalism of her work" - and the numerous producers nominated from all over the world for their works, noting that "just being in the final competition is a reward, because the finalist films were selected out of over 2000 candidate films". She also announced that she is making a film about Michael Jackson and his relationship with faith, which will be presented at the Cannes Film Festival next May.

Best Short Film

"Zatti, hermano nuestro" by Don Ricardo Campoli (Argentina)

It is 1941 and the news arriving at the San José hospital in Viedma, Patagonia, is not good at all. The order is in fact to immediately vacate the building, which will be demolished, and transfer patients, doctors and nurses to a new location, further from the city. The hopes of saving the hospital are all placed in the Salesian brother Artemide Zatti, the true soul of the place. The film offers only a brief episode of his life, but it says a lot about the way of being Christian of this son of Don Bosco, proclaimed a saint by Pope Francis on 9 October 2022.

Best Documentary

"Arma Christi: a chronicle of dissent" by Victoria Darves-Bornoz (France)

It's a film about Christians in wartime Ukraine. It also presents the singular story of the great contemporary artist Banksy, who traveled to the country during the war and painted eleven masterpieces on the walls of as many bombed buildings. An epiphany of beauty amidst great devastation.

The other finalist documentaries were: "Follow that bishop" by Sean-Patrick Lovett and Antonio Olivie (Spain), and "New creation in love" by Huayu Yang (China).

Best Film

"La sirvienta" by Pablo Moreno (Spain)

Vicenta María lived almost 200 years ago. From a very young age she felt the call to protect the other women of her time, who did not have the same opportunities and tried to emigrate from their villages to the big cities, in many cases with little luck.

Lera, a domestic worker who fled from Ukraine, has just been arrested on charges of theft. In prison she meets Julia and Mihaela, two prostitutes, to whom she tells the story of the woman who changed her life. Can one woman's decision change the course of history for thousands of others? Based on the true story of a woman who challenged her world to change ours.

The other finalist films were: “Saint Michael: meet the Angel” by Wincenti Podbinski and Don Przemysław Krakowczyk (Poland), and “The message of Loudes” by Stefano Mazzeo (USA).

The other finalist shorts were: “Arrivederci Paris” by Luis Salvatore Bellanti (France) and “Hatid (send off)” by Rosswil H. Hilario (Philippines).

Best Director

Ex aequo prize to Eddie McClintock for “Miracle at Manchester” (USA) and Jan Sobierajski for “Called” (Poland)

Eddie McClintock for “Miracle at Manchester” (USA)

A school community comes together to try to save a teenager from an aggressive form of brain cancer. Two weeks after the entire Catholic high school – 1,700 students and staff – said a prayer for this boy, his tumor disappeared. During the ordeal of the illness, his father loses his faith, but in the end manages to renew it. A story of hope suitable for all ages, which speaks of the power of prayer and warms the heart.

Jan Sobierajski for “Called” (Poland)

“Called” tells the story of the meeting between a Catholic priest and a wealthy family, where the priest goes for a pastoral visit, during which a strong exchange of opinions takes place. The themes revolve around seven main services entrusted to priests: the sacrament of the Eucharist, that of reconciliation, baptism, the preaching of the Word of God, prayers for healing, exorcism and the accompaniment of a dying person. The priest tells unusual, but true, stories of lay people converted through priestly ministry. It is the story of the real experience of seven people, whose lives were radically transformed through the testimony and works of priests.

The other finalist directors were: Snehashish Das for “Suka Bhaira Sholay” (India) and Chris Vickers-Rynecki for “A bad choice” (USA).

The **Capax Dei Foundation Award** was given to “New Creation in Love” by Huayu Yang (China).

Both Aslan and Krissy are young Mongolians in China. Aslan grew up in the steppes of Inner Mongolia and was deprived of parental care from childhood, setting the stage for an unstable life. Crissy grew up in the city, without knowing what love was, due to the separation of her parents when she was very young, which led her to develop a chaotic lifestyle.

The two became drug addicts, but even in a confusing world and in full desperation, Krissy found the saving grace of Jesus Christ and shared her faith with Aslan, starting a journey of personal transformation and becoming a loving and evangelizing couple.