

## Gender

The second season of *The Exorcist* takes a very peculiar approach to how it displays gender roles. It sticks to traditions of the church where females are not allowed to be Priests (Miller, p. 61). To this extent all the priests in the season are males. Female members of the clergy portray traditional gender roles that the church associates with members of the female gender. These include nuns.

Traditionally speaking exorcists have always been male. However, the season takes a sharp deviation from this norm. One of the most ferocious exorcists in the season is called Mouse and is a female. She is a brutal exorcist who is bent on doing whatever it takes to defeat the demons. She is also grounded in reality as opposed to Father Thomas who employs more of an idealistic approach. Mouse is open to the idea of killing a host if it becomes clear that the exorcism will not work and that integration is imminent. She is an advocate of killing Andy when it becomes clear that the demon that is possessing him is too powerful and they do not have the sufficient time to effectively carry out an exorcism on him.

The ferocious nature of Mouse is very important from a gender point of view. Her story arch is also very interesting. She starts off as a naive nun who ventures where she should not and ends up possessed by a demon. She has firsthand experience on how a possessed person feels and this explains why she has such a high degree of contempt for demons. The fact that she is the one willing to do whatever it takes to win shows that women can be just as ferocious and ideal driven as men. Her actions are completely devoid of emotion and she relies more on logic and the prevailing circumstances to make her decisions.

Verity is one of Andy's daughters from his house. She has a troubled past and has a problem fitting in. However, she serves as his emotional center. When the priests propose using one of the children to appeal to him to fight the demon she openly volunteers for the role. She knows the danger that she faces yet she steps forward. She is willing to place herself in anger so that her siblings do not have to and so that she can help Andy where possible. Despite thinking that she is not very dear to Andy it turns out that he loves her a lot. He is able to show a lot of resolve when the demon is pushing him to kill her. This is the first instance where he is able to use his sheer will to fight the advances of the demon and in fact completely reject its will, leading to the demon becoming further frustrated..

The season delves into the emotional nature of women and their need to take care of children. Rose Cooper is a child affairs agent who is very concerned with children and putting them in an environment where they can thrive. However, the season also deviates from the norm and presents males as also being capable of unprecedented love and altruism towards children. Andy is a man who has dedicated his life to taking care of children who need help. He wishes he could take in more children and help them to overcome the various difficult situations that they have faced in their lives. He even talks to Rose about the laws in place and how they prevent him from taking in even more children as he wishes to.

The show is not necessarily feminist but it tries its best to place men and women on a near equal pedestal. The demon that torments Andy and his family is a female. However, some of the other demons in various episodes are males. The portrayal of demons by both genders is very important in terms of creating a balance. It sends a message that one gender is not necessarily evil and the other pure. Rather both genders are capable of incredible evil and

Do THEY  
OTHER  
FEMALE  
CHARACTERS  
FIT INTO  
THIS TYPE  
TOO?

incredible good. Both can come up with evil atrocities or be the source of reprieve for people who are in need.

GOOD IDEAS  
HERE

## Ideology

An important element of the show is the politics especially in the Vatican. Father Thomas and Father Marcus would like to get help in their fight against evil. However, the bureaucracy in the Vatican prevents them from getting this help. The fact that the top tier priests in the Vatican also worship demons and actively strive to be possessed by demons further works to ensure that their efforts will be frustrated. They are declared enemies of the Vatican and are actively hunted down as opposed to being helped and heralded as heroes of the church.

Father Bennett is a Vatican insider who is aware of the fact that there is rampant demon worship among the high ranking officials. He tries to bring this fact to light. However, he is brought down by his superiors who order him to cease his investigations and keep his mouth shut. They attempt to, and indeed succeed at, making him look like a crazy conspiracy theorist with a bone to pick with some of the high ranking priests. This is reminiscent of the manner in which whistle blowers are treated in modern society. The current society is one in which whistleblowers end up being punished for revealing what is actually happening. Some of them have their lives torn apart and their careers basically ruined.

The show intentionally reinforces traditional notions of religion. It emphasizes on the age old battle between good and evil. It also emphasizes on the fact that evil is dedicated towards ensuring that human beings suffer while good is bent on saving human beings and the destruction of evil. There are also undertones of the victory of good over evil. An example of this is that the children from Andy's home finally get adopted by Rose at the end. Despite losing their father and experiencing the horrors of him being possessed by a demon they get a semblance of a happy ending.

The theme of religion is widespread throughout the show. The show explores this topic in an environment where people are increasingly turning away from religion and religious establishments. It tries to paint a picture that religion is relevant despite what some people may think of it and its place in modern society. It also emphasizes the presence of evil forces even if some people choose to remain blissfully ignorant of this fact.

The show has some liberal ideologies. First of all the lead character, Father Marcus, comes from a minority group. He is also going up against the elites in Europe. He represents new ideas in the battle against good and evil the fact that he is willing to go off the radar and carry out exorcisms off the books is an example of his revolutionary nature and his divergence from the traditional way of doing things. He comes off as a priest who is willing to go against the church in the name of doing the right thing and helping people who need his help. However, the other priests in the Vatican come off as people who are too tied down by outdated bureaucracies to actually make any meaningful changes in the world.

The series also delves into the politics of the church with reference to ascension to papal status. The idea of Father Marcus becoming the first Mexican Pope is thrown around a few times. However, it is thrown around as a political move as opposed to one that is in the best interest of the church. The idea is also presented by a demon as a means of enticing him to stop his fight against evil. This serves to reinforce the idea that the position of the Pope has become more political than it is religious. It is presented as a powerful position that is used to control the masses as opposed to generally advancing the ideologies of the church and advancing the fight of good against evil.

THIS ONE COULD  
BE MORE THOROUGHLY  
DEVELOPED; YOU MIGHT  
THINK ABOUT THE CHURCH  
AS METAPHOR FOR  
POWER

## Works Cited

- Bachiochi, Erika. *Women, Sex and the Church: A Case for Catholic Teaching*. McGraw Hill, 2010.
- Caciola, Nancy. *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*. Cornell UP, 2006.
- The Exorcist*. Directed by William Friedkin, Perf. Ellen Burstyn, Max Von Sydow, Lee J. Cobb. Warner Bros., 1973.
- Miller, Monica M. *The Authority of Women in the Catholic Church*. Emmaus Road Publishing, 2015.
- Plante, Thomas G., and Kathleen L. McChesney. *Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: A Decade of Crisis, 2002-2012*. ABC-CLIO, 2011.
- The Exorcist*. Produced by Jeremy Slater, season 2, Fox, 2017.
- Yamane, David A. *The Catholic Church in State Politics: Negotiating Prophetic Demands and Political Realities*. Sheed & Ward, 2005.

YOU'RE DEFINITELY  
ON THE RIGHT  
TRACK HERE, W/  
SOME GOOD IDEAS  
IN ALL THE SECTIONS.  
SOME COULD BE  
DEVELOPED MORE  
THAN...