

**MOVIE REVIEW: *In Good Conscience*, DVD, directed by Barbara Rick
(New York: Out of the Blue Films Inc., 2006), 82 min.**

Barbara Rick's documentary, *In Good Conscience*, fits right in the middle of the theme of this volume of *Reflective Practice* on responsibility and accountability. The film follows the journey of conscience of Sr. Jeannine Gramick, a Roman Catholic woman religious, in her ministry with gay and lesbian people within the Roman Catholic Church. The film begins with letters of censure from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, when he was head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to the General Superior of the School Sisters of Notre Dame essentially forbidding them to continue in this ministry. Father Nugent, with whom Sr. Gramick has written a book about building bridges when difference separates people, complied with the Vatican's edict. Sr. Gramick did not. She continued her work in New Life Ministry on behalf of gays and lesbians.

The documentary introduces Sr. Gramick on her fifty-eighth birthday as she celebrated forty years in religious life. The film documents her transformation from early childhood in a traditional Roman Catholic family as she evolves into a strong spokesperson for respect and full inclusion of gays and lesbians. Sr. Gramick is a gentle, friendly, caring presence who clearly articulates the issues. She expresses the needs and desires of many gay and lesbian people who want to participate fully in the life of the Roman Catholic Church, but who feel excluded by the constrictions placed on congregations, people of faith, clergy, and religious by the ruling principles of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Church, she reminds us, is the people of God, not the hierarchy; and at the core of all our decisions is the primacy of conscience in decision making.

This film quietly portrays how one person courageously put into practice her own sense of responsibility and accountability informed by her faith and religious beliefs. It is a powerful journey of conscience that demonstrates how a person of faith transformed herself and her ministry to champion the rights and lives of people who had been relegated to the margins of the Roman Catholic Church. This would be an excellent film to show to people who would like to explore how one's faith informs taking on responsibility in our society and being accountable to those who are excluded by organizations and institutions.

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