

Francesco guillare di Dio (PG)

Francis, God's Jester (PG)

11 members watched the Rossilini/Fellini collaboration, made in 1950 when Italy was still recovering from the Second World War, on Wednesday 11th March.

Telling 9 episodes from the life of St Francis of Assisi, this gentle (apart from an occasional bit of violence and one slightly shocking scene with a tyrant) film was made on a low budget, with mainly amateur actors (largely actual monks) — and it showed! In fact, the only professional actor was in the role of the Tyrant, and he was the hammiest of them all.

The nine episodes concentrated on positive aspects of Francis's life and were all told in a very simple manner. At times, this left us wandering about how the monks actually survived as the practicalities of their life were very largely glossed over. One particularly touching scene was when Francis met the leper, greeting him with a hug and being very upset about the man's condition.

Overall, a very different film from our more mainstream viewings, but one that was worth seeing: the messages of love, peace, forgiveness and charity being very relevant today.