

Cordano Endowment in Catholic Studies  
Department of Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara

# Colleen McDannell

## Learning from *The Exorcist*

Wednesday, May 21 / 4:00 p.m. / Free  
McCune Conference Room  
6020 Humanities and Social Sciences Building

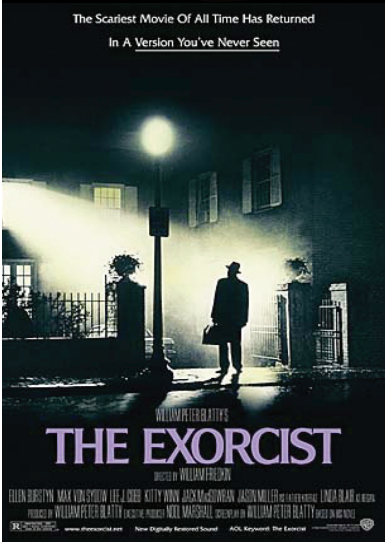
When *The Exorcist* opened in cinemas the day after Christmas in 1973, movie-goers ran from their seats in fear. Then, they could not get enough of the film—standing in line for hours to see a devil-possessed little girl battle a psychiatrist-priest. The special effects and notorious character of *The Exorcist* have not lost their power over the years. However, the realistic terror of the film has distracted viewers from its wider spiritual message set out by its producer/writer William Peter Blatty. *The Exorcist* is not merely a horror film. It is a Catholic horror film. And, more specifically, it is a Jesuit horror film.

Colleen McDannell is professor of History and Sterling M. McMurrin Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Her publications include *Catholics in the Movies*, *Picturing Faith: Photography and the Great Depression*, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America*, *Heaven: A History*, and *The Christian Home in Victorian America: 1840 1900*.

Presented by the Virgil Cordano O.F.M. Endowment in Catholic Studies in the Department of Religious Studies and Interdisciplinary Humanities Center Catholic Studies Research Focus Group at UC Santa Barbara.

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