



## *The Miracle Club*

91 min

September 25, 2023

*The Miracle Club* is an Irish drama that takes place in the late 60s, featuring Kathy Bates and Maggie Smith as two women looking for spiritual healing who head to Lourdes, France, the site visited by more than 6 million Christians each year. Joining them on the pilgrimage, a young mother (Agnes O'Casey) and her 6-year-old mute son (Eric Smith) in search of divine intervention, and much to the group's chagrin, their late friend's grown daughter (Laura Linney), whom they view as the antichrist. With this group, you know there will be laughs along the way, but mostly heartfelt moments and a dose of hope. We are lucky that films like *The Miracle Club* are still being produced; adult dramas aimed at the mature set. Directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan, the story takes place in the small village of Ballygar, Ireland in 1967. The local parish run by Fr Dermot Byrne (Mark O'Halloran) is holding a talent contest as part of their Lourdes Pilgrimage Fundraiser. The first prize is tickets to Lourdes, France where the church group will visit the site where the Virgin Mary appeared to a 14-year-old girl a total of eighteen times in 1858. The spring in the village has been reported to heal people and now millions of pilgrims visit the site in the hope of a miracle. But according to Fr Byrne, "You don't come to Lourdes for a miracle. You come for the strength to go on when there is no miracle." Each of the three ladies entering the talent show as a collective (they form a singing group named The Miracles) has a reason for going to Lourdes. First, there's the outspoken Eileen (Kathy Bates) who fears she has cancer after detecting a lump in her breast. She's told no one including her husband (Stephen Rea) who's worried about doing the cooking and cleaning if they win the contest. Her best friend Lily Fox (Maggie Smith) was born with one leg shorter than the other, but that's not why she wants to go to Lourdes. It has something to do with her late son. Then there's young mother Dolly who wants to take her son Daniel to the Holy Shrine, he's six and still doesn't speak. Once the film shifts to France, we watch as the women face the ghosts of their past. Do miracles take place? While *The Miracle Club* may resemble a light-hearted drama, it gets weighty once the women begin confiding in each other. O'Sullivan balances the drama with lighter moments and quite a few laughs giving the audience moments of respite. It's great to see a cast of this calibre together. Their presence elevates the film.

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