

Building a Bridge

Synopsis

Named after the book by Father James Martin, *Building a Bridge* follows a priest on his journey to make the Catholic Church more accepting to the LGBTQ+ community, despite loud opposition from both within and outside the Church.

Directors' Statement

While there has been dramatic progress on LGBTQ+ issues in this country and around the world over the last several decades, much ignorance and hatred of LGBTQ+ people remains. The main reason for peoples' intolerance – that being gay is a sign – and the consequences are a matter of life and death for many LGBTQ+ people.

As one of the most influential religious voices in the world, the Catholic Church has the power to change the way LGBTQ+ people are treated. Father Martin's message of building a bridge between the Church and the LGBTQ+ community resonates with us both personally, Evan as a Catholic and Shannon as a queer person, and we were inspired by the palpable energy at his talks.

Our film tells the stories of people whose lives intersect in emotional and complicated ways with Father Martin's journey as a voice for acceptance within the Church. The conflict between conservative and liberal Catholics over LGBTQ+ issues and their efforts to shape the institution mirrors greater social and political struggles and we hope our film will lead to a greater understanding, if not common ground, as one more brick in the path toward equality and justice.

- Evan Mascagni and Shannon Post

Story Overview

Building a Bridge follows Father James Martin on his journey to make the Catholic Church more accepting of the LGBTQ+ community, despite loud opposition from within and outside the Church.

Horrified by Catholic leaders' silence in the wake of the Pulse nightclub massacre, Father Martin writes a widely-acclaimed book and tours the country speaking with the news media, local parishes and LGBTQ+ Catholics with his message of "compassion, respect, and sensitivity."

The film follows Father Martin and the lives he has impacted, including a grieving Pulse mother, a family with three queer siblings, and a college student trying to reconcile his gay and Catholic identities.

Meanwhile, Father Martin faces vicious attacks from his most vocal opponent, Michael Voris and his "alt-right media empire," Church Militant. Voris is a repentant Catholic with a "sinful" past who organizes protests and social media campaigns against Father Martin.

Despite the online attacks and his own personal struggles, Father Martin reaches hundreds of thousands of people with his message across the country and world.

Biographies

Evan Mascagni, Co-Director & Producer

Evan Mascagni is a documentary filmmaker from a Catholic community in Kentucky. He directed and produced the documentary feature, *Circle of Poison*, which premiered at DOC NYC and aired on Al Jazeera. The Hollywood Reporter called *Circle of Poison* “an eye-opening and ire-raising doc.” Evan is a producer and mentor for BYkids, a non-profit organization that pairs youth with filmmakers to create shorts that air on PBS, and is currently directing and producing a documentary supported by The Redford Center. He co-founded the NYC-based Player Piano Productions, where he produces non-fiction films and branded content for nonprofits and social-impact companies.

Shannon Post, Co-Director & Producer

Shannon Post is a queer documentary filmmaker from Florida. She attended college in Orlando and Pulse nightclub was a safe place for her and her friends, including Dru (Christine’s son), to have fun and be out and proud. Her first documentary feature, *Circle of Poison* (Director/Producer), premiered at DOC NYC. Shannon is currently producing a documentary feature supported by The Redford Center. Her second documentary, *Building a Bridge*, is part of her decades-long LGBTQ+ activism and commitment to social justice. She co-founded the film production company, Player Piano Productions, which creates social impact documentary films.

Nick Capezzer, Director of Photography & Producer

Nick Capezzer is a documentary filmmaker, photographer, and Korean adoptee. His last film, *Universe*, followed Miles Davis’ protege, famed trumpeter Wallace Roney. It won the 2020 IDA award for best music documentary of the year. Nick worked with the New York Times to create a seven-part VR series, called *Life on Mars*. It chronicled scientists in Hawaii on their mission to simulate conditions on the red planet. He has worked with Google, Refinery 29, and CNN’s *Great Big Story* and his work can be seen in films featured through Netflix, Amazon, and PBS. For his next film, Nick is developing a first-person family memoir about his experience as a Korean adoptee.

Father James Martin

Father James Martin is a Jesuit priest, editor at large of *America* magazine, consultant to the Vatican's Dicastery for Communication and the author of many books, including the New York Times bestsellers *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* and, most recently, *Learning to Pray*. A graduate of the Wharton School of Business, Father Martin worked in corporate America before entering the Jesuits. His book *Building a Bridge* was an invitation to the Catholic Church to reach out to the LGBTQ community with “respect, compassion and sensitivity.”

Credits

Directed by
EVAN MASCAGNI
SHANNON POST

Executive Producer
MARTIN SCORSESE

Executive Producers
JAMES O'DONNELL
BRIAN & LAURA HULL
MARK MCDERMOTT & YUVAL DAVID

Produced by
EVAN MASCAGNI
SHANNON POST
NICK CAPEZZERA

Cinematography by
NICK CAPEZZERA

Edited by
MICHAL LABIK
ELLEN KNECHEL

Original Music by
TEDDY ABRAMS
NATHAN FARRINGTON

Additional Camera by
MICHAEL CORMIER
JOSEPH EAST
BRYAN LEVIN
EVAN MASCAGNI
DOUGLAS C. MURRAY
FRANCESCO PISTILLI
SHANNON POST
JJ ROLFE
DANIEL ZIMMER

Consulting Editor
COLIN NUSBAUM

Post Production Facility
DUNGEON BEACH, BROOKLYN

Re-recording Mixer
TIMOTHY KORN

Sound Design
JENNIFER RUFFALO

Dialogue Editor
JOHN FUHRER

Post Facility Producer
GEORGE DELLINGER

Digital Intermediate Colorist
SHANNA MAURIZI

Online Editor
JEFF SOUSA

Titling & Motion Design
JEFF SOUSA

Artwork Design
JASON SYPTAK

Artwork Photography
CHRIS CRISMAN