

ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE
MARK WAHLBERG

GOD WANTED A FIGHTER...
AND HE FOUND ONE



FATHER STU

EXCLUSIVELY AT CINEMAS MAY 13

ABOUT THE FILM

Based on a true story, FATHER STU is an unflinchingly honest, funny and ultimately uplifting drama about a lost soul who finds his purpose in a most unexpected place.

When an injury ends his amateur boxing career, Stuart Long (Mark Wahlberg) moves to L.A. dreaming of stardom. When he meets Carmen (Teresa Ruiz), a Catholic Sunday school teacher, the long-time agnostic starts going to church to impress her. But surviving a terrible motorcycle accident leads to the surprising realisation that he is meant to be a Catholic priest.

Despite a devastating health crisis and the scepticism of Church officials and his estranged parents (Mel Gibson and Jacki Weaver), Stu pursues his vocation with courage and compassion, inspiring not only those closest to him but countless others along the way.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

The release of FATHER STU is a great chance to start conversations about faith, hope and redemption.

Invite a friend to see the film with you **exclusively at cinemas on May 13 2022**, then use this resource to chat about it afterwards.



STU WHO?

Born: Seattle, 1963

Occupation: ~~Boxer~~ – ~~Grocery Store Clerk~~
~~Actor~~ – ~~Bouncer~~ – ~~Museum Manager~~ **Priest**

Religion: ~~Agnostic~~ **Catholic**

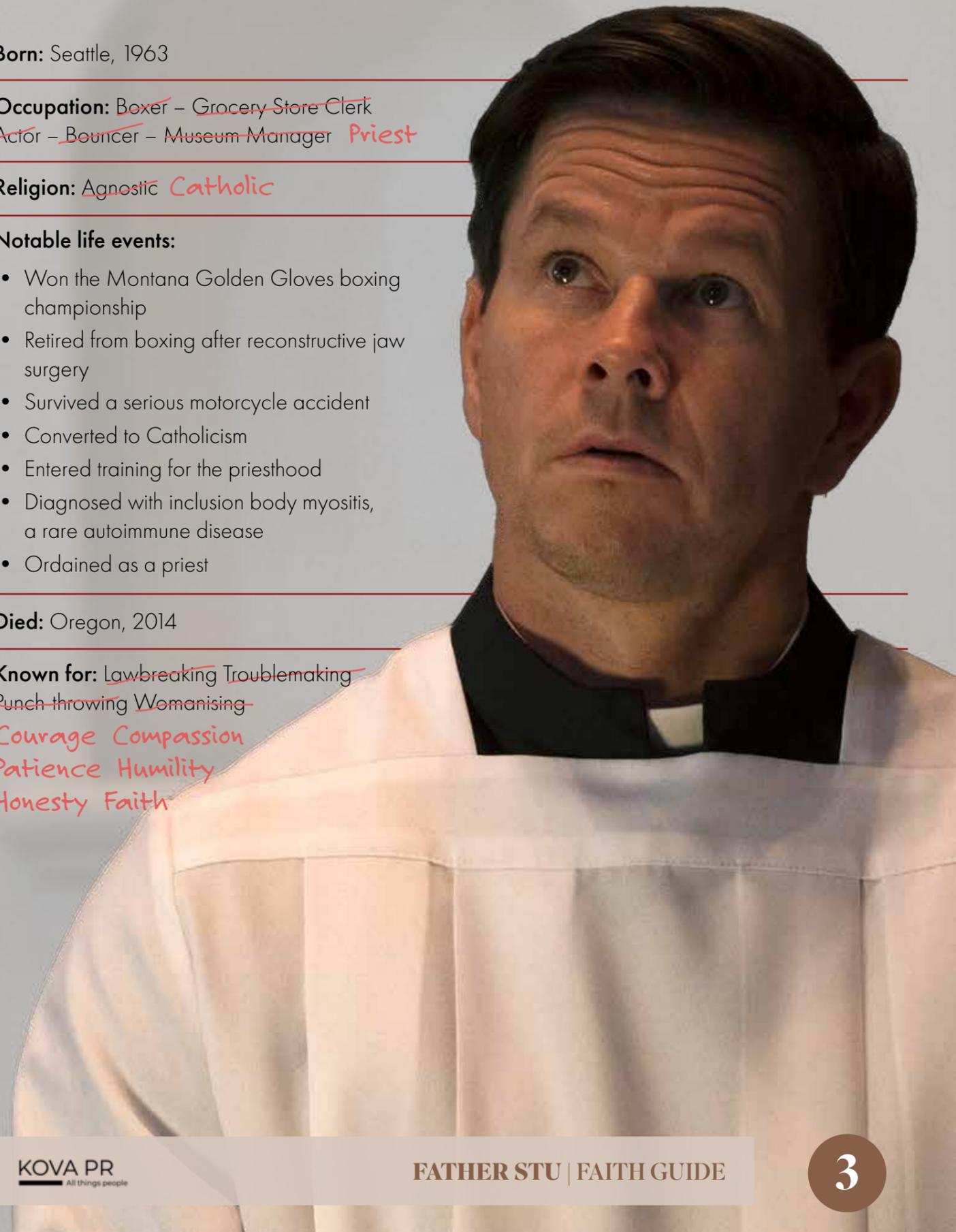
Notable life events:

- Won the Montana Golden Gloves boxing championship
- Retired from boxing after reconstructive jaw surgery
- Survived a serious motorcycle accident
- Converted to Catholicism
- Entered training for the priesthood
- Diagnosed with inclusion body myositis, a rare autoimmune disease
- Ordained as a priest

Died: Oregon, 2014

Known for: ~~Lawbreaking~~ ~~Troublemaking~~
~~Punch-throwing~~ ~~Womanising~~

Courage **Compassion**
Patience **Humility**
Honesty **Faith**



A PRIEST WITH PUNCH

It was actor Mark Wahlberg's own parish priest who first told him about Father Stuart Long. 'I've always looked for roles that have a personal connection for me,' Wahlberg says. Stu's story struck a chord with his own experience of 'running the streets as a teenager and young adult' through to being transformed by his Catholic faith. From that point on he made it his mission to produce the film.

He shared his passion project with screenwriter Rosalind Ross. 'My first instinct was to say no, that it wasn't something I could write with any integrity since I wasn't raised Catholic,' she says. 'But with deliberation I realised that Stu's story is not strictly Catholic, it's universal.'

She pieced together the details of Stu's life through interviews with his father, Bill, and his best friend from seminary, as well as a pamphlet from Stu's memorial service which was filled with anecdotes. 'They were quite funny and charming, and really gave me a sense of his humour and his irreverence,' says Ross.

Mark Wahlberg was so impressed with her script that he invited her to direct as well. Their vision was to make a movie 'that felt real — coarse language, shameful behaviour, messy relationships and all.'

Wahlberg wants the film to be an uplifting experience for audiences at a time when many people are struggling to find hope: 'FATHER STU teaches us that your circumstances are all about your perception. When all the cards were stacked against him, he chose to see that stacked deck as a blessing. The grace with which he suffered gave comfort and inspiration to others.'



GET TALKING

'When you call it a faith-based film I think people expect a certain thing, and it is not that.' – Mel Gibson

Was FATHER STU the film you expected? Would you call it a faith-based film, and why or why not?

'Last thing I need is another father to fail for.' – Father Stu

What ideas does Stu have about God before he becomes a Catholic? Where do these ideas come from, and could you relate to them?

'Some of the most remarkable figures in the history of the Church are reformed men.' – Mark Wahlberg

Do you think it's possible for people to really change? How do you react to the idea of forgiveness and redemption?

'Our construct of maleness shames the idea of surrender. And religion requires surrender.' – Rosalind Ross (screenwriter and director)

What do you think of this quote? What does Stu's journey of surrender look like? What does 'being a man' mean to you?

'You shouldn't pray for an easy life, but the strength to endure a difficult one.' – Father Stu

What gives Stu the strength to face the difficulties in his life? How might you have reacted in his place?



ONE FOR THE ROAD

'I want to share Stu's courage and conviction, to encourage people never to give up trying to be the best versions of themselves.'

Mark Wahlberg

When you have a quiet moment later, find three photos on your phone that you feel show 'the best version' of you. Focus less on how you look and more on who you're with, what you're doing and how you felt in that moment.

- What gifts, qualities and beliefs represent the best version of you?
- How could you grow and develop these in your life?

Make a quick list and if you're feeling inspired, share with friends on social media.

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**GO AND SEE THE FILM
WITH A FRIEND**

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All things people

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