

Called to serve

By MICHELLE BEARDEN
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In directing his first documentary, David Ranghelli chose to pursue a deeply personal question:

When people feel a calling to serve God, how do they decide what to do? How does their decision affect their lives and, more important, their families?

"I wanted to personalize religion, to get into the heart and soul of this difficult choice," says the New Yorker. "So much goes into it that has never been explored in film."

The subjects of Ranghelli's provocative film, "The Calling," have close ties to Tampa. For five years, he followed three members of the Family of Jesus the Healer, a small religious community founded in 1998 by the Rev. Philip Scott of the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg. The group served the poor and homeless in Ybor City before relocating to Chaclacayo, Peru, in January 2003.

"The Calling" brings the story home at 5 p.m. Friday when it plays at CineBistro in Hyde Park as part of the Gasparilla Film Festival.

Ranghelli, 41, and co-producer Trey Burvant selected the Family of Jesus the Healer community because Burvant's sister was a member. They started filming in Tampa in December 2002, expecting that the whole story would take place here.

But the next year, Scott announced that God had put it in his heart to move the religious community to his native Peru, to serve in one of the poorest regions.

"I don't speak Spanish and I had never even been to South America," Ranghelli says. "I had to make a few decisions myself on whether we could continue. But by then, the story was taking shape and I couldn't walk away."

"The Calling" focuses on Scott's personal and logistical challenges as he moves his young mission; [Jesuit High School graduate Orlando Castillo](#), a young man from a prosperous South Tampa family who wishes to "live simply" and struggles with following a spiritual calling; and Mother Mary Elizabeth, a divorced mother of two adult children who has to choose between her religious community and her biological family.

The film alternates between Tampa and the dusty village on the outskirts of Lima as the subjects deal with the intense emotions of pursuing their faith and long separations from family. **Castillo's** parents and Mother Mary Elizabeth's daughters share their feelings as well, providing a glimpse of the ripple effect an individual's decision has.

"I think that's one of the first questions people have when they make that decision," Ranghelli says. "It's not 'What will I have to deny myself in order to serve God?' It's 'How can I tell my family?' You can take or leave things in the cultural context, but you can't take or leave your blood. These are raw, difficult questions."

Contacted by e-mail in Peru, Scott, known affectionately as "Padre," says he never expected his religious community to be the subject of a documentary.

"I never thought we were anything out of the ordinary," he wrote. "We are just Catholic Christians that want to be deeply converted. God has chosen to use us all. So this is really all about Him. We are blessed to be invited to answer His invitation."

Friday's showing will be the film's third festival appearance. In addition, it has aired on PBS nationwide and at college campuses.

For information on the film, go to www.thecallingdocumentary.com.