

Keeping the Faith (2000)

Father Brian Kilkenney Finn ([Edward Norton](#)) has been dedicated to his calling since he was a child, and now shares the duties of a [New York](#) congregation with an older priest, Fr. Havel ([Miloš Forman](#)). Rabbi Jacob Schram ([Ben Stiller](#)), best friends with Brian since childhood, is the youngest rabbi at his [Reform](#) synagogue; his lack of effort to find a wife often results in his mother ([Anne Bancroft](#)) and other women of his congregation setting him up on blind dates, much to his dismay.

In its earlier days, the friendship included a third party. Via flashbacks and reminiscent musings, Anna Reilly ([Jenna Elfman](#)) is introduced: she met Jake and Brian in middle school, after beating up a bully who was picking on them. The three enjoyed attending [ballgames](#), playing sports, and riding the subway around the city together, as well as getting into typical mischief. Unfortunately, Anna's father gets a new job that results in the Reillys moving cross-country to California.

Years later, Anna calls her old friends out of the blue and the friendship is rekindled when her company temporarily reassigns her to a New York position. Feelings quickly begin to run deeper than before, as Anna, despite her workaholic tendencies, is as vibrant as Brian and Jake remembered her; however, it is, ironically, the men's careers that prove to be the most problematic.

She and Jake start sleeping together, but he is reluctant to be involved in a serious relationship with her because she is not Jewish, a fact which could compromise his relationship with his congregation and also with his mother (who disowned her other son for marrying outside the faith). Between the religious conflict and their desire to spare the feelings of their mutual friend, the relationship is kept mostly secret, resulting in both humorous and harmful complications.

Meanwhile, Brian is involved in his own test of faith as he struggles with his feelings for Anna despite his vows. Apart from praying about the situation, and discussing it with Fr. Havel, he keeps these thoughts mostly to himself. Brian begins misinterpreting Anna's words and actions (some of which are subtle signals to Jake as their affair is kept under wraps) and even has an erotic dream about her; he begins to seriously consider quitting the priesthood to pursue a romantic relationship with her.

Anna tells Jake that she wants things to be more serious between them, and he does not respond well. After an argument over the religious issues complicating their romance, Jake and Anna part ways in frustration. Anna turns to Brian for comfort, and he rushes over to her apartment. Still unaware of what's been going on, he takes her tearful ramblings to be a confession of feelings for him, then kisses her and admits his love. When she interrupts him, he first assumes it to be guilt based on his vows, but she tells him she is in love with Jake. Feeling embarrassed and rejected, Brian raids Anna's liquor cabinet, angrily cutting off her attempts to reassure him and apologize. The next day, still drunk, Brian stumbles into the temple and interrupts a post-[bar mitzvah](#) gathering, resulting in a confrontation with Jake that ends with the priest punching the rabbi. He leaves and stumbles around the city, getting drunk and relating his troubles to a sympathetic bartender ([Brian George](#)).

As the community center's grand opening approaches, along with the last days of Anna's east coast assignment, the relationships begin to mend. A discussion between the two men prompts Jake to go to Anna's office building (where he is on perpetually uneasy terms with the security guard), with Brian shouting encouragement at him as he runs down the street. Jake manages to get Anna's attention from a window in the building across the street, and calls to explain himself and offer to set things right. They surprise Brian in the middle of his karaoke number at the interfaith center, which looks to be off to a successful start. Anna greets Rabbi Lewis ([Eli Wallach](#)) as he passes by and asks about their meetings together, at which point it becomes

clear that she had been taking classes to [convert](#). The film ends happily with the three childhood friends posing for a snapshot together.

Cast

[Ben Stiller](#) ... [Rabbi Jake Schram](#)
[Edward Norton](#) ... [Father Brian Finn](#)
[Jenna Elfman](#) ... [Anna Riley](#)
[Anne Bancroft](#) ... [Ruth Schram](#)
[Eli Wallach](#) ... [Rabbi Ben Lewis](#)
[Ron Rifkin](#) ... [Larry Friedman](#)
[Milos Forman](#) ... [Father Havel](#)
[Holland Taylor](#) ... [Bonnie Rose](#)
[Lisa Edelstein](#) ... [Ali Decker](#)
[Rena Sofer](#) ... [Rachel Rose](#)
[Ken Leung](#) ... [Don](#)
[Brian George](#) ... [Paulie Chopra](#)
[Catherine Lloyd Burns](#) ... [Debbie](#)
[Susie Essman](#) ... [Ellen Friedman](#)
[Stuart Blumberg](#) ... [Len](#)

Selected memorable quotes (with notes on difficult vocabulary)

[Jacob](#): God was showing off when he made you.

to show off = darsi delle arie

[Indian Bartender](#): May those who love us, love us. And those who don't love us - may God turn their hearts. And if He cannot turn their hearts, may he turn their ankles, so that we may know them by their limping.

to turn one's heart/ankle = gioco di parole con *heart* (cuore) e *ankle* (caviglia): (lett.) far girare il cuore → far cambiare opinione/atteggiamento e far storcere la caviglia; **to limp** = zoppicare

[Indian Bartender](#): Let me guess. Your old lady got fed up because you're out here chasing the skirt so she took these little ones and left you.

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): It's a little more complicated than that.

[Indian Bartender](#): Sure it is. Everyone thinks his story is the one with a twist. Well let me tell you, I've heard just about everything there is to...

[Brian unzips his jacket, revealing his priest's collar]

[Indian Bartender](#): Holy shit.

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): Exactly.

to **chase skirt** = andare dietro alle gonnelle; **story with a twist** = storia con un imprevisto; **priest's collar** = colletto da prete; **holy shit** = gioco di parole tra l'espressione idiomatica che significa maledizione!/porca miseria e il suo significato letterale che include la parola holy (santo).

[Brian, a celibate priest, confesses his love for Anna, to Jake's astonishment]

[Jacob](#): I mean, she's like your sister!

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): Thank you for adding new depth to my confusion.

add depth to confusion = confondere ancora di più le idee

[Anna Riley](#): I work harder than God. If He had hired me, He would have made the world by Thursday.

to hire = assumere; **to make the world by Thursday** = finire la creazione già di giovedì

[Anna Riley](#): Don't you have work?

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): We're doing a hostile takeover of Congregation Bertov Sholem.

hostile takeover of Congregation Bertov Sholem = scalata ostile alla congregazione Bertov Sholem

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): I got you something. I almost didn't because I was so mad but this is too good.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Holy shit! It's the Rabbi Schlomo Schnurson rookie card! It's like the last in the series!

rookie card = tesserino da poliziotto

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): God is a lot like Blanche Du Bois.

Blanche Du Bois = personaggio di *Un tram chiamato desiderio* di Tennessee Williams

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): It's customary to sneak out after communion.

to sneak out = svignarsela

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): The truth is, I don't really learn that much about your faith by asking questions like that... because those aren't really questions about faith, those are questions about religion. And it's very important to understand the difference between religion and faith. Because faith is not about having the right answers. Faith is a feeling. Faith is a hunch, really. It's a hunch that there is something bigger connecting it all... connecting us all together. And that feeling, that hunch, is God. And coming here tonight, on your Sunday evening... to connect with that feeling, that is an act of faith. And so all I have to do is look around the room at this packed church... to know that we're doing pretty well as a community. Even if all of you failed my pop quiz miserably.

hunch = idea, impression

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): Who is the coolest woman you and I have ever known, ever.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): That's easy. Anna Reilly, eighth grade. No question.

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): You got it.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): What? She called you? Anna Reilly called you?

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): Yeah. Totally out of the blue.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Why?

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): 'Cause she's coming to New York, uh, for work... and she wanted to get together with us. She just looked me up.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Really? Anna Reilly. What is she doing now?

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): She - She's, like, analyzing synergies, or synergising analogies, or, or some such thing. I couldn't follow it. She's, like, this very high-powered business - You know.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Woman?

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): Woman, yes. Thank you.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Wow. And you told her about us?

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): Yeah. She flipped, in a - in a good way. You know, I mean, she laughed for about ten minutes, but she was excited.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Man, that is so cool.

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): I know.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): I wonder why she called you.

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): What do you mean?

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): No, I mean, she called you.

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): What, are you in the eighth grade still?

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): What? That's a legitimate question. I just - I mean, we're both listed.

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): Finn before Schram, okay? You're ridiculous.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): That's a good point. Alphabetical.

out of the blue = dal nulla, inaspettatamente; **to look sb up** = cercare qualcuno nell'elenco telefonico; **to flip** = (fig.) fare un salto; **we're both listed** = siamo tutti e due sull'elenco

[Anna Riley](#): I thought I'd got the Tony Robbins hotline by mistake.

[Tony Robbins](#) = autore di programmi di auto-aiuto

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Tuesday's not good for me, I gotta mourn with the Schwarzes.
to mourn = essere in lutto

[Rachel Rose](#): You write all your own sermons, right?

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Actually I download them off the net, there's this great site www.hotgod.com.

[Rachel Rose](#): Really?

[*Anna kicks him under the table*]

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Ooh hoo, no.

hotgod = gioco di parole che ricorda la linea diretta (hotline) e le connotazioni sessuali di 'hot'

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Whoa! Listen to what you're saying. You're telling me that I was supposed to be sensitive to the possibility that a Catholic priest might have a crush on my secret girlfriend?

crush = cotta

[Alan Klien](#): I suck! They're gonna take away my Yamulkha!

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): No you don't. You don't suck.

[Alan Klien](#): I suck.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Yes, all right, you do. You suck. But that's ok, you're supposed to suck. This isn't a talent contest, it's a rite of passage.

to suck = essere una rottura

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): The seven deadly sins. Who can name the seven deadly sins? People! It was a very popular film with Brad Pitt, you have the ultimate cliff note.
deadly = (qui) capitale; **cliff note** = equivalente americano dei bignami

[Anna Riley](#): I'm gonna miss a lot of things around here. Like Len's endless Howard Stern recountings and of course my Romeo Casanova boy across the way.

[Len](#): [*someone in Casanova's office starts waving a sign*] Hey, what is that?

[Anna Riley](#): I don't know.

[*looks through binoculars*]

[Debbie](#): Who is that?

[Anna Riley](#): It's Jake.

[Debbie](#): What's he doing?

[Anna Riley](#): [*He's miming "pick up the phone", she picks up the phone*] Anna Riley.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Hi, Anna? Can, can you see me? Cause I can't see you, I'm just looking at a reflection of myself.

[Anna Riley](#): Jake, I can see you, what are you doing?

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): I've been trying to get up there for the last hour but it's like the frigging Pentagon with that T-Bone guy. So I decided to try Mr Casanova here - by the way his name is Howard. Anyway I've been doing some thinking and there are some things I'd like to talk to you about.

Howard Stern = conduttore radiofonico americano

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): How upset are they?

[Rabbi Lewis](#): Let's just say they're less than thrilled.

[Larry Friedman](#): [*after cut to new scene*] To be honest, we're less than thrilled.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Ok, with what specifically?

[Larry Friedman](#): With what specifically. Well, with guided meditation specifically, with stand up comedy sermons specifically, with your loose improvisational style specifically.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Ok, with people actually enjoying services? People showing up at all?

[Larry Friedman](#): To be serenaded by the Harlem freaking gospel choir?

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): At least they were praying.

[Rabbi Lewis](#): It was a hell of an Ein Keloheinu, Lar.

[Larry Friedman](#): It's not kosher, Rabbi Lewis.

[Rabbi Jacob "Jake" Schram](#): Larry, what does that mean?

[Larry Friedman](#): You have to ask me what kosher means? Study your gemara.

Gemara = parte del Talmud

[Father Brian Kilkenney Finn](#): I feel like I'm on some bad new Aaron Spelling show - "Melrose Priest."

Melrose Priest = gioco di parole che ironizza sul titolo di una delle tante serie televisive prodotte da Aaron Spelling, *Melrose Place*.

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keeping_the_Faith
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0171433/>