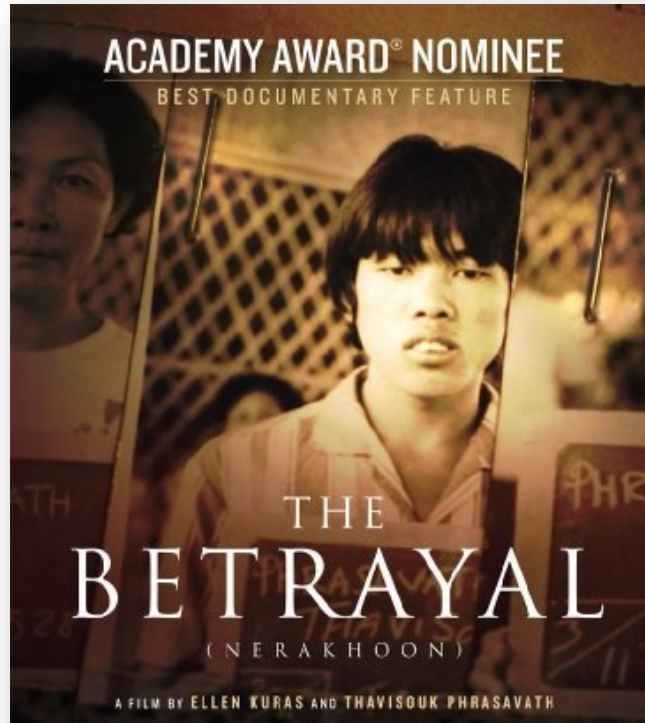


Thavisouk Phrasavatha

(1964 ~ present)



Thavisouk Phrasavath is a New York-based Lao American film director/editor, writer, and visual artist. Thavisouk was born in Thakhek, Laos, on March 14, 1964. His father was a commander in the Laotian military, working with the U.S. military when it was bombing Laos. After the U.S. pulled out, the Communists arrested his father, and he and his mother fled to Thailand, where his Laotian nationality caused him to suffer extreme prejudice. At age 19, his mother brought him to the United States in the mistaken hope that our government would take care of them. He eventually studied at the Pratt Institute School of Art. In 1986, he started tutoring renowned cinematographer Ellen Kuras in the Lao language, and 20 years later they created a documentary film, *The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)*, for which he became the writer, editor, and co-director. The film was nominated for Best Documentary in eight festivals, including the Academy Awards. In that same year he became the first Lao American writer inducted by the Writers Guild of America, West. Thavisouk is currently a creative consultant for film, television, and other media, directing documentaries, dramatic shorts, and music videos. He has published poetry and won awards for paintings and illustrations. His memoir, *Stepped out of the Womb*, appeared in 2011 to positive reviews. In 2022, he was featured in a Library of Congress seminar with Bryan Thao Worra and last year's SMM honoree Kao Kalia Yang. The Bureau of Police of New York has used Thavisouk as a liaison and consultant for the Lao community; his primary civic projects are assisting gang prevention for youth and family crisis intervention. He has also consulted for the New York City Board of Education.

"Writing is my personal way of self-expression, self-healing and therapy."

St. Mary Magdalen is honoring the different communities of our parish in 2023.