

# Commentaries on The Passion

Catholic Leaders	<p><b>The Vatican</b> <b>Pontifical Council for Social Communications</b> <b>Archbishop John Foley</b> <b>President</b></p> <p>A senior Vatican official who watched clips from Mel Gibson's controversial film "The Passion" offered enthusiastic praise Saturday for what he saw, despite concerns from Jewish groups that the movie will promote anti-Semitism.</p> <p>U.S. Archbishop John P. Foley of the church's social-communications office said he hoped to show the film in the Vatican and said he doubted whether criticisms of the film were valid. "From what I could see of the trailers, it seemed to be an excellent film," Foley said. "I don't think they would be well-founded criticisms because all the material in the film comes directly from the Gospel accounts. There's nothing in the film that doesn't come from the Gospel accounts. "So, if they're critical of the film, they would be critical of the Gospel." (<i>Associated Press</i>, Sept 13, 2003)</p>
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Catholic Leaders	<p><b>The Vatican</b> <b>Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos</b> <b>Worldwide Prefect of the Clergy</b></p> <p>As I watched this yet unfinished version of the film, I experienced moments of profound spiritual intimacy with Jesus Christ. It is a film that leads the viewer into prayer and reflection, into heartfelt contemplation. In fact, as I told Mr. Gibson after the screening, I would gladly trade some of the homilies that I have given about the passion of Christ for even a few of the scenes of his film.</p> <p>With this film, Mr Gibson has achieved something truly extraordinary. He has used the marvelous technology available through our modern means of communication to make the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ come alive for the people of our times. What is more, the film as a work of art – the performances, the dazzling cinematography, the sounds, lighting, and pacing– is just as powerful as the message it contains.</p> <p>In my opinion, one of the great achievements of this film is to have shown so effectively both the horror of sin and selfishness, and the redeeming power of love. Seeing this film provokes love and compassion. It makes the viewer want to love more, to forgive, to be good and strong no matter what, just as Christ did even in the face of such terrible suffering. The viewer is drawn into a powerful experience of God’s strong yet gentle love, of his overflowing mercy. It is my belief that if we could understand what Jesus Christ did for us and we could follow his example of love and forgiveness, there would not be hatred or violence in the world. This film will help to make that possible.</p> <p>This film is a triumph of art and faith. It will be a tool for explaining the person and message of Christ. I am confident that it will change for the better everyone who sees it, both Christians and non-Christians alike. It will bring people closer to God, and closer to one another.</p> <p>Mr. Gibson has had to make many artistic choices in the way he portrays the characters and the events involved in the Passion, and he has complemented the Gospel narrative with the insights and reflections made by saints and mystics through the centuries. Mel Gibson not only closely follows the <u>narrative</u> of the Gospels, giving the viewer a new appreciation for those Biblical passages, but his artistic choices also make the film faithful to the <u>meaning</u> of the Gospels, as understood by the Church.</p> <p>Anti-Semitism, like all forms of racism, distorts the truth in order to put a whole race of people in a bad light. This film does nothing of the sort. It draws out from the historical objectivity of the Gospel narratives sentiments of forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation. It captures the subtleties and the horror of sin, as well as the gentle power of love and forgiveness, without making or insinuating blanket condemnations against one group. This film expressed the exact opposite, that learning from the example of Christ, there should never be any more violence against any other human being. (<i>La Stampa</i>, Sept 18, 2003)</p>
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<p>Catholic Leaders</p>	<p><b>Cardinal Francis George</b> <b>Archbishop of Chicago</b></p> <p>From <i>Chicago Sun Times</i></p> <p>Is "The Passion" – Mel Gibson's upcoming film about the hours leading up to Jesus' death – anti-Semitic? That depends how you interpret the Bible, says Cardinal Francis George, who saw a rough-cut version of the film two weeks ago.</p> <p>It's a very graphic presentation of the passion of Christ in the Gospels," George said Saturday. "For people who think that the passion narratives are themselves anti-Semitic, well then, it's a presentation of those narratives.</p> <p>For those of us who don't believe they're anti-Semitic, that Christ died for our sins, all of us, and so therefore we all caused his death, it's a way to portray, very graphically, the brutality of that execution in a Roman style."</p> <p>"I've read the Passion narratives of the Lord and contemplated them and prayed over them many, many times, and I've never thought of the crucifixion with the images that I received while watching this," George said. "I'll never read the words the same way again." <i>(Chicago Sun Times, Aug 3, 2003)</i></p>
<p>Catholic Leaders</p>	<p><b>Archbishop Charles Chaput</b> <b>Archbishop of Denver</b></p> <p>From <i>Rocky Mountain News</i></p> <p><b>Beal:</b> And what do you think [of The Passion]?</p> <p><b>Chaput:</b> I thought it was an extraordinary work of art and extraordinarily faithful to the gospels. If I was critical of the film's detractors it's because I think it's unwise for any group to try to intimidate either the church or people of Mel Gibson's faith from speaking very clearly what they believe to be true. You know anti-Semitism is a terrible sin; it's a sin the church has repented from and will need to continue to repent from if and when there are examples of it in church life. But to clearly proclaim our belief that Jesus is the messiah and that he suffered, died and rose from the dead is for us something we have a duty to proclaim. We can't be intimidated from proclaiming it. It seems to me the rush to judge the film before it was even completed was an act of intimidation to prevent Christians from doing what they need to do. I can't speak for Mel Gibson, of course, but I think making the movie was for him an act of faith. I think it's a hugely significant personal venture for him. I think it's important for him to listen to the criticisms that come his way, but I also think he should be free to pursue his best judgments on the matter.</p> <p><b>Beal:</b> The Anti-Defamation League and Rabbi Marvin Hier, the dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, have also objected to the film on the grounds that it is anti-Semitic and that, once released to the public, it could inflame anti-Semitic sentiment.</p> <p><b>Chaput:</b> I don't agree. I think some members of the Jewish community have felt that any passion play, any depiction of the passion whatsoever, automatically begins in anti-Semitism. If such a case occurred the church would act to show how it is wrong and a sin. But with Gibson's film, certainly the version I saw, this isn't the case. <i>(Rocky Mountain News, Aug 21, 2003)</i></p>

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<p>Catholic Leaders</p>	<p><b>Knights of Columbus</b>  <b>Carl Anderson</b>  <b>Supreme Knight</b></p> <p>Carl A. Anderson, head of the 1.6 million member Knights of Columbus, attended a July screening of <i>The Passion</i>. In introducing Gibson to leaders of the Knights, Anderson said “The Passion” was a powerful depiction of Christ’s crucifixion. “I urge critics who have not seen the final film to keep an open mind and not prejudice it,” Anderson said. If there is going to be a public debate about “The Passion” and religious rights, Anderson said, the Knights “would not duck from it.” Giving Gibson the opportunity to meet with the Knights, he said, “was making sure ‘The Passion’ gets a fair hearing. We hope such a hearing will promote better religious tolerance and dialogue among all religious faiths.” (<i>Knights of Columbus</i>, Aug 12, 2003)</p>
<p>Catholic Leaders</p>	<p><b>Santa Clara University Jesuit Community</b>  <b>Rev. Matthew Carnes</b></p> <p>I found “The Passion” to be a deeply moving and reverent presentation of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross. I believe that this film will have a special appeal to young adults. I think “The Passion” will give them a rich sense of the person of Jesus and the meaning of his suffering, and will invite them deeper into faith and exploring the Bible. I will certainly promote the film among the students with whom I work, and can imagine hosting student discussions of it after viewing it. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Catholic Leaders</p>	<p><b>Thomas Aquinas College</b>  <b>Thomas Dillon</b>  <b>President</b></p> <p>I have spent my life teaching the Great Books and have a strong interest in film. I think what you have done in “The Passion” is extraordinary and will probably be recognized as the best religious film ever made. I will continue to pray for you and for the success of the film, and will ask our students to do so as well. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Catholic Leaders</p>	<p><b>Evangelization 2000</b>  <b>Fr. Tom Forrest</b></p> <p>In time, I expect the film to be declared a masterpiece, and more importantly believe that it could have stunning and very positive repercussions throughout the world. For sure, it will make people talk and think, and that alone is a wonderful thing. Count on it that he and you have our prayers and the prayers of everyone we can invite to join with us in storming heaven for the spiritual and artistic success of this fine work of art. (From a letter to Icon)</p>

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Catholic Leaders	<p><b>Crisis Magazine</b> <b>Deal Hudson</b></p> <p>From an aesthetic standpoint, the film is beautiful. Its visual narrative carries traces of the long tradition of Christian art, from the very earliest Christian styles and medieval iconography up to pre-Raphaelite images. My wife Theresa and I came away from the film with a sense that our faith had been revitalized. Make no mistake: this movie will convert and uplift hearts. Once you've seen it, you'll never again take for granted the words: "He suffered, died, and was buried." And what about all the alleged anti-Semitism? I didn't see any kind of anti-Jewish bias in the film. If anything, it was the unspeakable brutality of the Roman soldiers that enraged me. Of course, that doesn't make me hate modern-day Italians. Nor do I hate the French when I see a film about the brutality of the French Revolution. Simply put, there's no reason to be concerned that this movie will spark any sort of anti-Jewish campaign. (<i>Crisis</i>, Aug, 2003)</p>
Catholic Leaders	<p><b>Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua</b></p> <p>I think that Mel Gibson has tremendous experience in the film world. I think used a lot of his, almost genius, in the film, having intuition almost on film making – how he was able to use that and take the scriptures, surely he and the others he used must have done a lot of research. I believe that he depicted it as something like Michelangelo would have done and say, "what's the essence here, what am I trying to teach?" Art is generally getting beyond the physical, you have to teach something in any kind of artistic presentation, whether it be in music, or painting or a sculpture, you must be able to look at it and see beyond just what was the artist actually depicting, what was he trying to teach. And the highest art is when you can see God in any art. Whether it is depicting a landscape, you've got to see it's God, a manifestation of God's beauty. That's the highest form of art, especially when it's not a mystery, like modern art, because I don't understand it. But great art to me is that I can see a manifestation of the attributes of God, the beauty of God, the mercy of God, the love of God, all of them. And I think that that came through in this film, of manifesting God's infinite love for us and what He did for us.</p>

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Christian Leaders	<p><b>National Association of Evangelicals</b> <b>Ted Haggard</b> <b>President</b></p> <p>The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) affirms the importance of the authentic retelling of the New Testament accounts in Mel Gibson's latest film, <i>The Passion</i>. The NAE has established this position of support for the film in response to numerous attacks leveled at Gibson and the film. In interviews on CNN and various radio networks, Ted Haggard, President of the NAE has described <i>The Passion</i> as, "A beautiful, wonderful account of the last twelve hours of the life of Jesus Christ. It is consistent with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John."</p> <p>At a special showing in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Haggard, along with 30 other prominent evangelical leaders, reviewed the film and encouraged Gibson to release it with minor stylistic adjustments. All acknowledged the biblical accuracy of Gibson's creative dramatization of the historical account.</p> <p>CNN questioned Haggard on specific claims from the story, including Jewish leaders' offering blood money for Jesus' betrayal and Jewish people's inciting hatred toward Jesus, leading to his crucifixion. Haggard responded, "The movie portrays historical accounts realistically, but the Body of Christ worldwide does not blame Jewish people for the crucifixion. Evangelicals believe that our sins are responsible for creating the situation that required the crucifixion of Christ. Christ did not die because of the political and religious powers of the day, but for a far greater purpose. We are all responsible. This is why evangelicals view <i>The Passion</i> as a love story. It demonstrates the profound love Christ has for all people."</p> <p>Haggard emphasized that evangelical Christians--who have a high view of the historical accounts in the Bible as shown in the film--are some of the most ardent supporters of Israel and defenders of Jewish people worldwide. He maintained that evangelical Christendom values the realistic portrayal of Jesus' last day and believes that the final effect of <i>The Passion</i> will be positive for Judaism in America and around the world. (NAE Release, July 22, 2003)</p>
Christian Leaders	<p><b>Focus on the Family</b> <b>James Dobson</b> <b>Chairman</b></p> <p>It is deeply moving, powerful, and disturbing. A film that must be seen - although the graphic scenes of the scourging of Jesus are emotionally wrenching. (From an email to Icon)</p>

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<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Focus on the Family</b>  <b>Donald Hodel</b>  <b>President and CEO</b></p> <p>What you showed to us was not simply another movie, to be compared with remembrances of previous cinematic portrayals of Christ, but rather something that breaks old boundaries and enters dramatic new territory. For what I believe to be the right reasons <i>The Passion</i> was profoundly compelling and affecting. The quality and realism of the acting, the setting, adherence to the historical record, its intensity and pacing all amount to an outstanding and moving film. It is unusually provocative concerning vital spiritual issues. For both Christian believers and for non-believers <i>The Passion</i> will penetrate the mind, heart and soul in ways that can only be memorable and positive.</p> <p>Any attempt to create a film rendering of a crucial portion of the life of Jesus Christ is a bold endeavor, and one bound to generate some amount of controversy. Let me further encourage you to withstand this premature and unjust criticism of your film and complete this important work of art. While some of its depictions of violence are adult-level material, this stunning film must be seen by as many people as possible.</p> <p>For our part, Focus on the Family applauds <i>The Passion</i> and it is a film we will heartily recommend to our constituents. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>The King's Seminary</b>  <b>Jack W. Hayford</b>  <b>Chancellor</b></p> <p>"The Passion" is a forthright, compassionate, evenhanded presentation of the historic facts of the trial, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. I found it deeply moving, factually accurate and unprejudiced in its presentation.</p> <p>As a Bible scholar, I was impacted by the integrity of the film to the testimony of scriptures. As a friend and supporter of world Jewry and modern Israel, I reject all suggestions of anti-Semitic bias for flavor in the film. As a Christian, I am grateful for the film's potential to deepen devotion to the Savior and to more broadly offer the evidence of His love and sacrificial death to people everywhere.</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Focus On The Family</b>  <b>Del Tackett</b>  <b>Executive Vice President</b></p> <p>It has been nearly three weeks since I saw the rough cut of <i>The Passion</i>. It is still impacting my life. I can't stop thinking about it nor can I stop talking about it. I have never seen a film that has so affected my life. It is powerful, moving, and disturbing. The film is true to the Bible and other historical evidence, yet it is alive with emotion and the harshness of reality. I do not want to see it again, yet I will be compelled from within to do so – not only again, but again and again. No one will be able to leave the theatre and not be moved at the core of their being. (From a letter to Icon)</p>

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<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Rick Warren</b>  <b>Pastor – Saddleback Church</b>  <b>Author – “Purpose Driven Life”</b></p> <p>Brilliant, biblical – a masterpiece. (Comments following a screening)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Southern Baptist Convention</b>  <b>Jack Graham</b>  <b>President</b></p> <p>The movie is biblical, powerful and potentially life-changing. The thing that I'm most excited about is the opportunity it's going to give those of us who preach the cross to explain the meaning of the cross and message of the cross to untold millions of people who are going to be asking questions about the cross and why Jesus died. There's no question it is the most hard-hitting display and demonstration of the crucifixion. (<i>Baptist Press</i>, Aug 22, 2003)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>The Liberty Channel</b>  <b>Dr. Jerry Falwell</b></p> <p>Mr. Gibson has attempted to painstakingly recreate the crucifixion of Christ, not to assail Jews, but to arouse in people a desire to understand the price paid for their salvation.</p> <p>I am praying that Mel Gibson's movie will have a powerful impact on our culture and that it will appeal to millions of movie lovers who are starving for a glimmer of honesty regarding the miraculous and life-changing story of the One who died for everyone, no matter their religious heritage, station in life, sexual preference or skin color. (From <i>Falwell Confidential</i>, Sept 24, 2003)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Crystal Cathedral / Hour of Power</b>  <b>Dr. Robert Schuller</b></p> <p>I can't tell you how I admire, respect and applaud you. May God give you the blessing you need, where you need it most.</p> <p><i>The Passion</i> is an awe-inspiring portrayal of the last hours of Jesus' life. It is an accurate account of Jesus' real sufferings for the sins of the whole world. This is not a film anyone should miss.</p> <p>I make available to you the use our television program – the most widely viewed religious television program in the world – to promote your upcoming film! (From a letter to Icon)</p>

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<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Christian Broadcasting Network</b>  <b>Pat Robertson</b>  <b>Chairman and CEO</b></p> <p>Without question, this is the finest work that has ever been done on this subject. The casting is superb. The action is gripping, and I believe that having the dialogue in Latin and Aramaic adds tremendously to the dramatic effect.</p> <p>Your treatment of the high priest and temple officials is sensitively done. It is clear that the small group of religious leaders were acting in an extra legal fashion without the full body of the Sanhedrin being present. The terrible suffering inflicted on Jesus Christ by the Romans was at the urging of a small band of power-hungry religious leaders, not by the Jewish nation.</p> <p>More than anything your portrayal of the suffering of Jesus is with a few exceptions in total accord with the biblical narrative. It is therefore wonderfully authentic.</p> <p>I understand there are at least 50 million evangelicals in the United States and nearly as many Roman Catholics. From what I can gather, the interest in your film is very high among those in these groups who have heard about it. In my opinion you will see a very large and enthusiastic audience when <i>The Passion</i> is released next March.</p> <p>It will be my pleasure to use whatever facilities we have available at The Christian Broadcasting Network to help you publicize this outstanding work. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Trinity Broadcasting Network</b>  <b>Paul Crouch, Jr.</b></p> <p>All I can say is Whoa! And get ready! It is one of the most powerful things I've ever seen. It basically starts at the Garden of Gethsemane and ends at the resurrection. It is without a doubt the best portrayal of Christ and the Crucifixion I've ever seen. In fact, it makes you want to take all Biblical epics and most "Christian" films and throw them right in the trash. (Including many of ours!!) This will do for "Jesus" movies what "Saving Private Ryan" did for war pictures. Every Christian MUST go see this movie and hold Mr. Gibson up in prayer. He's going to take a lot of heat for this project, but if we'll support him, this movie could have a profound spiritual effect on millions of people. (From a TBN email)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Faith Television Network</b>  <b>Jim West</b>  <b>President</b></p> <p>It took a <i>brave heart</i> to make "The Passion". "The Passion" is the most graphic, gritty and gripping depiction of Christ's arrest, trial and execution ever made. As a film, it will become a classic work of art with dramatic lighting, authentic sets, compelling music, realistic dialog, believable actors coupled with a timeless story. (From an email to Icon)</p>

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<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Young Life</b>  <b>Denny Rydberg</b>  <b>President</b></p> <p>As President of Young Life, I am pleased to voice my strong support for <i>The Passion</i>. The Young Life sphere of influence includes tens of thousands of staff and volunteers, as well as hundreds of thousands of adults and kids who would be lining up in an instant to see this film. In addition, I think the film will have mass appeal to people of any faith or no particular faith, simply because of the quality of the production and the historical nature of the content. My best to you as you move into the final stages of production and distribution. I'm thrilled about the prospect of a quality film of historical substance and modern appeal hitting the marketplace. Thanks for improving our options. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Youth For Christ/USA</b>  <b>Roger Cross</b>  <b>President</b></p> <p>I feel the film is the most powerful treatment of Jesus passion that I have ever witnessed. It is true to the text and done with the quality that it deserves. The range of emotions caught me by surprise but the message is so powerful that it captures your soul.</p> <p>From a ministry perspective I tried to imagine what young people would think and how they would respond. My hope is that they will also be captured by the presentation. I believe they will because it is simply the telling of God's story. I am most encouraged by the fact that they will see a true representation of Jesus: fully God and fully man. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>International Bible Society</b>  <b>Stan Kellner</b></p> <p>Mel and his team marvelously wove a tapestry of subtle and not so subtle Hebraic insights into the movie, e.g., the heal hitting the serpent's head, Mary asking in Hebrew "Why is this night different from all other nights", the flashbacks to the Jesus' Passover Seder with his disciples (commonly called the Lord's supper). The list goes on and on.</p> <p>As a Jew, while I see why some Jewish leaders might be offended, I must say that the only reason they would be is because of how close to the Scriptures you stayed in the telling of the story. There are a whole host of reasons why we, as Jewish people, can feel a keen sense of rejection, offense or other things by what some Christians have done "in the name of Christ" during the last 2,000 years. But, let me assure you that Mel Gibson is not to be named in that number. Mel has chosen the narrow road of staying true to the Scriptures. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Harvest Crusades</b>  <b>Pastor Greg Laurie</b></p> <p>I think <i>the Passion</i> is going to make history. Even after the film has had its impact in the theatres it will have a very, very long shelf life through DVD, etc. I can see that film being shown around the world to touch untold millions of people. Mel has created a resource that will make a difference in the lives of many for time and eternity. (From an email to Icon)</p>

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<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Tim LaHaye</b> <b>Tim LaHaye Ministries</b></p> <p><i>THE PASSION</i> is the finest presentation of the last hours of Jesus' life I have ever seen. It is a scripturally accurate account of how He really suffered for the sins of the whole world. The acting and production were superb, and the message leaves a lasting impact on both Christians and non-believers. Everyone should see this movie.</p> <p>The believers who see this film will be renewed in their commitment to Christ. Many non-believers will be moved to reevaluate His claim of dying for the sins of the whole world. No film in my lifetime has the potential of impacting more people with the world's greatest story than <i>THE PASSION</i>. It is sensitive to the Savior, Biblically accurate, and both production and acting are of the highest quality. It could be Hollywood's finest achievement to date.</p> <p>I was extremely impressed with Mel Gibson's spiritual passion on wanting to present the true nature of Christ's suffering for all the world to see. It gives a message that will benefit people of all faiths, cultures, and backgrounds. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Chuck Colson</b> <b>Break Point</b></p> <p>Imagine for a moment that an Oscar-winning director, such as Steven Spielberg or Roman Polanski, announces that his next project will be an historical drama. Now imagine that groups representing the people depicted in the film are demanding to see the script to see if it meets with their approval. There's no way that any responsible director would give in to those demands. And, in refusing, he'd have the whole-hearted support of what is called "the creative community" and the First Amendment watchdogs. The exception, of course, is if the history in question is the passion of our LORD, in which case creative freedom is expected to take a back seat to the demands of political correctness.</p> <p>That's what's happening with Mel Gibson's upcoming film <i>The Passion</i>. <i>The Passion</i> tells the story of the twelve hours surrounding the Crucifixion. While <i>The Passion</i> is only the latest in a series of films about Jesus, it stands out for two reasons: First, it is unsparing and unsentimental. In Gibson's opinion, previous cinematic efforts had failed to capture the enormity of Jesus' suffering on our behalf.</p> <p>This quest for fidelity has made some people nervous. Even without seeing the film, some Jewish and Catholic leaders have accused Gibson's film of fomenting "religious animosity" and even anti-Semitism. They worried that the film might blame "the Jews" for the death of Jesus. And they requested that a panel of scholars be allowed to review the script before the film's release.</p> <p>Gibson's defenders include Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver. He wrote that he found it "puzzling and disturbing that anyone would feel licensed to attack a film of sincere faith before it has even been released." He reminded Gibson's liberal critics that when <i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i> – and attack on the historic Jesus – came out, "movie critics piously lectured Catholics to be open-minded and tolerant. Surely that advice should apply equally for everyone." (<i>Break Point</i>, Aug 2003)</p>

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<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Dallas Theological Seminary</b>  <b>Dr. Darrell Bock</b>  <b>Research Professor of New Testament Studies</b></p> <p>Three words summarize for me: Sobering, Stunning, Haunting. The film speaks for itself. I hope you keep the graphic nature of it complete in the film, because it will cause everyone to reflect on what His death was. The world tends to wash over this directness. The details are very accurate -- this is the kind of death our Lord died for me. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Northern Baptist Theological Seminary</b>  <b>Chuck Moore</b>  <b>President</b></p> <p>Having viewed the film in Chicago, I see no basis for the ongoing allegation that the film is anti-Semitic in any fashion. Please express our deep appreciation to Mr. Gibson for his excellent work and assure him of our ongoing prayers in this important endeavor. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Mastermedia International</b>  <b>Larry Poland</b>  <b>Chairman and CEO</b></p> <p>Based on first century eyewitness accounts, <i>The Passion</i> is a historically accurate film chronicling the events surrounding the trial, torture and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Far beyond this, the film is a life-changing glimpse into a person and into a world that contemporary Americans can scarcely imagine. My plea to everyone is, "Go see <i>The Passion!</i>" Go with your skepticism or your questions, but go. You will leave the film forever changed. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Vanguard Church</b>  <b>Kelly Williams</b>  <b>Senior Pastor</b></p> <p>Our team went to see the movie – we each came away from that movie greatly impacted and affected by the images and scenes that we took in that day. Without reservation we will recommend this film to our community. If there is anything we can do as an organization to help promote this film we are more than willing to do so. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>American Life League</b>  <b>Judie Brown</b>  <b>Founder and President</b></p> <p>Please rest assured that we at American Life League will do all we can to help promote this amazing film. (From an email to Icon)</p>

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<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Evangelicals For Social Action</b> <b>Ron Sider</b> <b>President</b></p> <p>“The Passion” is simply fabulous. It is emotionally wrenching because it is brutally honest about the violence of Jesus’ death. Never in my life have I seen any movie that comes even close to depicting what Roman crucifixion was really like. Long familiarity and theological explanation have leached out in our minds the awful brutality of Jesus’ trial and death. John’s simple words, “the Pilate took Jesus and scourged him” feel vastly different as you watch two brutal Roman soldiers go on minute after terrible minute bludgeoning Jesus near-naked body with flesh-gouging whips. Pious talk about Jesus’ death for our sins takes on a whole new meaning. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Pat Boone</b> <b>Singer, Actor</b></p> <p>It’s a monumental accomplishment. It continues to impact me in ways I couldn’t have imagined. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Ed Young Jr.</b> <b>Pastor</b> <b>Dallas-Area Fellowship Church</b></p> <p>I have no doubt that the movie will be one of the greatest evangelistic tools in modern day history. I think people will go to it and then flood into the churches seeking to know the deeper implications of the movie. That’s where we have a chance to capitalize. The bottom line is that our sin nailed Christ to the cross, the movie crosses all barriers to black, white, Jew, gentile, white-collar, pink-collar, blue-collar. The whole message is one of love and forgiveness and grace. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Youth Specialities</b> <b>Michael Yaconelli</b> <b>CEO</b></p> <p>I believe this film will have a powerful impact on students and adults. This film will not only have widespread interest but will finally make sense out of the Easter story for thousand of people who have never entered the door of a church, especially young people.</p> <p>We heartily recommend this film and will do everything we can to mobilize our constituency to see it. (From an email to Icon)</p>

# Commentaries on The Passion

<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Mothers of Pre-Schoolers (MOPS)</b>  <b>Elisa Morgan</b>  <b>President and CEO</b></p> <p>I have had the privilege to view a rough cut of Mel Gibson’s new film, “The Passion.” That was weeks ago. I am still haunted by the images, the characters, the powerful action, and of course, the message. I find myself reviewing certain scenes in my mind, and longing to see the film again...and again. It was that compelling.</p> <p>The audience that MOPS represents is mothers of preschool age children. There are 14.3 million in the United States alone. While preschool age children would obviously be too young to view this film, I believe that mothers everywhere will respond to the dramatic interaction between mother and son in this film. Further, in a culture where mothers are stretched beyond themselves to raise the children under their care, and in a season when they are depleted of their own resources, mothers are hungry for the hope that comes from outside themselves in the form of this story of a God who loves them and cares for them.</p> <p>This film offers a graphic picture of the hope all mothers’ want. It is a powerful telling of a message that families need to hear. I plan to encourage our audience to see this movie and to take their families with them. (From a letter to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Berean Christian Stores</b>  <b>Roger Feenstra</b>  <b>President</b></p> <p>This is the movie that people have been waiting for. For years producers have attempted to portray the life and death of Jesus Christ, but they were never able to get it right. Mel Gibson got it right! I have been in the Christian retailing business for over 23 years and I can tell you that people will come out in droves to see this movie. I have already sensed an air of excitement from people who have gotten wind of it. (From an email to Icon)</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Mission America Coalition</b>  <b>Paul Cedar</b>  <b>Chairman/CEO</b></p> <p>How delighted I am to share this letter of affirmation for the remarkable and powerful film, “<i>The Passion</i>.” It was my privilege to view the film a few weeks ago in a private screening of a few religious leaders.</p> <p>I was very moved by the film. In fact, it was a deep spiritual experience for me. Without a doubt, it was the closest I have ever been to actually witnessing the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. I highly recommend this powerful film to you. I believe that it is accurate and very consistent with the Biblical account of the passion of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I am very grateful to Mel Gibson for his vision in producing this marvelous film. It is not exaggerated or glamorized in ways that many of the Hollywood films in the past have portrayed the life and death of Jesus. It is a film that I would encourage every young person and adult of every religion or philosophical persuasion to view.</p>

# Commentaries on The Passion

<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Mark Mittelberg</b>  <b>Author – “Building a Contagious Church”</b></p> <p>Film makers are the history teachers of our culture – and Mel Gibson's movie, “The Passion”, teaches us about history's most important event. The impact of this movie will be immeasurable.</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Promise Keepers</b>  <b>Brian W. Blomberg</b>  <b>VP and Chief Development Officer</b></p> <p>The Passion is one of the most amazing images of the real account of the Crucifixion. What struck me most was the gritty, in your face account of the ultimate hero Jesus Christ. Although graphic and brutal, it is a film worth taking your children and friends to witness on the big screen. This may be the next great evangelism tool of our time.</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Outreach Inc</b>  <b>Doug Martinez</b>  <b>Chief Operating Officer</b></p> <p>I predict The Passion will be one of the most talked about experiences of our generation It is not a movie but an experience...a life changing recognition of the true love of GOD for me through the sacrifice of his willing son Jesus Christ. It is my hope that the body of Christ will embrace this movie as one of the most opportunistic forms of Outreach of their lifetime and will be obedient to invite their friends, family members, and people they come in contact with to theatres to experience Gods love.</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Max Lucado</b>  <b>Pastor – Best selling Author</b></p> <p>Thank you for allowing our congregation to preview the movie trailer of The Passion. In just four short minutes, the images and the authenticity left our members “spell bound”. Something went right to the heart of those who watched the trailer. You have our prayers and support as we look forward to the release of the movie.</p>
<p>Christian Leaders</p>	<p><b>Worship Leader Magazine</b>  <b>Chuck Fromm</b></p> <p>The Passion resonates in both art and message crushing the Gnostic head of a superficial Christianity with a Braveheart style of gospel experiential narrative. I think Gibson is a Giotto on celluloid. He makes all past Biblical narrative cinematic interpretation seem tepid or grossly unreal. As I said in the meeting, I thank God that my 17, 16 , 15, and 11, year old children will have an opportunity to experience the Passion of Jesus Christ in a language they can understand, and to be confronted with the killing of God, and finding their own lives washed in the blood of the redemption story.</p> <p>My hope and prayer is that Icon’s investment will pay off 1,000 fold so that you can continue to create and promote media art with eternal meaning for decades to come.</p>