

ABE FOXMAN NEEDS A REALITY CHECK

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), met with Vatican officials yesterday. He urged them to tell bishops around the world to instruct Catholics that Mel Gibson's upcoming movie, "The Passion of the Christ," is "Mel Gibson's version of the gospel," and not "the gospel truth." Foxman described the film as "the old medieval classical interpretation of deicide, which blames the Jews, and it will be seen by millions of viewers." He asked the Church "to stand up to defend its teachings."

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

"Abe Foxman needs a reality check. He obviously does not understand that this is the 21st Century and not the Middle Ages. He is demanding that the Church issue warnings about Gibson's movie because he thinks it resurrects the old deicide charge—a charge that he has said may provoke violence against Jews. But the last time Jews were assaulted following a Passion Play was during the Middle Ages. Today, Jews and Christians enjoy a close friendship. And in no place have Jews lived in greater peace and harmony with Christians than in the United States.

"There is real danger in the world for Jews, and it comes from fanatical secularists and fanatical Muslims in the Middle East. They don't need a movie to inflame their hatred, and this movie wouldn't do it anyway. By overreaching in his criticism of a movie, Foxman runs the risk of trivializing the very real dangers of anti-Semitism.

"Foxman first worked with a stolen script, saw the movie by stealth and then asked for a postscript to the film when his

attempts to dictate the film's content were rebuffed. He has now gone to the Vatican to demand the Church issue warnings about the film. Foxman's unprecedented meddling in a movie that speaks so powerfully to Christians may only serve—as Michael Medved has suggested—to feed anti-Semitism."