

# ADL ATTACKS MEL GIBSON

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) yesterday issued another attack on Mel Gibson for his yet unseen movie, "The Passion." Catholic League president William Donohue answered the ADL as follows:

"In its news release of June 24, the ADL seriously misrepresented the position of the Catholic bishops regarding 'The Passion.' It said that it had 'joined with the Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in April, 2003 to assemble Jewish and Catholic scholars to evaluate an early version of the movie's screenplay.' It then said it welcomed the remarks by the Catholic scholars. But what it didn't say is telling.

"The ADL did not say that the Catholic panel was unauthorized by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Nor did it say that the USCCB has since apologized to Mel Gibson for reviewing a movie it hasn't seen. Nor did it say that the script was stolen. Nor did it say that both the ADL and the USCCB have returned the stolen screenplay to Gibson's Icon Productions.

"One person who has seen the movie, and has translated it into Aramaic and Latin, is Jesuit Father William J. Fulco, a National Endowment for the Humanities professor of ancient Mediterranean studies at Loyola Marymount University. He not only insists that the ADL has nothing to worry about—'there is no hint of deicide'—he also says that the specific concerns raised by the ADL are baseless. Is there brutality in the film? Yes. Indeed, it would be historically dishonest to portray the crucifixion in a non-violent manner.

"Every Sunday Catholics recite the 1,700 year-old Nicene Creed, and every time they do they mention that Jesus was

'crucified under Pontius Pilate.' They do not say Jesus was killed by the Romans. Nor do they say He was killed by the Jews. They individualize the guilt. That anti-Semitic Christians have sought to blame 'the Jews' deserves condemnation. But fairness dictates that Gibson not be put in that camp. As he has said, 'Neither I nor my film is anti-Semitic.' That's good enough for the Catholic League and, we trust, for fair-minded Americans of every religion."