ADL TO HOST ATTACK ON MEL GIBSON

On November 6, the Anti-Defamation League will convene its 90th Annual National Meeting at New York's Plaza Hotel. One of the sessions will explore the controversy over the Mel Gibson film, "The Passion of Christ." Speaking to the issue will be Paula Fredriksen, professor of theology at Boston University; Sister Mary C. Boys, professor of Judeo-Christian Studies, Union Theological Seminary; and Abraham H. Foxman, the ADL's national director.

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed the event today:

"The ADL session on Mel Gibson will reveal no surprises. All three of the participants have already demonized the man and none has seen the movie. Paula Fredriksen has even charged Gibson with sponsoring violence, saying 'When violence breaks out, Mel Gibson will have a much higher authority than professors and bishops to answer to'; she has also said she has no intention of seeing the film. Sister Mary Boys has gone so far as to say that the movie 'could be one of the great crises in Christian-Jewish relations,' even though the closest she has come to seeing the film has been to read an early draft of a stolen script. Abe Foxman has accused Gibson of being anti-Semitic, and has then had to take back his charge when confronted by reporters. (Our website, catholicleague.org, has a new section on Gibson's movie.)

"Rabbi Daniel Lapin, who heads an organization called Toward Tradition, has made it his life ambition to build good relations between Christians and Jews. He regards these blind protests against 'The Passion of Christ' as 'morally indefensible.' He is right. There is not one scene in the movie that blames all Jews for the death of Christ—either then

or now. And if it did, the Catholic League would condemn it.

"The Catholic League congratulates the ADL on its 90th anniversary. Notwithstanding our sharp disagreement with the organization on this issue, we commend the ADL for its brilliant track record in combating anti-Semitism and other expressions of bigotry."