

APPEAL TO MICHAEL EISNER AND HARVEY WEINSTEIN: RESCHEDULE "40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS"

Catholic League president William Donohue has asked Disney chairman Michael Eisner and Miramax co-chairman Harvey Weinstein to reschedule the opening of "40 Days and 40 Nights" (the movie is a Miramax production and Disney is the parent company of Miramax). The film portrays actor Josh Hartnett as a Catholic who pledges to give up sex for Lent but has his will tested by his ex-girlfriend. It is scheduled to open March 1. Lent begins February 13 and runs through Easter, March 31. Donohue is requesting that the movie open sometime after Easter. He explained his reasoning as follows:

"In my letter to Michael Eisner and Harvey Weinstein, I asked each of them to 'intercede on behalf of Catholics' by doing whatever they could to reschedule the movie. 'To show a film that parodies Lent in a most vulgar way is bad enough,' I said, 'but to show it during Lent is outrageous.' It is no wonder the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* commented, 'Pretty sensitive of Miramax to schedule a film mocking Lent during Lent, eh?' Indeed, the movie is rated R for 'strong sexual content, nudity and language' and is noted for its 'vulgar sex gags.' Now if this is Weinstein's Lenten gift to Catholics, he can keep it.

"On the Miramax website, it says the movie is based on the real-life experience of the film's writer, Rob Perez. Yet the movie's publicist tells us that Lent was used merely as a vehicle for the character to give up sex—so as to 'make the story cute.' But wouldn't it have been just as cute to portray the character as a Muslim who gives up sex from sundown to sunset during Ramadan and is tempted during the day? That, however, would have cast Weinstein as being

insensitive to Muslims and that is not a sin he wants to commit. Indeed, Weinstein postponed the film 'Gangs of New York' after 9-11 saying, 'in light of the ever-changing current events, we have chosen to err on the side of sensitivity and postpone the wide release of the film until 2002.' Wonderful. Now if only he treats Catholics the way he does Muslims and New York thugs, Catholics will be delighted."