

# BILL MAHER BRANDS MEL GIBSON ANTI-SEMITIC

"I do think Mel Gibson is anti-Semitic." According to NewsMax, this is what comedian Bill Maher told radio talk-show host Don Imus today. Responding is Catholic League president William Donohue:

"The character assassins will not stop trying to malign Mel Gibson. Not that Bill Maher is any stranger to the subject of bigotry—in recent years he has consistently been listed in the Catholic League's *Annual Report on Anti-Catholicism*. Indeed, we have criticized him so many times for his Catholic bashing that just two months ago Maher—in a rare display of Catholic guilt (he is half Catholic, half Jewish)—confessed to Larry King, 'The Catholic League has condemned me as an anti-Catholic bigot. I am not an anti-Catholic bigot.' Who's he trying to convince?

"The crusade against Gibson is immoral and Christians are increasingly losing patience with it. For the last quarter century, virtually every movie out of Hollywood that has depicted Christians has sought to malign them; the movies that Catholics have had to endure are particularly obnoxious. Finally, along comes a film that all Christians can be justly proud of, 'The Passion,' and wham—we're told we're the bigots.

"Take Abe Foxman of the ADL, for example. When he was recently interviewed for a story in *The New Yorker*, he was asked if Mel Gibson is anti-Semitic and he said no. Then last Thursday it was reported in the *Jewish Week* that Foxman branded recent remarks by Gibson as painting 'the portrait of an anti-Semite.' We immediately accused Foxman of seeking to poison Catholic-Jewish relations by labeling Gibson (and by extension all those who love his movie) anti-

Semitic. Then Rachel Zoll of AP asked Foxman to comment on his charge against Gibson: he said, 'I'm not ready to say he's an anti-Semite.' So what changed?

"Foxman can dance all he wants but the damage he has done is real. As for Bill Maher, his own deep-seated bigotry against Catholics gives him no moral authority to call anyone a bigot."