

# CRITICS OF “THE PASSION” CRACKUP

Catholic League president William Donohue notes today how critics of “The Passion of the Christ” continue to rant:

“In a Knight Ridder column, Rev. John Pawlikowski, director of the Catholic-Jewish Studies Program at the Catholic Theological Union, wrote the following: ‘Christians who react favorably to Gibson’s film are shamefully evading their religious responsibility.’ Thus did he indict Pope John Paul II; Cardinal Dario Castrillón Hoyos, Prefect of the Congregation for Clergy; Most Reverend John Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications; Reverend Augustine Di Noia, Undersecretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago; Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, Australia; Most Reverend Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Denver; Most Reverend John Donoghue, Archbishop of Atlanta; Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino, Bishop of Madison, Wisconsin; Reverend Richard John Neuhaus, Editor-in-Chief, *First Things*; Reverend Thomas Rosica, CEO, Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation; theologian Michael Novak; and scores of Protestant leaders from virtually every denomination.

“Yesterday, *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich labeled ‘The Passion’ a ‘porn movie,’ noting ‘its laborious build-up to its orgasmic spurtings of blood and other bodily fluids.’ He also said that when Mel Gibson was speaking of his critics in his interview with Diane Sawyer, Mel must have been referring to him: ‘But Ms. Sawyer never identified me as Jewish, thereby sanitizing Mr. Gibson’s rant of its truculent meaning. (She did show a picture of me, though, perhaps assuming that my nose might give me away.)’ How observant.

“On August 3, 2003, Rich said, ‘it’s hard to imagine the movie

being anything other than a flop in America.' It must break his heart to know the film has well surpassed the \$200 million mark.

“In short, Christians who don't agree with Pawlikowski are acting irresponsibly, and those who criticize Rich are anti-Semitic. Thus does the crackup continue.”