

“DA VINCI CODE” DEVELOPMENTS WELCOME

Catholic League president Bill Donohue today addressed recent developments associated with “The Da Vinci Code”:

“All the Catholic League wants is for Ron Howard to put a disclaimer at the top of his movie noting that ‘The Da Vinci Code’ is not a work of history and we’ll drop the issue. While Howard refuses to comment on this request, there are important recent signs that he has gotten the message. For example, yesterday on the ‘Today’ show, co-producer Brian Grazer said three times that the film is ‘informed fiction’; he said that this was also the position of director Ron Howard and lead actor Tom Hanks. Indeed, he went so far as to say, ‘We don’t feel it’s factual, it’s not historic, but it’s informed fiction, and it’s a thriller.’ What exactly is informing this fable he does not say, but in any event we welcome this admission.

“We were also pleased to read that a Sony spokesman was quoted yesterday in *Business Week Online* saying that ‘we view’ the movie as ‘a work of fiction that is not meant to harm any organization.’ With honesty like this we expect a short disclaimer in the film will appear.

“But not all is going well for Dan Brown, the author of the famous book. Closing arguments in the London *Da Vinci Code* trial have been heard and a verdict will be issued by April 13. Two of the three authors of the 1982 non-fiction book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* have sued *Da Vinci Code* publisher Random House for copyright infringement: they argue that Dan Brown stole his thesis from their volume, copying parts of their book, however ‘unwittingly.’

“Brown’s deceitfulness is well established: he has tried to

sell his tale as if it were historically true. But the authors who are suing Brown's publisher are also deceitful. The lies they told about the Catholic Church means their book was anything but non-fiction. Indeed, they're now saying that their work is 'historical conjecture.' Quite a difference.

"So far at least, the real problem has been the authors of these two books, not Sony or Ron Howard. We hope the latter do not disappoint us."