

# **“DA VINCI CODE” DISCLAIMER SOUGHT IN MOVIE**

The Catholic League is seeking a disclaimer from the director of “The Da Vinci Code,” Ron Howard, that would inform the audience that what they are about to see is based on fiction, not fact. An open letter to Howard making this request was published in the March 6 *New York Times* (see p. 13).

What necessitated this move is the duplicity of Dan Brown, the author of the book upon which the movie is based. At times, Brown has said the book is fiction, but at other times he has said it is factual. For example, on June 9, 2003, “Today” show host Matt Lauer asked Brown, “How much of this [the book] is based on reality in terms of things that actually occurred?” To which Brown said, “Absolutely all of it.”

It was Brown’s dishonesty that motivated Bill Donohue to write to Howard last year asking him to put a disclaimer at the beginning of the film noting that it is fiction; the letter was dated March 18, 2005. Because Howard chose not to answer, preferring instead to speak to reporters who then relayed to Donohue what he said for a comment, Donohue decided to write an open letter to him in the *New York Times*.

It’s not just Brown’s remark to Matt Lauer and others that is disturbing; the book opens with three “facts,” none of which is true. And to top it off, John Calley, one of the movie’s co-producers, has admitted that the film is “conservatively anti-Catholic.”

As Donohue has said on TV, there is not a single producer in Hollywood who would boast that he is associated with a movie that is anti-Semitic, racist or homophobic. But when it comes to Catholics, a different rule applies. Hence, our vigorous response.

Sony, the company that is releasing the movie, and director Ron Howard, have both inserted disclaimers into their films in the past. Sony issued one in "The Merchant of Venice," and Howard allowed one in "A Beautiful Mind," so it is not persuasive to say they are averse to disclaimers.

We are happy that the Da Vinci Outreach, a national initiative to expose "the anti-Catholic lies" in the movie, has formally endorsed the league's request for a disclaimer. We expect others will join this campaign.