

“DA VINCI CODE” PEDDLES LIES

As Catholic League members know, what is most pernicious about “The Da Vinci Code” is the book upon which the script is based: the author, Dan Brown, peddles one lie after another; now his book of lies is available in paperback.

The biggest lie of them all is the one claiming that the divinity of Jesus was made up out of whole cloth in 325 at the Council of Nicea. In fact, there are 25 references to the divinity of Christ in the Gospels and more than 40 references in the New Testament. Not only that, the letters of Paul were written in the 40s and 50s—earlier than the Gospels. These writings are much closer to the time of Jesus than the so-called Gnostic Gospels, and even those books—which were excluded from the New Testament—regarded Jesus to be the Son of God.

If Constantine concocted the idea that Jesus was divine in the 4th century, then how does one explain the Apostles Creed in the second century? After all, it explicitly mentions the divinity of Jesus. Brown says Constantine decided which books to include in the New Testament when, in fact, he had nothing to do with it. Indeed, the Council of Nicea didn’t address this issue.

As historians have detailed, the Council of Nicea was called to decide how to understand Jesus’ divinity, not whether he was divine. The question before the council was whether Jesus was the first being created by God (as erroneously assumed by a priest named Arius), or whether He was co-eternal with God the Father. As Christians everywhere now believe, Jesus was begotten—not made.

Another lie floated by the book and the movie is the one which posits that Jesus married Mary Magdalene. There is absolutely no evidence to support this position. Brown says it would have

been highly unlikely for a Jewish man to be celibate, but again he is wrong. We know that Paul the Apostle was celibate, as was John the Baptist. Indeed, so were the Essenes—the Jews who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Speaking of which, Brown contends that the Dead Sea Scrolls import new information about Jesus. Really? The truth is they never mention Jesus! The Dead Sea Scrolls tell us about the Essenes—the Jewish community that lived at the time of Jesus and in the same place.

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Throughout the book, Brown tells us about the evil machinations of the Vatican and how it consolidated its power base under Constantine. But there was no Vatican in the 4th century—it didn't exist until the 14th century.

The book also claims that witch-burning led to 5 million women being killed by the Catholic Church, but the number that most scholars accept is somewhere between 30,000-50,000. Not all were women and, more important, most were killed by civil authorities, not the Church.

The pages of history are strewn with figures like Dan Brown. After all, what bigger prize is there for any author than to challenge The Greatest Story Ever Told? Whether their motive is bigotry or ego, or both, the goal is to sow seeds of doubt about Christianity. The grand prize, of course, would be to witness its eventual demise. Though all such efforts have failed, as will this one, we live in a time when a ready audience exists to swallow this moonshine.

There are three reasons why so many people continue to believe that *The Da Vinci Code* is true: (a) postmodernism (b) bigotry and (c) the scandal in the Church.

The Western world is in the grips of a postmodern culture, one that refuses to acknowledge the existence of truth. Such a

culture of radical skepticism explains why the tabloids that are displayed at the supermarket check-out counter continue to feature wild stories about aliens, kids born with three heads and women who get pregnant at seven or seventy. Many conclude that while not all of this may be true, some of it must be, otherwise it wouldn't be in print. Ergo, some of what *The Da Vinci Code* says is probably true.

Anti-Catholic bigots love to believe the worst about the Church, and nothing is more appealing to them than the exposure of sordid tales about a secretive and manipulative hierarchy. It's the Christians who have been duped, they say, not them. And their arrogance is so visceral that no book disputing their beliefs will shake their faith: they literally hate the Catholic Church.

Finally, the scandal that has rocked the Church is ample fodder for these bigots. The climate is ripe to believe the worst about Catholicism, and unfortunately some members of the clergy have made a bountiful deposit to this milieu.

Remember, John Calley, the film's co-producer, has dubbed it "conservatively anti-Catholic." That there is not a single producer in Hollywood who would brag about his association with a movie that is racist or anti-Semitic speaks volumes about what we're up against.