

# MEL GETS A BOUNCE FROM HOLLYWOOD GUILT

The Mel Gibson film, "The Passion of the Christ," was nominated today for three Oscars: cinematography, makeup and original score. Catholic League president William Donohue commented on this today:

"When all the chatter began last spring regarding the possibility that 'The Passion of the Christ' would be nominated for best picture, it soon became evident that this was not going to happen. Here's what the *New York Times* had to say about this on June 24: 'Significantly, in the movie industry, which tends to be liberal and secular in outlook, as well as disproportionately Jewish, few people interviewed about 'The Passion' said they had actually seen the movie.' Then there was a report in *Newsweek* last fall that said, 'Hollywood, with its Jewish roots, did not experience 'The Passion' as a transcendent religious and emotional event, as many other viewers did.' The same article quoted an 'Oscar-campaign vet' as saying, 'A lot of older Academy voters, who are largely Jewish, refuse to even see this movie.' And as Hollywood observer Tom O'Neil admitted, those who finally did vet this movie for the Oscars wore their animosity on their sleeve: 'At this religious movie, there was more cussing and swearing by Oscar voters than has ever been seen in an Academy screening before.'

"What does this last response, in particular, tell us? If a movie is considered boring, the audience typically yawns. A grimace or a shake of the head signals the movie is a flop. And we've all been in theaters where the film is so bad that there is literally no crowd reaction at all. But when an audience swears at the screen, there is something else going on.

“So how do we explain the three nominations, even if they are second-tier categories? Chalk it up to Hollywood guilt. Having been criticized for months for not giving Mel a fair shake, it looks like the Hollywood elite got the message. In any event, it seems plain that Catholic guilt has been successfully exported to Hollywood. And by any standard, this is truly a miracle for the ages.”