

# SAINT MEL

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the reaction to "The Passion of the Christ":

"We are at a cultural tipping point. Never has the division between the elites and the masses been more evident. Many good things are happening: the smack-in-the-face that the public awarded Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake; the public revulsion to the anti-marriage campaign; the firing of Howard Stern from many radio outlets; and, most of all, the public's embrace of 'The Passion of the Christ.'

"Saint Mel. That's what he is in the eyes of millions of Americans. But for some, he's Satan. Leon Wieseltier, the big fan of the Catholic-bashing writer Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, labels the movie a 'sacred snuff film.' Ex-Catholics like Maureen Dowd not only mistake the sacred for the profane, they think the film engenders intolerance when, in fact, the intolerance has come almost exclusively from the movie's most vociferous critics.

"But this is good—the pus has come to the surface. Now we can get on with the real debate: should the culture continue its celebration of self-indulgence or repair to a culture of restraint? If the latter is to be achieved, believing Christians, Jews and Muslims will have to join together to defeat those whose concept of liberty is pure libertinism.

"Already, left-wing censors in Hollywood are out to get Mel. They think they can stop him. But it's too late for the blacklists to win. Nothing can stop the public from rallying around Saint Mel."