

SONY, RON HOWARD, NOT AVERSE TO DISCLAIMERS

Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, spoke out today about his request for a disclaimer in the upcoming film, "The Da Vinci Code":

"Last Monday, the Catholic League ran an 'Open Letter to Ron Howard' on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* requesting a disclaimer in the beginning of the movie noting its fictional nature. That request has since been denounced as an 'arrogant' demand, suggesting it is an infringement on the artistic rights of Sony, the company that is releasing the film, and Ron Howard, the director. But a little research reveals that neither Sony nor Howard are averse to disclaimers in their movies.

"When Sony released 'The Merchant of Venice,' the movie opened with a disclaimer noting that 'Intolerance of the Jews was a fact of 16th Century life even in Venice, the most powerful and liberal city state in Europe.' And in 'A Beautiful Mind,' a Ron Howard film, the movie ended with a disclaimer noting that it differs from the book (of the same name) that inspired the film: Howard, and screen writer Akiva Goldman, admitted that they 'fictionalized a number of the incidents.'

"So much for the argument that the Catholic League is out of line by asking for a disclaimer in 'The Da Vinci Code.' The Dan Brown book upon which the film is based is a pack of anti-Catholic lies, and it is the author's duplicity that is driving our campaign: he has tried to pitch his book as if it were an authentic historical account. Thus, to the extent that the movie fails to note that it is a fable, some viewers will be misled. And, as we warned in the ad, Howard's reputation will be damaged. There's a lot at stake and there's an easy way out. The ball is in their court."