

# **“The Ten” Amuses Critics; Double Standard Is Nauseating**

On August 3, ThinkFilm released “The Ten,” a movie composed of 10 different vignettes depicting characters breaking each of the Ten Commandments. The Catholic League’s own Kiera McCaffrey watched the film and found it to be absolutely asinine. The skits, all absurd comedy, are a mix of the vulgar, the scatological and the blasphemous.

Amidst characters like a woman who has sex with a wooden ventriloquist’s dummy and prisoners who sodomize each other is a virginal librarian who travels to Mexico and begins an erotic affair with a carpenter named Jesus. The name is no coincidence. The man she is having sex with is Jesus Christ. He’s supposed to be bringing about Armageddon, but finds it too much of a hassle, so he chooses to bed the American visitor instead. During sex, she screams his name (thus breaking the second commandment). Years later, when she is married to another, she has flashbacks of her affair whenever her husband leads the family in saying grace at the dinner table.

Another skit, related to keeping the Sabbath holy, has grown men lying to their wives about being sick on Sunday mornings. Instead of going to church, they take the opportunity to sit around naked together. To them, this is a better way of getting in touch with God’s creation than attending services.

“The Ten” did not open in many theaters, and has not made very much money. What we found troubling, however, are the reactions of the critics to this offensive and thoroughly uninteresting film. Various reviewers were amused by puerile comedy; a quick sampling shows they were not concerned by the anti-Christian content:

*Variety* declared, "Only Christians with a very liberal sense of humor are likely to enjoy 'The Ten.' Even lay viewers will need to be tolerant of gags as envelope-pushing as anything in 'Borat.'" The online magazine *Slant* admitted, "'The Ten' is, I guess, sacrilegious in the strictest sense of the term..." And Roger Ebert heartily approved, noting, "'The Ten' is comprised of 10 blasphemous and hysterical stories that put the insanity back in Christianity."

The web site *NotComing.com* declared, "'The Ten' is cohesive in the irreverence of its scenarios (in my favorite, Jesus Christ—Justin Theroux as a disheveled, overly hirsute carpenter...)" Another online page, *EfilmCritic.com*, said of the filmmakers, "They're almost gleeful in their crudity; grinning ever-wider as they seem to ask the audience just who this bit of blasphemy is hurting." Critic Emanuel Levy described the film as "Comprised of ten blasphemous vignettes, each inspired by one of the Biblical Commandments, [it] goes out of its way to be irreverent and hilarious..."

The Associated Press and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* both noted the Jesus sex scenes; *Independent Critics.com* proclaims the sketch containing them to be the funniest, noting as an aside, "By the way, did I mention that conservative Christians may find this film offensive?" *FilmStew.com* raved, "'The Ten' is as sacrilegious as 1979's *The Life of Brian*..."

In a culture where tolerance is touted as the supreme virtue, when it comes to Christianity, the media elites only show tolerance to those who misappropriate Christian beliefs and imagery for their own tawdry ends. We rarely see this happen with any other religions. As Bill Donohue said to the media on August 1, "If Hollywood were to substitute Muhammad for Jesus, it is a sure bet that many of these same critics wouldn't find the humor in it. Moreover, we'd all be watching the fallout that such a movie would engender on the evening news."