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STATEMENT BY ARCHBISHOP DANIEL E. PILARCZYK REGARDING

*THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST*

As of this date, I have not been able to see Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ*. Given the violence and brutality that reportedly pervades the film, I probably will not see it.

Yet two things are clear to me from the publicity and comment that has preceded the public screening of the film.

The first is that, no matter what the film maker intended, the film is not a full and faithful presentation of the four gospel narratives of the passion of Our Lord. Apparently the film adds some non-gospel material to the narrative and omits other gospel material. Like all works that claim to be worthy of consideration as art, *The Passion of the Christ* is an individual artist's interpretation and must be viewed as such. Some persons who have seen the film have found it profoundly moving. Other have not.

Secondly, the film must not be allowed to justify any resurgence of the anti-Semitism that most religious communities have worked so hard to leave behind. No one should accuse the film maker of deliberate anti-Semitic intentions. But, at the same time, viewers must be careful not to take away from the film anything that would seemingly justify a lack of love and respect for our Jewish brothers and sisters.

Viewers and potential viewers may find helpful the collection of Catholic documents recently republished by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops under the title *The Bible, the Jews, and the Death of Jesus*. This publication is available through the bishops' conference web site, [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).