

## The Passion continued

So what is all the controversy about? Topics range anywhere from the violence of the film to the message that Gibson is trying to extend to all audiences. Though this film is the topic of heated debate since before it premiered, maybe the question should be why did Gibson choose this movie at all? The answer is simple. According to *The Making of Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ*, Gibson's answer proves to be simple to him, but the answer is not well-liked by the viewers. "It's like any other story that gets told," says Gibson. But it does not die here. Gibson adds, "I want people to understand the reality of the story... I found it healing for me. If you're wounded in life, I use the wounds of Christ to heal myself."

Using the gospels as a source, Gibson used his learning to form a harsh reality that some audiences will find disheartening. Movie critics such as, Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, from the *Spirituality & Health* website, suggest the film is not for young people or children. "Even those who are accustomed to witnessing gore and mayhem in the movies – and on the evening news – will be shocked by the unrelenting cruelty and bloodshed on the screen. We had been prepared by what we had heard about the movie and went braced to endure it. We found ourselves both amazed and grateful that Jesus choose to suffer violence rather than to practice it!"

No matter the reason to see this movie, it is not a question that seeing it should be brought to the front.

If you want to see it, see it! Only you can make the judgment call.

Audiences that have seen it can state their opinion on the movie at websites such as

[www.moviereviews.ca](http://www.moviereviews.ca). This Apollo guide to movies lets the viewer form his opinion under the comments section. Brian Webster's critique of *The Passion* is an example. While Webster used continuous referral to a "religious agenda" and "claustrophobia" in reference to the religious aspect and context of the film, readers of his review had a lot to say. One such reader expresses her opinion: "Mr. Webster found no redeeming qualities in this film, one that so many moviegoers have found moving and powerful. It is obvious that Mr. Webster has an ANTI-religious agenda, at least as it relates to Christ..."

Other comments on the movie can be found in newspapers. *USA TODAY* readers express their side as well. A Las Vegas resident, who is Jewish, said: "The Jews of the time are made to look like cruel idiots. I don't know how Mel Gibson can say he respects us." The Jewish and Christian faith has brought a question to fellow believers on what to believe in the film. Religions who continue to follow their belief want viewers to understand how they feel. Discussion of faith and love has set some controversy in churches. Signs above the church doors on signs on the street of the church have let passerby know how they feel about the movie.

Discussions of *The Passion* were introduced at Brevard College in the Myers Dining Hall on March 15. Leading the forum was Brevard College's Chaplain, Shelly Webb. Also, Reverend Dave Desforge from Grace Community Church, Father Carl Del Giudice from Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Reverend Fred Jordan from Brevard First United Methodist Church, and Brevard College Professor Preston Woodruff spoke from the perspective of the community and college.

Topics ranged from "one man's expression," speaking about Mel Gibson, to the actual violence in the film. Questions from the audience broadened as Shelly Webb asked the community and students to speak out. Father Carl Del Giudice spoke of individuality as one student commented on peer pressure to view the film. Giudice suggested, "It is up to you as an individual. Don't rely on someone else's judgments. If you want to see the film, see it." Advice and commentaries from other speakers followed. Woodruff ended with a prayer from John Paul II as the discussion came to an end.

In conclusion, controversy has proven to be something to talk about. Without it *The Passion* would not be as popular by name. Perhaps the best quote is one by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, "No matter what other beliefs we bring to the theater, we can all agree that Jesus is an innocent victim here. The most compelling message of this movie is that in his name, we are obligated to extend our compassion to victims everywhere."