

May 21, 2006

Statement from Archbishop Edward Gilbert regarding the movie, *The Da Vinci Code*

The reason I have agreed to offer a brief statement on released movie *The Da Vinci Code* is that I received so many telephone calls about the book and was asked so many questions in airports by people who were upset by the book.

The first point I want to make is that the movie is based on a novel. That is what the author intended. The movie will not change its nature - it will never be anything other than a novel. It is not a book on theology and Church history.

My second point is that there have been a number of scholarly critiques about the novel. The most incisive and objective critique that I have seen was the printed text of the address given in Washington by Father Gerald O'Collins SJ, a systematic theologian who teaches at the Gregorian University in Rome. It is available in the CNS documentary service, *Origins* (January 27, 2005 p. 213 ff). I recommend that serious readers use the Internet to download the text.

My final point is that I suspect that those who told me that their faith was challenged by the book will be even more upset by the movie whether they see it or no. Obviously, the movie will impact on more people than the book did - people watch more than they read.

Therefore as a help to reaffirming those whose faith may have been shaken, I am supporting the publication of the text that follows this statement. It deals with issues of fact in the book, which I assume will reappear in the movie. It is offered by Fr Mark Georges, a priest of Opus Dei who lives and serves in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain.

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