

THE “DA VINCI CODE” - WHAT IS ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

I have not read the book nor do I plan to see the movie, but I can offer you a few observations that will hopefully shed some light on the subject whether you read the book, see the movie, or decide not to do so. The book and movie are clearly fiction (It is sold as a Novel). They have more to do with entertainment and making a profit than critical historical study of the Catholic Church and/or faith in Jesus Christ. My personal feeling is that each person should ask why they would read the book or consider seeing the movie. If you are looking for true facts or credible research, I would suggest you do not start with a work of fiction. If you are seeking entertainment or trying to satisfy some curiosity, that might be a reason to read the book or see the movie, but that does not give us much of an insight into why all the fuss and popularity.

One reason the book may be so popular is the idea of conspiracy. Conspiracy sells! It reminds me of the success of Oliver Stone's book and movie on the assassination of “JFK.” It made for a good story and movie but it has not changed the facts that overwhelmingly support Oswald acted alone. Some will never believe the facts, and Stone and others have turned a nice profit off the emotion and importance of the event. I remember seeing the film and it made a compelling story and conspiracy theory but it does not pass the test of a critical research for the Truth. It was based on pseudo-facts and fiction, the stuff of a good conspiracy! There are many similar liberties taken in the “Da Vinci Code” when it comes to establishing facts in order to build up its own intrigue and conspiracy theme. Like the JFK assassination the subject matter of Christ and the Church is going to evoke strong reactions. After all, what is more important than the identity of Christ to Christians? Therefore, for those who see the book or movie as an attack on Christianity, the Church and/or faith I would suggest you not see the film or read the book. Why? Because you will not be able to view it as entertainment, you might even see it as sacrilegious and therefore you, in good conscience, will be better off to avoid it.

If you do go to the movie or read the book, see it for what it is, a novel intended to keep your interest through the necessary development of conspiracy and deception. Keep in mind the author was not interested in the history of salvation or the real Jesus. Brown has apparently been very successful in creating this story of intrigue, murder and conspiracy. His work might entertain you but it can't possibly save you or anyone for that matter! Now I think we are getting closer to the fuss ... we already have the True story that has created a stir for over 2000 years ... **Christ is Risen, He is the Son of God, He is our Lord and Savior. Alleluia!** The Church has always proclaimed this truth from the very beginning and it has not been proclaimed with the tools of imagination, ink or film; but with the living flesh and blood of Christ and the flesh and blood of martyrs and saints throughout history. Despite all the claims of the book and the marketing of the “Da Vinci Code” as truth, the movie has absolutely nothing to do with a search for truth. So if you decide to see it in the movies or read the book, please don't confuse the issue.

Is there more to the fuss than this? Have you heard the environmental saying “It is not nice to fool Mother Nature?” This introduces my final insight. Truth, when found, has real meaning, and we should not take it lightly or take liberties with it, just as we don't distort nature without risking the possibility of lasting damage. There is an intrinsic value to truth and honesty that we all need and seek. I suspect that the real controversy is whether much good can come from a novel that distorts the “Real Jesus” even if it is fiction. Distortions if taken for authentic can keep us from encountering the real. For anybody who cannot distinguish the “Real Jesus” from the Jesus found in the “Da Vinci Code”, or for those weak in faith the movie provides a possible stumbling block and that is enough for me not to recommend it.

What positive steps can a person of faith seeking deeper understanding take without seeing the movie or reading the book? I would suggest reading the Scriptures, the Early Church Fathers, The lives of the Saints, and the Early Church Councils. This will deepen your understanding of Church History. You will see that the lived faith for over 2000 years clearly refutes the claims of the “Da Vinci Code” and rightly catalogues this work as fiction. Give credit to the author, he knows human nature well enough and created a story that has made a lot of money, but his fame and money are fleeting, and the conspiracy theory of the “Da Vinci Code” will take its proper place among the imaginary not the real. Ask yourself a question. Do you believe 2000 years from now anyone will be talking about the “Da Vinci Code” as truth? How about 5 years from now? How does the saying go “15 minutes of fame”? To know the truth is always the best response to fiction. To know that the Jesus Christ of History is the same as the Jesus Christ of the Church yesterday, today and forever is all one needs in order to view the “Da Vinci Code” as a work of fiction.

Fr. Mike

Ps: If you are still curious you might want to look at a few of the sites below. These sites clearly expose the major fictions and deceptions found in the “Da Vinci Code.”

Excellent on line information on the fact vs fiction of the Da Vinci Code:

- USCCB & Catholic Communications Campaign: <http://www.jesusdecoded.com/>
- University of Georgia Catholic Center: <http://www.uga.edu/cc/news/davinci.htm>
- Catholic Answers (a question and answer format): http://www.catholic.com/library/cracking_da_vinci_code.asp
- OPUS DEI - Latin “Work of God.” <http://www.opusdei.org/art.php?w=32&p=7017>