

Passion fans feel snubbed by Hollywood: Academy Award omission

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Conservative Christian groups are outraged but not surprised, they say, that last year's box-office hit *The Passion of the Christ* didn't get an Academy Award nomination for best picture or best director.

Mel Gibson's film, which grossed \$370 million in the U.S. and more than \$600 million worldwide, did receive three nominations—for makeup, original score and cinematography.

But some religious fans still see the omission as a snub, said Catholic League president William Donohue. "There's no question that bigotry and prejudice is rank among the liberal elite of Hollywood," said Louis Sheldon, founder of the Washington-based Traditional Values Coalition. Tim Wildmon, president of the Tupelo, Mississippi-based American Family Association, said he would have been surprised if *The Passion* received a best picture nomination from what he called the "anti-Christian" Hollywood community.

Gibson's bloody depiction of the last days of Christ's life is the ninth-highest-grossing movie of all time in the U.S. Some Jewish leaders say it is anti-Semitic in the way it stereotypically portrays Jews and blames them for Christ's death, but the film was extremely popular.

It won "favorite drama motion picture" at the 2005 People's Choice Awards. - *Religion News Service*