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Still photographs taken on film location by Ken Duncan and Philippe Antonello.

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Aramaic and Latin text with English translation taken from *The Passion of The Christ*, a screenplay by Benedict Fitzgerald and Mel Gibson. Copyright © 2004 by Icon Distribution, Inc.

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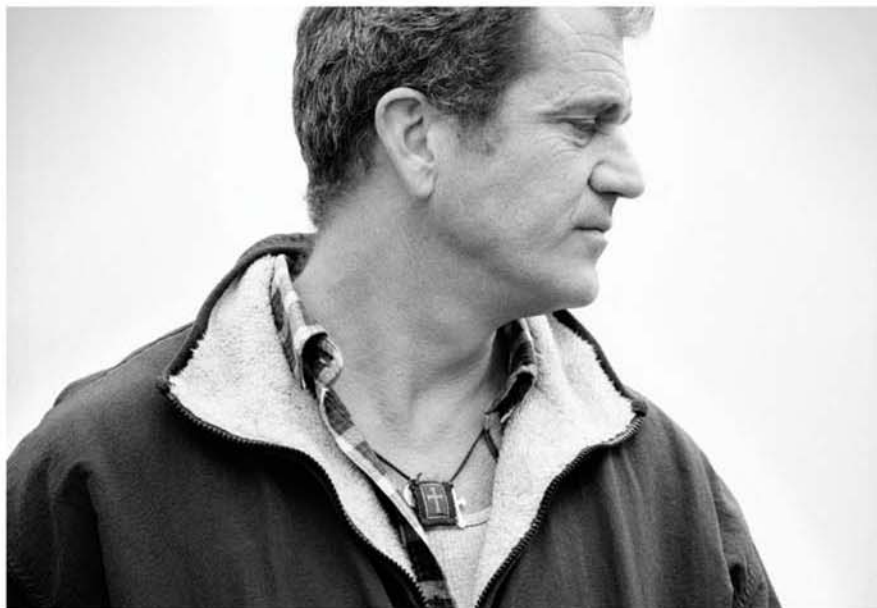
THE PASSION



PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE MOVIE

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

FOREWORD



People often ask me why I wanted to make a film about the Passion of Our Lord. My usual response is that I've wanted to make this film for over ten years, which is true. That seems to answer the question for most.

The reality, of course, is more complex, and had its genesis during a time in which I found myself trapped with feelings of terrible, isolated emptiness. Because I was brought up to be a good Christian and a good Catholic, the only effective resource for me was prayer. I asked God for His help.

It was during this period of meditation and prayer that I first conceived the idea of making a film about The Passion. The idea took root very gradually. I began to look at the work of some of the great artists who had drawn inspiration from the same story. Caravaggio immediately came to mind, as well as Mantegna, Masaccio, Piero della Francesca . . . their paintings were as true to their inspiration as I wanted the film to be of mine. It is one thing to paint one moment of The Passion and be true to it; it is quite another to dramatize the entire mysterious event.

Holy Scripture and accepted visions of The Passion were the only possible texts I could draw from to fashion a dramatic film. But what about the film itself? I wanted the effort to be a testament to the infinite love of Jesus the Christ, which has saved, and continues to save, many the world over.

There is a classical Greek word which best defines what "truth" guided my work, and that of everyone else involved in the project: *alētheia*. It simply means "unforgetting" (derived from *lethē*—water from Homer's River Lethe caused forgetfulness). It has unfortunately become part of the ritual of our modern secular existence to forget. The film, in this sense, is not meant as a historical documentary nor does it claim to have assembled all the facts. But it does enumerate those described in relevant Holy Scripture. It is not merely representative or merely expressive. I think of it as contemplative in the sense that one is compelled to remember (unforget) in a spiritual way which cannot be articulated, only experienced.

That is the truth I aspired to, as did my friends Philippe Antonello and Ken Duncan, both of whom were often on hand during the filming. Their keen-eyed way of looking and seeing fills this book. The images that move rapidly in the film move more slowly in these photographs, but pull you into the moments they depict. They are, in their own right, pieces of a larger revelation. My new hope is that *The Passion of The Christ* will help many more people recognize the power of His love and let Him help them to save their own lives.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Mel Gibson', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Los Angeles, October 2003

THE PASSION

GETHSEMANE

Then Jesus brought them to an olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, "Sit here while I go on ahead to pray." He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he began to be filled with anguish and deep distress. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and watch with me."

He went on a little farther and fell face down on the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine." Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you stay awake and watch with me even one hour? Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak!"

Again he left them and prayed, "My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away until I drink it, your will be done." He returned to them again and found them sleeping, for they just couldn't keep their eyes open.

So he went back to pray a third time, saying the same things again. Then he came to the disciples and said, "Still sleeping? Still resting? Look, the time has come. I, the Son of Man, am betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let's be going. See, my betrayer is here!"

JESUS IS BETRAYED

The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a battalion of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him. Stepping forward to meet them, he asked, "Whom are you looking for?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. Judas was standing there with them when Jesus identified himself. And as he said, "I am he," they all fell backward to the ground! Once more he asked them, "Whom are you searching for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"I told you that I am he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go."

Judas had given them a prearranged signal: "You will know which one to arrest when I go over and give him the kiss of greeting." So Judas came straight to Jesus. "Greetings, Teacher!" he exclaimed and gave him the kiss.

Jesus said, "My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for." Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. One of the men with Jesus pulled out a sword and slashed off an ear of the high priest's servant.

"Put away your sword," Jesus told him. "Those who use the sword will be killed by the sword. Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us,

and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?" And he touched the place where the man's ear had been and healed him.

Then Jesus spoke to the mob, "Am I some dangerous criminal, that you have come armed with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there every day. But this is your moment, the time when the power of darkness reigns." At that point, all the disciples deserted him and fled.

There was a young man following along behind, clothed only in a linen nightshirt. When the mob tried to grab him, they tore off his clothes, but he escaped and ran away naked.

*Matthew 26:36–46, 49–54, 56; John 18: 3–8; Mark 14:44, 51–52;
Luke 22:51–53*





ABBA



My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me.
Matthew 26:39



Before the Passover celebration, Jesus got up and began to wash the disciples' feet. After washing he said, I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

John 13:1, 4-5, 12, 15