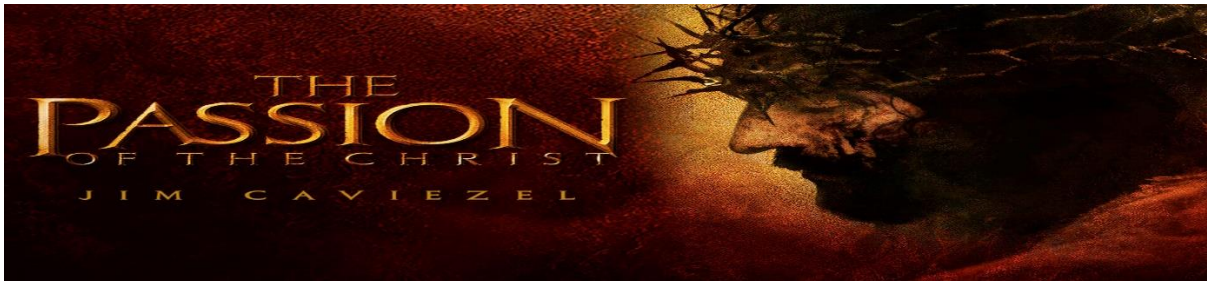


A PASSION FROM THE HEART FOR ALL HEARTS



One movie I will recommend we watch and rewatch this week is – **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST**. The Passion of the Christ is a powerful and controversial 2004 American biblical drama film that depicts the final 12 hours of Christ' Passion. The film was directed by Mel Gibson with Jim Caviezel playing Jesus Christ; this cinematic masterpiece has captivated audiences all over the world. Mel Gibson was determined to portray the Passion of Christ to our secular world, and he knew the film would be attacked by various secular and unclean forces that he asked so many Catholic priests to celebrate daily Masses for that intention. He equally got a local priest (Philip Ryan), to visit the set daily to provide counsel, confession, and Holy Communion to Jim Caviezel. Although the film was produced with a budget of \$30million, it became a hit throughout the world that it has made over \$612million worldwide.

However, the main thrust of this film was revealed in the interview Jim Caviezel granted on 27th May 2013, regarding his role as Jesus Christ in the film. According to Jim, a lot of miracles took place while they were filming; not only was their production set struck twice by lightning, Jim while hanging on the Cross was literally set on fire by a lightning but was unharmed, he equally had his shoulders dislocated while carrying the Cross. Going further, Jim stated he knew he was unworthy to play the role and throughout the whole film, he prayed and offered his sufferings to God for his own conversion and the conversion of the world. Jim Caviezel stated that he gave his all to the movie and that the movie touched him personally and transformed him profoundly to the point he had a heart operation at the end of filming it. Yes, the Passion of Christ which we commemorate on this Passion Sunday centres on Christ' heartbeat for us as revealed in this week's Sunday Readings and calls for the transformation of our hearts.

My friends, the Passion of Jesus Christ which we commemorate this entire week is not a drama we repay every year as Christians, no, it is the height of Jesus' love for us. That same Jesus whose heart was so full of love that He suffered and died for us, is asking you and I to open our hearts to be transformed by Him. May His Passion remind us of the many people who are suffering around us and in our world. May it remind us of the many times we have abandoned true love in search of fleeting pleasures; and may it lead us to open our hearts to Him this Holy Week and beyond. God Loves You!

Fr Johnpromise Umeozuru (**Homily for Passion Sunday Year B**) 24/03/2024