



For Immediate Release

**A Special One-Night Television Event: UP Presents
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
IN ITS COMMERCIAL TV DEBUT ON PALM SUNDAY**

**10 Years after It Made Box-Office History, Mel Gibson's
Oscar®-Nominated Movie Premieres with Limited Commercial
Interruption on Sunday, April 13, 2014 at 9 p.m. EDT/6 p.m. PDT**

**The Premiere Film is the Centerpiece of
UP's Two-week Celebration of Easter**

ATLANTA – March 12, 2014 – *The Passion of the Christ*, Mel Gibson's blockbuster retelling of Jesus' final hours, will make its commercial television premiere on the UP television network on Palm Sunday. Ten years after it captivated the world and made box office history, the powerful, provocative and three-time Oscar®-nominated and People's Choice winner *The Passion of the Christ* will air with limited commercial interruption on UP. Presented as part of UP's two-week celebration of Easter, the one-night television event takes place at 9 p.m. EDT/6 p.m. PDT on Palm Sunday, April 13, 2014.

"UP is proud to present this powerful, groundbreaking cinematic portrayal of Christ's death and resurrection as the centerpiece of our extensive Easter programming," said Charley Humbard, president and CEO, UP. "*The Passion of the Christ* is a story of unconditional love: the love of a Mother for her son and the love of a Son for his Heavenly Father—and for all mankind. This film depicts the story that is at the very heart of Christianity. It truly epitomizes our holiday theme: 'Easter Lives Here.'"

The release of *The Passion of the Christ* coincided with the founding of UP a decade ago. Today the network is one of the largest producers of faith-friendly films. Since its launch, through the end of 2014 UP will have produced 40 original films, with 18 scheduled to premiere this year and 20 additional original films scheduled for 2015.

First released theatrically in 2004, *The Passion of the Christ* took in \$612 million at the worldwide box office, becoming the highest grossing independent film of all time. The film remains the highest-grossing religious film in history. Since then, it has never aired on a commercial network. Directed by Mel Gibson (*Braveheart*, *Apocalypto*) from a script by Gibson and Benedict Fitzgerald, the film stars Jim Caviezel (*The Prisoner*, "Person of Interest") as Jesus and Monica Bellucci (*The Matrix Reloaded*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*) as Mary Magdalene. UP will air an edited-for-television version provided by the producer.

Spoken entirely in reconstructed Aramaic and Latin with subtitles, *The Passion of the Christ* focuses on the last 12 hours of Jesus of Nazareth's life. The film begins in the Garden of Olives where Jesus has gone to pray after the Last Supper. Jesus must resist the temptations of Satan. Betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Jesus is then arrested and taken within the city walls of Jerusalem where leaders of the Pharisees confront him with accusations of blasphemy and his trial results in a condemnation to death.

In addition to its massive popularity with audiences in the U.S. and abroad, *The Passion of the Christ* was lauded by numerous major film critics. USA Today's Claudia Puig wrote at the time, "Gibson has made a stunning film, beautifully photographed in contrasting dark and golden hues by Caleb Deschanel," adding, "Caviezel plays Jesus with magnetism, dignity and humility." The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Phil Kloer described it as a "movie so singular, so intense, so overwhelming that it simply has to be experienced" and James Berardinelli of ReelViews described it as "a gripping, powerful motion picture—arguably the most forceful depiction of Jesus' death ever to be committed to film." Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun-Times commented, "I was moved by the depth of feeling, by the skill of the actors and technicians, by their desire to see this project through no matter what," while Richard Roeper of TV's "Ebert & Roeper" called it "the most powerful, important and by far the most graphic interpretation of Christ's final hours ever put on film."

The Passion of the Christ was produced independently and filmed in Italy—primarily at Cinecittà Studios in Rome, in the old city of Matera, and in the ghost town of Craco. The estimated \$30 million production cost, plus an additional estimated \$15 million in marketing costs, were fully borne by Gibson and his company, Icon Productions. As one of the most successful independent movies of all time, *The Passion of the Christ* overnight created a new market for faith-based and faith-friendly films, and inspired filmmakers around the world. A decade later in 2014, The Bible continues to inspire audiences as films including *Son of God*, *Noah* and *Exodus* will be released theatrically.

The Passion of the Christ received numerous industry and critical awards, including the People's Choice Award for Favorite Motion Picture Drama, the National Board of Review Award for Freedom of Expression and ShoWest's Consumers Choice for Favorite Movie Award. The film was nominated for three Academy Awards: Best Cinematography, Best Makeup and Best Original Score. Gibson was named Hollywood Producer of the Year at the Hollywood Film Festival. The instrumental original movie soundtrack, one of three soundtracks for the film, also received a GMA Dove Award for Instrumental Album of the Year.

In addition, *The Passion of the Christ* was voted the most pro-Catholic film of all time by readers of Faith & Family magazine and the National Catholic Register newspaper. It received more votes from readers than the next three films on the list combined: *The Sound of Music* (1965), *A Man for All Seasons* (1966) and *The Song of Bernadette* (1943). In June 2006, Entertainment Weekly named *The Passion of the Christ* #1 on its list of "The 25 Most Controversial Movies of All Time."

About UP

UP, America's favorite network for uplifting entertainment is a 24-hour television network that provides high-quality, diverse, family-friendly programming, including original and premiere movies, theatricals, drama and comedy series, music and holiday specials. UP can be seen in 67 million homes in high definition (HD) and standard definition (SD) on cable systems including Comcast, Time Warner Cable, Bright House Networks, Charter and Cox Communications as well as DIRECTV (Channel 338), DISH Network (Channel 188) and Verizon FIOS (Channel 224). As part of its mission to entertain and uplift, the network's pro-social initiative "Uplift Someone" reminds and inspires people to do simple acts of kindness. UP is also a service provider to its sister network ASPIRE. Based in Atlanta, UP is a division of UP Entertainment, LLC, which also offers gMovies, the first faith-friendly streaming movie service.

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