

Catholic body opposes telecast of Jesus documentary

After protesting the controversial blockbuster 'The Da Vinci Code' last year, Roman Catholics in the metropolis have again sprung into action against the worldwide premiere of a documentary that claims to have found the burial place of Jesus that challenges the basic tenets the Christian faith.

The Catholic Secular Forum (CSF), a Mumbai-based community organisation, have written to the Discovery Channel's office in [New Delhi](#) requesting it to refrain from broadcasting the feature documentary scheduled for a worldwide premiere Sunday.

'The Lost Tomb of Jesus' is a feature documentary, directed by Emmy Award-winning documentary film-maker Simcha Jacobovici and produced by Oscar-winning director James Cameron of the 'Titanic' fame, Flex Golubev and Ric Esther Bienstock.

'The documentary trivialises the credibility of the Bible and the Christian faith,' said CSF general secretary Joseph Dias.

'The Lost Tomb of Jesus' hurts the sentiments in a pluralistic society and is an attempt for selfish profits and commercial gains or cheap publicity.'

'We want the Discovery Channel to relent from broadcasting the documentary in India. We have lodged our complaint with the channels' Delhi office and are expecting a response on the matter by Friday,' Dias told IANS here Thursday.

'The documentary can be best described as a hotchpotch, concocting archaeological adventure,' he added.

The organisation said that the timing of the broadcast during the 40 days of Lint, observed by Catholics is very unfortunate as was the case with movie version of Dan Brown's 'The Da Vinci Code'.

'The credibility of the Bible, which says that Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb and rose from the dead to rise to the heaven, is trivialised in the documentary,' Dias said.

The CSF is also protesting references made in the documentary to Judah as the secret son of Jesus through Mary Magdalene and portrayal of Mathew, one of the writers of the Gospels, as a maternal relative of Jesus and the mention of the burial of Jesus' siblings in the same tomb.

According to the Discovery Channel website, 'The Lost Tomb of Jesus' traces the discovery of thousands of tombs containing ossuaries or limestone boxes that served as coffins in the first-century Jerusalem.

'One of these tombs was found to contain ten ossuaries. Six ossuaries have inscriptions on them and it turns out that every inscriptions in this particular tomb relates to the Gospels,' it says.

'In the feature documentary, a case is made out that the 2000-year-old 'Tombs of the Ten Ossuaries' belonged to the family of Jesus of Nazareth.'

The film also documents DNA extraction from human residue found in two of the ossuaries and reveals new evidence that throws light on Jesus' relationship with Mary Magdalene.

The documentary includes dramatic recreations, based on the latest historical evidence, illustrating accurate images of Jesus of Nazareth, his family, his followers, his ministry, his crucifixion and his entombment.

'We are showing our disappointment to protest and warn viewers that a lot of mistruth is being shown on the Discovery Channel. The viewers should take such kind of telecast with a pinch of salt,' Dias warned.

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