

Discovery Channel puts off Jesus documentary telecast

Roman Catholics in the metropolis Friday called off their protest against the proposed screening of a controversial documentary on Jesus Christ after broadcaster Discovery Channel decided not to telecast the programme in India.

The Catholics in the city had earlier sprung into action against the worldwide premiere 'The Lost Tomb of Jesus' that claims to show the burial place of Jesus challenging the basic tenets the Christian faith.

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

The Catholic Secular Forum (CSF) had 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.

'We have called off our protest from today after Discovery Channel expressed regret that the channel had inadvertently hurt religious sentiments of the Christian community and decided not to telecast the feature documentary in India,' said CSF general secretary Joseph Dias here Friday.

'We had taken up the matter with the TV channel, sending it notices threatening an agitation on the day of telecast and legal action. The CSF had also presented a memorandum to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and other ministers including the Union Information and Broadcasting Minister P.R. Dasmunsi in a move to prevent the telecast.'

Dias said that CSF would, however, continue with its awareness campaign against the documentary.

'We will continue with our awareness campaign against the documentary, exposing the falsehood promoted or implied by it.'

'We will also take up the issue with the Indian government for the possibility of banning the book by Jacobovici slated to be released before Easter and also ban the sale of DVDs intended to cash in on the hype the documentary has generated ,' Dias told IANS.

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.

'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. The feature documentary makes a case 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.

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