

Open Letter to Sony

The Information Office of Opus Dei in Japan sent an open letter to the shareholders, directors and employees of Sony Corporation, which is producing "The Da Vinci Code" film. An English translation of the Japanese original follows.

04/14/2006

April 6, 2006

To the shareholders, directors and employees of Sony Corporation

Dear Sirs:

We greet you, in the assurance that you are enjoying peace and good health.

We are addressing ourselves to you, from the Information Office of Opus Dei in Japan, in regards to the expected May release of *The Da Vinci Code* film produced by Sony/Columbia.

We first wish to make clear that this letter is not at all polemical in intent, but is only for information. We are sending it, with all our respect, because you are members of a Japanese corporation with a great tradition, and for the reasons that we explain below.

In recent months it is possible that you may have heard about Opus Dei, in the context of the aforementioned film. It is likely that for many this was the first time that you have had occasion to hear the name of this institution of the Church, and some

of you might have wished to know more about it. Therefore this office feels obliged to state its availability to inform whoever wants to know about the real Opus Dei, which has nothing to do with the description sketched in the novel. Whoever wants information can ask this office, and we will respond as soon as possible with great pleasure: our doors are wide open. On the official web page (www.opusdei.org) inquirers can find plenty of information about this institution of the Catholic Church. They will see that the essence of its message is that their professional work, whatever it may be, is a way to holiness, or in other words, it is a suitable place to live the Christian faith.

As you already probably know, there are some aspects of *The Da Vinci Code* novel that distort the figure of Jesus Christ, and which affect the religious beliefs of Christians.

Moreover, in the book it is said that the Christian Faith is founded on a lie, and that the Catholic Church has over the centuries employed criminal and violent means to keep people in ignorance. The novel mixes together fact and fiction, and in the end one does not know where the boundaries lie between truth and invention. A reader without much knowledge of history may reach false conclusions, and might even feel less sympathetically inclined towards the Church, which nonetheless is worthy of respect.

All corporations, as well as their material patrimony, possess a series of intangible values which are shown in the way they treat their employees justly, the quality of their products, their attention to their clients, their care of the environment, and other similar actions. These characteristics express the social responsibility that businesses have, and do not spring

from self-interest, but rather conviction; and it is certain also that these intangible values contribute to the measure in which these corporations are appreciated by those around them, and even contribute to their economic value in the stock market as they guarantee stability. One of these important immaterial values is respect towards the beliefs of citizens: in our free society, responsibility implies respect. This obligation affects large corporations in a special way, moving as they do in multinational and multi-cultural spheres, which demand particular attention.

We have become aware, through the public declarations of some of the participants in the project, that Sony/Columbia sincerely wishes that this film would not injure the religious sensibilities of viewers, and would like to avoid the release being a cause of division, in an already too-

divided world. This respectful line expresses well Sony's reputation and culture. Some of the media have specifically written that Sony is considering the possibility of including at the start of the film a disclaimer making it clear that this is a work of fiction, and that any resemblance to reality is pure coincidence. An eventual decision of Sony in this direction would be a sign of respect towards the figure of Jesus Christ, the history of the Church, and the religious beliefs of viewers.

A final thought: unfortunately nowadays it is not uncommon for the name of God to be used to justify hatred and violence. Precisely for this reason, we are making a renewed appeal to peace, which is in the heart of the Catholic Church and in the soul of all Christians.

We ask for pardon for any inadequate expression that we may have employed.

We send our regards with our best wishes of peace, health and prosperity.

Thank you very much.

Seizo Inahata

Information Office of Opus Dei,
Japan

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