

each made in the image and likeness of God. We have upheld the sacred union of a husband and wife joined as one in the sacrament of marriage. We have honored our Blessed Mother as the model of faith. St. Mary Magdalene herself is the repentant sinner who stood at the foot of the cross and saw the resurrected Lord; she is an inspiration for all of us.

The book attacks Opus Dei, an organization founded by St. Josemaria Escriva in 1928. Opus Dei is neither a cult nor spy organization, but a personal prelature of the Holy Father. The purpose is for all members—priests and laity—is to sanctify their work as an offering to God. Moreover, there are no monks in Opus Dei, especially albino ones.

There are more half-truths, misrepresentations, and lies. In sum, this work is blasphemous against God, our Church, and Christianity as a whole. Remember a few months ago the Islamic community was outraged by the cartoons of Mohammed; rightfully so, although no one should resort to violence or the taking of innocent lives. Nevertheless, we should be outraged. However, we too should take this opportunity to profess our faith, counter the lies with the truth and evangelize. In such a way, good will triumph over the blasphemous conspiracy presented by The Da Vinci Code, both book and movie.

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Pamphlet 220

## **The Mortal Sin of Blasphemy**

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One of the greatest violations against the love of God and the reverence we owe to Him alone is the mortal sin of blasphemy. Blasphemy is thinking, speaking, or acting against God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – in a contemptuous, scornful, profane, or abusive manner. Serious ridicule of the saints, sacred objects, or persons consecrated to God is also blasphemous because God is indirectly attacked. As Christians who are God-fearing, who truly respect God as God, and who love God with our whole, heart, mind and soul, we must be outraged at the blasphemous book and movie entitled The Da Vinci Code.

While the author Dan Brown states that his work is fiction, he also states it is based on facts. This work is a weaving of half-truths, misrepresentations, and outright lies. We do not have time to elaborate on all of them. However, a good source book would be The DaVinci Deception. Here are a few of the assertions paraphrasing directly from the book:

The book asserts that our New Testament was the product of man, not God. Wrong. The human authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The words of Sacred Scripture teach faithfully, firmly, and without error that truth God wanted us to have for our salvation.

The book asserts that throughout history there never has been a definitive version of the Bible. Wrong again. At the time of our Lord, the Jewish people had the 46 books we know as our Old Testament. The New Testament writings were completed by the year 100 at the latest and there is growing evidence that the completion date was closer to 70. In the early second century of Christianity, St. Irenaeus (a disciple of St. Polycarp, who was a student of St. John the Apostle), St. Justin the Martyr and Bishop Papias attested to the 27 books of our New Testament being used at Mass. The Muratorian Fragment (AD 155) lists the books of the New Testament and distinguished between those that were genuine to the apostolic faith and those that were heretical and forged, referring to Gnostic writings. There were only four gospels, those attributed to St. Matthew, an apostle; St. Mark, a disciple of St. Peter; St. Luke a disciple of St. Paul and who knew our Blessed Mother; and St. John, an apostle. These four gospels were accepted because of their apostolic witness.

After the legalization of Christianity in AD 313, the Church was able to meet and to set officially the texts of Sacred Scripture. In AD 367, St. Athanasius listed the 27 books of the New Testament. When Pope St. Damasus instructed St. Jerome to translate the Sacred Scriptures into Latin in AD 382, producing the Vulgate Text, the canon of Sacred Scripture comprised 46 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament, as we have today and what the apostolic Church had accepted. This canon

was again affirmed at the Council of Hippo in AD 393, the Council of III Carthage in AD 397, and in a letter of Pope Innocent I in AD 405. In AD 1441, the Council of Florence again defined the canon of Sacred Scripture. Therefore, the Church has had a definitive version of the Bible. The first person to tamper with the canon was Martin Luther in 1532 when he removed 7 books from the Old Testament.

What then are the Gnostic gospels? They did not appear until about AD 150-200. The Gnostics were a heretical sect that believed in a God and an equally powerful devil. First mistake! They thought everything material, including our person, was evil; everything spiritual was good. Our spirit was imprisoned in the body and only a special knowledge or gnosis would free us. Jesus, a spiritual creature (another mistake) only appeared human; he entered a human Jesus, because a spiritual being would not really become incarnated. He gave the gnosis. He then did not die on the cross; only the human Jesus did. Therefore, the Gnostics did not believe in the incarnation. There was no redemption of us, body and soul. There were no sacraments because God would not channel grace through evil material things like bread and wine, water or oil. The Gnostics did not believe in marriage or procreation, because no one would want to imprison another spirit in a body. Moreover, abortion, suicide, and infanticide were not uncommon among some of the Gnostic sects, because these acts freed the spirit from the body. For good reason, the Church condemned Gnosticism. The Gnostics wrote

“gospels” appending names like the “Gospel of St. Thomas” to lend credibility, but these were bogus. None of the Gnostic gospels can be traced to apostolic origin, and for that reason plus their heretical teaching, they were condemned.

The Da Vinci Code asserts that Emperor Constantine declared Jesus as divine. Wrong again. Another lie. The gospels attest Jesus is a divine person, true God who became true man. He showed His divine power through such ways as His miracles, exorcisms, and the forgiveness of sin. He suffered, died, and rose for our salvation. Just think: Would those apostles have gone forth to found the Church and face martyrdom if Jesus truly was not the divine Lord and Savior, who rose from the dead? Would the Church have survived all of these centuries if Jesus were not the divine Lord and Savior, still present in the midst of His Church? Granted in AD 325, Constantine and Pope St. Sylvester convoked the Council of Nicea to address another heresy called Arianism which asserted Jesus was just a human; that council produced the Nicene Creed, based on the Apostles Creed attributed to the apostles. Nevertheless, Christians have always believed in the divinity of Christ.

The book asserts Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. Wrong again. There is no historical evidence even in the bogus Gnostic gospels to support such a claim. The book asserts the Church is “anti-woman.” Wrong again. We have always upheld the equal dignity of man and woman,