

***The Da Vinci Code* is hogwash. It's an entertaining mystery, filled with engaging puzzles, but it pretends to be a history lesson, and it's not. The book and the movie would have us believe that Jesus of Nazareth married Mary Magdalene and started a family, and that the Catholic Church has known all about this and has been keeping it secret. The author claims that Leonardo da Vinci encoded this story in his famous fresco *The Last Supper*, and that the Catholic organization Opus Dei commits murders.**

There is absolutely no convincing evidence that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene or to anyone else. Could God have used a married man to save the world? I think God could have done that. But there is no evidence that he did. The bible presents Jesus as a single man who had no children.

Did da Vinci hide the image of Mary Magdalene in *The Last Supper*? No. The book and the movie think the youthful figure on the right of Jesus is Mary Magdalene, but artists and art historians have always identified that person as John.

Does Opus Dei commit murders? Of course not.

Promoters of the film say they mean no harm. They want you to know it's just a fictional story. But they present it as if it were fact. This isn't just fiction. It's a lie. And it's fooling a lot of people.

Is the Catholic Church worried about this? Not completely. The book has sold a lot of copies. But the Bible has sold a lot more. Many people are seeing the movie. But more people are seeing the truth. Hollywood is not in charge. God is in charge.

That is what we celebrate with the Ascension of the Lord. After the resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples to strengthen their faith and give them confidence. Then he was taken up to heaven, where he is in charge. We state our belief in this every Sunday in the creed: He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

Today's psalm was probably written for a ceremony when the ark of the covenant was brought up to the Jerusalem Temple. We sing, "God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord." Just as our ancestors once sang with joy when the ark went up into the Temple, so we sing for joy as Jesus goes up into heaven.

Believers sometimes meet doubters who want to change what we believe and how we act. Sometimes people will say they mean no harm, but other times they are trying to make us lower our standards.

This is not a day to be low. It is a day to be high with the ascended Jesus. We look at the world from his perspective, a world troubled, yet loveable; a world that struggles with faith. Yet we can walk all our days in confidence that Christ walks this way with us, that he has ascended, and that he sits at the right hand of the Father, where he rewards those who seek the truth.