

Mel Gibson Sparks Controversy by Recasting Jesus and Mary Magdalene in 'Passion' Sequel

After more than 20 years Mel Gibson is returning to the story that shook the world. His long-awaited sequel to *The Passion of the Christ*, titled *The Resurrection of the Christ*, is officially moving forward but not without controversy.

According to the Daily Mail, the director has chosen to recast both Jesus and Mary Magdalene for the upcoming film, a move that has “sparked outrage from fans.”

In the original 2004 masterpiece Jim Caviezel’s portrayal of Christ left an unforgettable mark on audiences and has since become synonymous with the image of Jesus on film. Italian actress Monica Bellucci originally portrayed Mary Magdalene, delivering a performance that became one of her most recognized dramatic roles.

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This time Finnish actor Jaakko Ohtonen will step into the role of Jesus while Cuban actress Mariela Garriga will portray Mary Magdalene. A source told *Variety*, “It made sense to recast the whole film. They would have had to do all this CGI stuff, all this digital stuff, de-aging and all that, that would have been very costly.”

The decision, while practical from a production standpoint, has left many viewers disappointed. For two decades Caviezel’s depiction of Jesus has defined the role for countless believers and moviegoers. He was more than an actor in a biblical drama. He embodied a spiritual connection to the story of Christ’s suffering making it deeply personal for

fans.

Caviezel, now 57, has previously expressed his desire to return. As The Daily Mail noted, he recently shared on a podcast that he first learned of the sequel in 2013 and that he hoped to “really stay in this moment” if given the chance to portray Christ again. “I want to enjoy this one more than I did the other one,” he said.



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Despite Caviezel's enthusiasm the passage of time appears to have dictated the casting choices. Mel Gibson, 69, told The Joe Rogan Experience earlier this year that the upcoming film will be “very ambitious,” adding, “I think in order to really tell the story properly you have to start with the fall of the angels. You need to go to hell. You need to go to Sheol.”

Those words have fueled both excitement and concern. The scale of Gibson's vision seems vast and cosmic, but with such ambition comes risk. Fans will remember that the original Passion succeeded not because of creative spectacle but because it stayed grounded in Scripture and the raw humanity of Christ's sacrifice.

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Gibson admitted the project will not be easy. “It's not going to be easy and it's going to require a lot of planning and I'm not wholly sure I can pull it off,” he said. “To tell you the truth it's super ambitious. But I'll take a crack at it because that's what you've got to do right, walk up to the plate?”

The first part of The Resurrection of the Christ is set to premiere on Good Friday, Mar. 26, 2027 followed by part two on

Ascension Day, May 6, 2027.

Whether audiences embrace Ohtonen in the role remains to be seen. But beyond casting choices the heart of the matter lies in Gibson's handling of the story itself. Caviezel's legacy as Jesus may be impossible to replicate, but what truly matters is that Gibson continues to portray the Son of God faithfully without bending to cinematic impulse or emotional excess.

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In the end fans may forgive a new face. What they cannot afford to lose is a film that drifts from the power and truth of the Gospel that made the first Passion so enduring.

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