Simon of Cyrene (James Caan) helps Jesus Christ (James Caviezel) carry a cross on the set of "The Passion of the Christ," directed by Mel Gibson. It is set for a Wednesday release.

**Mel Gibson's 'Passion' stirs campus interest**

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Dozens of students at Truman State University have already bought tickets for the upcoming showing of Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ." Last week, the favorite movie to see in the last 12 hours of Christ's life and opens in Kirksville and nationwide Wednesday.

Many Christian groups on campus are anticipating watching the film. But other organizations, like Hillel and the Freethinkers Society, are wondering how the film will affect their upcoming plans.

Gibson, who is a conservative Roman Catholic, has said neither he nor his movie is anti-Semitic. "For me, it goes against the tenets of my faith," he said in an ABC interview May 3.

"It's based on fact," he said. "The Romans are portrayed will kind of fan the flames of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism has, in the past, been justified on the theory that Jews inherently carry the guilt of Jesus' death." But he said the film will be a worthwhile experience for all people.

"I think that from 'The Passion' people at least will become more informed in the life of Jesus," he said.

Junior Alan Venneman, a member of the Catholic Newman Council, said participating in the film is anti-Semitic, they may be changing their minds.

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