

wrong idea that the 'best' kinds of Jews are those who believe Jesus to be their Messiah.

Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (1979) is not strictly about Jesus; it satirises religious and political fanaticism and does it wonderfully. It would have been even better, though, if it had directly satirised the Jesus story instead of focusing on the fictional Brian Cohen. No mainstream movie has ever had the courage to poke fun directly at the Gospel myth.

Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) is an adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis' novel *The last Temptation*. I think it has the most interesting and earthly Jesus yet seen on the screen. This Jesus struggles with the demands of



**"I hope for nothing. I fear nothing. I am free"
- Nikos Kazantzakis
(engraved on his tomb in Crete)**

God and expresses the flaws of his nature - deceit, hypocrisy, fear, lust and pride. He clearly comes across as a man of this world and not as some visitor from Heaven.

It is because of their selective reading and pious interpretation of the Gospels that Christians find this film so deeply offensive and blasphemous. Those same Gospels, however, reveal a man who is anything but God's perfect son. Scorsese's film cannot simply be dismissed as having nothing in common with the Gospel Jesus, as many would like to believe. His hypocrisy, for example, is clearly evident in Matthew 5:39, 44; Matthew 10:32-33; 12:34; 21:12-13; 23:15-33; Luke 11:40; John 18:22-23. And, according to Matthew's Gospel, he denies that he is morally perfect (19:17). What I like about this Jesus movie is that it can be understood in a secular sense - whether or not that was the intention of its Catholic director. And as fallible people we can identify with this Jesus, unlike the perfect image of Christianity.

This, of course, is not so with the most recent Jesus film, Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* which, like the God of the Bible, is nothing more than an ugly work of sadism. It is one of the most violent and repulsive films I have ever seen. As such, it crucifies more than Jesus: it assaults the spirit rather than uplifting it. Jesus turns the other cheek in the face of relentless torture, but the film contradicts the message by raising your anger to boiling point.

I have yet to see a Jesus film made by a genuine freethinker or Humanist. All of the efforts so far have the mark of Christianity one way or the other, Scorsese's movie included. □

IRISH SON

Brian McFadden is causing a stir over the lyrics of the title song of the debut solo album *Irish Son*, just released. So here it is in all its irreligious glory:

*I was born in the heart of Dublin
Back when being gay wasn't cool
Made get on our knees every Sunday with the other fools
We were warped by the Christian Brothers
In the cell blocks at our schools
Get a handprint on your skin
Before you break their rules*

*Go hit me now
That I'm twice your size
Brushed off the accusations
And bowed before your lies*

*This is the city that raised me
With the religion they gave me
Now I'm old enough to know my own mind
And it was leaving that saved me
I seen so much that has changed me
Just break with your past
Feed your own mind
This Irish son has moved with the times*

*Weddings deaths or baptizing children
That's my debt paid to the church
I don't need that kind of salvation
When I get hurt
Don't fill my head with sermons
And force me to believe*

*This is the city that raised me
With the religion they gave me
Now I'm old enough to know my own mind
And it was leaving that saved me
I seen so much that has changed me
Just break with your past
Feed your own mind
Cos' this Irish son has moved with the times*

*Our father who art in heaven
Come down here and make your presence known
We can't do it on our own
The lunatics let run the asylum
How can we find peace inside your home
When you can't trust your own*

*This is the city that raised me
With the religion they gave me
Now I'm old enough to know my own mind
But it was leaving that saved me
I've seen so much that has changed me
So just break with your past
Feed your own mind
Cos' this Irish son has moved with the times
Cos' this Irish son has moved with the times.*