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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 04, 2004

## The Year Of The Christ

by Michael in New York on 11/04/2004 01:36:00 PM

Two signal events bookend this year and they are inextricably linked. Early in 2004, Mel Gibson's "The Passion Of The Christ" was an astonishing blockbuster throughout the country. It's one of the top-grossing movies of the year and it's in Aramaic for gosh sakes. The pundits on the coasts were astonished but people in the heartland lined up to see it again and again. (It made more than **three times as much** as "Fahrenheit 9-11" at the box office.)

And now George Bush is president. 56% of Catholics voted for Bush over the first Catholic nominee since John F. Kennedy! As a practicing Catholic who was furious with the Bishops that stumped for Bush, that breaks my heart. Right there, in that one group, you've got a margin for victory for Bush. (You can blame any group, really, since the race was tight enough to hinge on one state.)

Voters weren't most concerned with Iraq or terrorism or even the economy. They voted on **moral issues**. Pundits on both coasts were again astonished. Our young men and women are dying overseas and people at home are more worried about gay marriage.

"Democrats were left with the fact that in the past 28 years, only Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton among their ranks have made it, and both had Southern and evangelical support. Mr. Kerry, a lifelong Roman Catholic, often struggled this year to speak of his faith in public," **says the New York Times**.

"Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter got elected because they were comfortable with their faith," said Representative Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, a former Clinton aide. "What happened was that a part of the electorate came open to what Clinton and Carter had to say on everything else - health care, the environment, whatever - because they were very comfortable that Clinton and Carter did not disdain the way these people lived their lives, but respected them."

"He added: "We need a nominee and a party that is comfortable with faith and values. And if we have one, then all the hard work we've done on Social Security or America's place in the world or college education can be heard. But people aren't going to hear what we say until they know that we don't approach them as Margaret Mead would an anthropological experiment.""

It's the year of the Christ. Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.



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