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ZINGERPLATZ PICTURES' *HAND OF GOD* TO SCREEN IN ITALIAN PARLIAMENT

On Friday morning, June 22, in the Sala delle Colonne of the historical Palazzo Marini, a building situated in the premises of the Italian Parliament in Rome, there will be a special screening of Italian-American filmmaker Joe Cultrera's documentary *Hand of God*. This screening – the first European one of this award winning film – is being presented by the Italian Parliamentary group la Rosa nel Pugno in cooperation with Anticlericale.net, an association affiliated with the Italian Radical Party (<http://www.radicali.it>) and the Transnational Radical Party (<http://www.radicalparty.org>). The presenters will welcome a large group of invited guests, in addition to all members of the Italian Parliament, and the Italian and foreign press. Also in attendance at the screening will be both the director Joe Cultrera and his brother Paul – the subject of the film. Other activities are being planned around the screening.

Hand of God portrays the vicissitudes of Joe Cultrera's Italian-Catholic family in Salem, MA. Cultrera decided to make the film after he learned his older brother Paul had been abused by a Catholic priest when he was 14 years old, and after the Church his parents helped finance and build (Saint Mary's Italian) was being forced to close by the Archdiocese of Boston. The closing of this church was due in part to offset financial losses the diocese had incurred in the settling of hordes of clergy abuse cases. The film looks at the issue of Catholic clergy abuse through a highly personal, impressionistic and non-dramatic lens.

In January of 2007 the film was aired on the prestigious PBS public affairs series *FRONTLINE*. It created a storm of positive response and some considerable controversy. Among the many strong reviews, Robert Butler of the *Kansas City Star* said *Hand of God* was, "...quite possibly the most gripping and illuminating documentary ever made from the point of view of a sexual abuse victim...The film works not only as journalism but also as cinematic art." The *Orlando Sentinel* called the film, "A provocative and powerful movie...Like a great detective story, *Hand of God* peels away layers of blind faith to reveal the truth."

The Anticlericale.net Association sees this moving and extraordinary documentary as a useful instrument to inform the Italian public about those truths that the Vatican, aided by many politicians and Italian press, has tried to hide. The Association believes that all people, Catholics or not, must be informed about the secretive system of cover-ups and non-cooperation that the Vatican has used in the countries where its Churches operate. The Vatican continues to protect and house priests, bishops and cardinals who have committed these crimes, or have helped cover them. A storm of controversy is already brewing in Italy over attempts to halt the airing of a controversial BBC documentary about the Vatican's handling of clergy abuse.

The Radical Party was born nearly 50 years ago. It was founded by then young leader Marco Pannella, now 76 years old. It originates from the Partito d'Azione, a small party of intellectuals who fought before and after World War II for an Italy free from any dictatorship, a free market economy, against any monopolies, and for the separation of the Italian State from the Church. They have stood up against the so-called "Concordato," which gives the Catholic Church the privilege of tax exemption (about three billion euros a year). This exemption was first given to the Vatican State by Benito Mussolini in 1929 in order to have the Church support his regime. The most memorable victories of the Radical Party were the introduction of the divorce and abortion laws, in the seventies, through the use of referendum and hunger strikes. The Vatican – and its supporters on both the left and right of the political spectrum – has stood in powerful opposition of these reforms.

The Anticlericale.net President is Hon. Maurizio Turco, a member of the Italian Parliament, where he has been appointed secretary of the Commissione Affari Costituzionali. He has also been elected as Vice President of the Transnational Radical Party and is a former member of the European Parliament. He recently went to Cuba to demonstrate with the "women in white" who were asking for the liberation of their husbands - jailed for political reasons. The Transnational Radical Party, after a 15 year battle for a worldwide moratorium of the death penalty, has obtained a positive result: the Italian Government and the German Presidency have been given a mandate by the European states to present the motion in the present U.N. assembly. Marco Pannella and many members of the Transnational Radical Party made this happen using non-violent means of persuasion: mainly hunger strikes, thirst strikes and other demonstrations.

For more information and images, contact Zingerplatz Pictures: 917-599-8843 or info@zingerplatz.com

Hand of God website: <http://www.handofgodfilm.com>

FRONTLINE's Hand of God website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/handofgod>

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