

Movie on Mexico's war against Catholics offers timely lessons



Rome, Italy, Mar 22, 2012 / 04:00 am (CNA/EWTN News).- The producer of a new film that brings to life the fight against the Mexican government's persecution of Catholics in the 1920s says there are clear parallels to today's situation in the United States and elsewhere.

"I think what we are living now is the same things that happened at that time, and after you watch the movie you will see there are a lot of topics that are very alive right now," Pablo José Barroso, producer of "For Greater Glory," told CNA on March 21.

"For Greater Glory" – formerly called "Cristiada" – charts the history of Mexico's Cristero War that was sparked by anti-clerical legislation being passed by the Mexican President Elías Calles in 1926. Those laws banned religious orders, deprived the Church of property rights and denied priests civil liberties, including the right to trial by jury and the right to vote.

The persecution became so fierce that some Catholics began to forcibly resist, fighting under the slogan and banner of "Cristo Rey" (Christ the King).

"This story broke our hearts, but it's a story that has to be told," said Barroso.

"It is a real story about people who stood up for their beliefs, and as a Mexican, I am very proud to share with the world this Mexican story which even many Mexicans don't know about."

The film is directed by Dean Wright and stars award-winning actors Andy Garcia, Eva Longoria and Peter O'Toole among others. "We're trying to do values movies" with high production quality, explained Barroso, who was present at a premier of the film in Rome on March 20.

On Sunday, March 25, Pope Benedict XVI will celebrate Mass with over 400,000 pilgrims in the central Mexican city of Silao. He will do so in the shadow of the 65-foot statue of Christ the King

which was constructed in the 1940s as a memorial for those who died in the Cristero War.

Dozens of martyrs from the war have since been canonized and beatified by the Church, including 14-year-old Jose Sanchez del Rio who was declared blessed by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005. His story is particularly highlighted in the new film.

“I hope that after seeing this movie that people start to stand up and really live by their religion,” said Barroso, who sees the threat to religious liberty emerging around the globe.

“As a Catholic, I think now is the time for laymen to stand up and do something.”

“For Greater Glory” will arrive in theaters in the United States on June 1, 2012.

David Kerr - CNA News