

ABC ALLOWS ATTACK ON MOTHER TERESA

Media coverage of the funeral Mass for Mother Teresa was generally quite fair. The lone exception came from ABC. During the consecration of the Host, ABC anchor Peter Jennings allowed author Christopher Hitchens to rant and rave against Mother Teresa; the *Vanity Fair* writer lambasted the late champion of the poor for her alleged “false humility” and “rabid fundamentalism.”

Catholic League president William Donohue delivered the following remarks about this incident today:

“ABC stands in stark contrast to CBS, NBC, CNN and FOX, all of whom treated Mother Teresa with the respect she deserves. Inviting the embittered Christopher Hitchens to comment on Mother Teresa would be like inviting an educated David Duke to comment on Martin Luther King. Hitchens is a notorious anti-Catholic bigot and ABC was certainly well aware of this fact when they invited him. He is also the author of a slim book on Mother Teresa, *The Missionary Position*, a volume that is most noted for its absence of any citations and its hate-filled commentary.

“There was an Episcopal priest who slammed Mother Teresa on CBS ‘This Morning’ on September 8, but the reporter was obviously shocked by Rev. Donald Reeves’ statement and did everything she could to calm things down. On September 7, NBC’s ‘Meet the Press’ invited Hitchens to comment on the royals, but Hitchens was not allowed to stay for the next segment on Mother Teresa; Tim Russert handled the situation with professionalism.

“Against this backdrop we have ABC’s irresponsible and calculated decision to allow Christopher Hitchens to bash

Mother Teresa; the decision by Peter Jennings to let Hitchens continue his diatribe during Holy Communion was particularly offensive. Princess Diana had many detractors, yet none surfaced on TV. Mother Teresa had one person who hated her and the Disney-owned network found room for him to vent.

"The league will convey its outrage directly to Preston Padden, President, ABC Television Network."