

ABC NEWS ERRS IN REPORT ON VATICAN ROLE IN HOLOCAUST

The ABC news broadcast of May 26, 1994 incorrectly reported that the Vatican had accepted "co-responsibility" for the Holocaust. The Catholic League sent the following letter to Peter Jennings, requesting a retraction for the error. Dr. William A. Donohue said of the incident: "It is not certain what led ABC to err in this matter. But what matters most at this juncture is that the error be acknowledged. It would also help, of course, if ABC spent more time verifying its stories before airing them."

Dear Mr. Jennings:

In the news broadcast of May 26, you erred in saying that the Catholic Church acknowledged co-responsibility and guilt for the Holocaust. What actually happened was that one German lay theologian had reached this conclusion in his preparatory remarks to the German and Polish bishops. The statement by Hans Herman Henrix was not even approved by the German and Polish Bishops' Conference, much less by the Church itself. Yet you said that this position emanated "from the heart of the Roman Catholic Church." Bill Blakemore contributed to the confusion by incorrectly labeling Henrix's position paper as a "Church document." As the Vatican pointed out immediately, the draft was "in no way a projected document of the Holy See." In light of the above, it is only fitting that ABC News issue a retraction.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President