

# ANTI-CATHOLIC BIAS AT THE NEW YORK TIMES

In the November 2 edition of the *New York Times*, there were several articles about the November 3 elections. The articles were grouped according to "The Senate," "The Polls," "The Campaign" and "The Churches." With regard to the last article, coverage was given to John Cardinal O'Connor's homily the day before wherein he questioned why some were blaming him for killing Dr. Barnett Slepian, the abortion doctor; the New York Archbishop wondered whether "this accusation was really aimed at me, or at those public officeholders and those campaigning for public office who are pro-life."

The article said that "Abortion-rights leaders criticized the Cardinal for casting politicians who oppose abortion rights as victims so soon before Election Day." It quoted Alexander Sanger, president of Planned Parenthood, as charging that the Cardinal was actually delivering "an electoral message."

The Catholic League pointed out the bias in a news release:

"On the front page of today's [the November 2] *New York Times*, it discusses how President Clinton and Rep. Charles Schumer made political hay by speaking in Protestant churches yesterday. Yet on page B6 it has a column, 'The Churches,' that makes no mention of these obvious church and state violations. Indeed, the title 'The Churches' is inaccurate: the only church mentioned is a Catholic one, namely St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"The author of this misstated piece, David Halbfinger, says that abortion-rights advocates were upset with Cardinal O'Connor for simply *mentioning* a public policy issue, and he quotes Alexander Sanger as evidence. Question: Was Mr. Sanger at St. Pat's yesterday? Was he accompanied by his friends in

the pro-abortion movement? Or did Mr. Halbfinger call Sanger for a comment? If so, whom did he call about Clinton and Schumer soliciting votes in Protestant churches? Why didn't he write about it? Why did he find it necessary to go back to 1984 to cite Cardinal O'Connor's objections to Geraldine Ferraro's position on abortion? Why the double standard?"

We are not certain whether this kind of bias is even noticed as such by those who spew it. It's either so deeply ingrained that the offenders are unaware of just how biased they are, or they know exactly what they're doing and simply don't care whether they're caught. But as far as the Catholic League is concerned, it's academic: our job is to root out the bias, whatever the motive.