

# AP's "MASS GRAVE" RETRACTIONS



Bill Donohue comments on the second retraction by the Associated Press (AP) over Ireland's "mass grave" story:

AP issued its first retraction on June 20 regarding its stories of June 3 and June 8 on Ireland's "mass grave" story. On June 23, AP reporter Shawn Pogatchnik issued a second, more complete, retraction; his article was titled, "Media Exaggerated Horror Tale at Irish Orphanage." Here is an excerpt of what he said:

"The reports of unmarked graves shouldn't have come as a surprise to the Irish public, who for decades have known that some of the 10 defunct 'mother and baby homes,' which chiefly housed the children of unwed mothers, held grave sites with forgotten dead. The religious orders' use of unmarked graves reflected the crippling poverty of the time, the infancy of most of the victims, and the lack of plots in cemeteries corresponding to the children's fractured families."

"Contrary to the allegation of widespread starvation highlighted in some reports, only 18 children were recorded as suffering from severe malnutrition. While publicly available records are incomplete, sporadic inspection reports indicate that the orphanage's population exceeded 250 throughout the worst years of child mortality, when overcrowding would have encouraged the spread of infection."

AP admits that it was guilty of "repeating incorrect Irish news reports that suggested the babies who died had never been baptized and that Catholic Church teaching guided priests not to baptize the babies of unwed mothers or give to them Christian burials. The reports of the denial of baptism later

were contradicted by the Tuam Archdiocese, which found a registry showing that the home had baptized more than 2,000 babies.”

AP had the courage to admit it erred. We need to hear from other media outlets as well. And we await Andrew Sullivan’s apology for accusing the nuns of running a “death camp,” and asking the pope to shut them down.