

DAILY NEWS SMEARS NUNS

In February, we took issue with a news story that ran in the New York *Daily News*.

On the front page of the *Daily News*, in huge bold letters, read the headline, "THE LYIN' 'NUN.'" Below, in smaller letters, it read, "Spins rape tale, recants."

The quotation marks around "nun" did not give the newspaper cover: the average reader would no doubt conclude that a Catholic nun lied about being raped. The story then appeared inside on p. 6 with the headline, "Nun: Rape Tale Was 'Bed of Lies.'" No quotation marks were given this time. Moreover, the online version read, "The Lyin' Nun," absent any quotation marks. Worse, it showed a picture of someone holding a rosary.

Not until readers got to the story did they learn that "A Brooklyn nun from a fringe Christian sect" had admitted she lied about being raped. We also learned that the Apostles of Infinite Love convent "appears to be linked to a Canadian-based religious order founded in the 1960s by a defrocked Catholic priest who ordained himself Pope."

In other words, these people are not Catholic, yet the *Daily News* deceitfully sold the story as if they were. Indeed, the story ends with an admission that this group is a "sect" from Quebec that "has been described as a cultlike group."

The misleading headlines sparked a flurry of anti-Catholic commentary in the comment section that accompanied the story online. It was clear from the comments that many of the posters did not read the story in full and used the headline as a springboard for bigotry.

One comment stated that "all priests and nuns are psychologically disturbed" because they take a vow of celibacy. Another called priests and nuns "sexually

dysfunctional zealots” who tell others how to live their lives. Had they read the story, they would have known that this woman was not a nun, instead they let the false headline steer their anti-Catholicism.

There is no way to justify such fraudulent hype. Catholic nuns were smeared and the public was invited to think the worst about them. We said that the newspaper owes them an apology. We urged our members to contact Kevin Convey, the *Daily News*’ editor-in-chief to voice their outrage. Needless to say, his inbox was flooded.

Soon after we hit the *Daily News*, Convey reached out to Bill Donohue and the two met and discussed how this situation can be avoided going forward. In the end, the issue ended amicably.