

“DEVOUT CATHOLIC”?

The *Washington Post* did a follow-up story on the killing rampage that John Salvi went on at an abortion clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts on December 30, 1994. It was an interesting story. One of the woman whom Salvi terrorized, Deborah Gaines, was in the clinic that day to abort her baby. As things turned out, she never had the baby and is now madly in love with her three year old. But she wants the clinic to defray the cost of raising her daughter.

The story was interesting for another reason: it proved once again that bad apple Catholics are regarded as “devout” by the media.

It made sense for the article to call Slavi an “antiabortion zealot.” It made sense to label him a “madman.” But it made no sense to brand him a “devout Roman Catholic.” Unless, of course, a cheap political point was intended.

One final point: does the media have a machine that measures devoutness, or is this just a judgment call? If it’s the latter, how do they distinguish between lazy, lukewarm Catholics and devout *Roman Catholic* ones? By the way, we couldn’t help but notice that the religious affiliation of Ms. Gaines went unmentioned.