

MEDIA BIAS AT CNN AND SALON.COM

According to a Nexis database search, there have been 231 stories over the past week on accused spy Robert Hanssen. Only one U.S. media source, CNN, made mention of his religion; he was dubbed “a devout Catholic” on May 31 on “CNN Live At Daybreak.”

Last Sunday, African Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo married a South Korean woman in a group ceremony arranged by Reverend Sun Myung Moon. Only one television network, CNN, made a circus of the story. On May 30, CNN legal analyst Greta Van Susteren interviewed George Stallings about the bizarre incident. Stallings, an African American and former priest, was excommunicated in 1989 when he broke away from the Catholic Church. In her introductory remarks, Van Susteren said, “If there’s one thing the Catholic Church doesn’t like, it’s a loose cannon....” She then opined, “There were no ‘best wishes’ from the Vatican.”

On June 1, the AP reported a story entitled “Catholic League Accused of Racism.” The story concerns a Catholic athletic league in Chicago that denied entry to a black Catholic grammar school, citing safety reasons. When we called AP noting that some people might infer from the headline that it was the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights that was accused of racism, our concern was acknowledged and the title was quickly changed to “Catholic Athletic League Accused.” Yet Salon.com listed “Catholic League charged with racism” on its “From the wires” segment without carrying other stories from the wire that appeared at the same time this story was posted by AP. Moreover, AP did not list the story under its “Top Stories” page but instead listed it under “U.S.” Thus, Salon deliberately gave the story a prominence that AP did not.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“Kudos to AP for acting responsibly. As for CNN and Salon.com, it’s no wonder both are tanking: ideology is driving them mad. Finally, Greta ought to know something about ‘loose cannons.’ Ted Turner founded CNN.”