

MEDIA BIAS AT CNN AND SALON.COM

Media bias is an issue we track closely. Overall, the Catholic League sees much about media coverage of the Catholic Church that is admirable. But it is also true that bias against the Church is more pronounced in the media than just about any other prejudice. Some clear examples of the problem recently caused us to issue a press release.

We noticed that in one week there were 231 stories 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.”

Then there was the incredible story of African Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo marrying 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 concerned 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."

That, however, didn't stop the online magazine, Salon.com, from listing "Catholic League charged with racism" on its "From the wires" segment. We found it curious that this story was listed by Salon, even though other stories from the wire that appeared at the same time AP posted this story were not. 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.

Our comment to the media was 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."