

# MEDIA KISS-UP TO KISSLING

Neither Frances Kissling, nor her letter-head group, Catholics for a Free Choice, are Catholic, but that means nothing to many in the media. To take the two latest examples, ABC and the *New York Times*, both media outlets seem bent on creating for Kissling what she cannot do for herself, namely, achieving credibility with Catholics.

On July 21, Peter Jennings of ABC engaged in a bit of Catholic-baiting when he exclaimed that mergers between community hospitals and Catholic hospitals raised dire warnings about “a virtual [Catholic] monopoly on health care.” In the same vein, he pondered, “What happens when a Catholic hospital is the only one around,” never questioning what happens when there is *no* hospital around.

To punctuate ABC’s misgivings over the horrible specter of hospitals refusing to kill unborn children, Jennings gave Kissling a platform to bash the Church. She did not disappoint. We let ABC News President David Westin know about our concerns.

Worse than Jennings was Nadine Brozan of the *New York Times*. In a column that questioned the pope’s latest letter asserting the Church’s authority on controversial issues, Brozan described Kissling as a “practicing Catholic.” Interestingly, in the preceding paragraph, Brozan quoted another dissident, a 28 year-old woman “who describes herself as a non-practicing Catholic.” (Why someone who does not practice his faith should be quoted about matters concerning his faith is not known.)

The Catholic League responded to Brozan asking her to demonstrate that Kissling is a “practicing Catholic.” Brozan was asked to identify the parish that Kissling belongs to, how often she attends Mass and how frequently she attends to the sacraments. “I recognize that these are private matters,”

wrote William Donohue, “but when someone who is not publicly identified as a Catholic is now making such a claim, the public has a right to know the truth.”

In a future edition of *Catalyst*, we will let members know how our protest of these two media-related stories turned out.