

Media Passionate About Anti-Catholic Bias

By Bill Donohue

This article was originally published by Newsmax on May 29, 2014.

Every demographic group can cite instances of media bias against them, but no group is more unfairly covered, on a consistent basis, than Catholics. Here are three examples drawn from news stories published on May 29.

Whenever a Catholic does something good, such as a police officer or firefighter who risks his life for someone, his religion is never mentioned. Nor should it be. But when he does something bad, we all learn of his religious affiliation.

To wit: Lukas Iorio went on a drunken rampage on the Jersey Shore last Sunday – he was arrested for carjacking, assault, burglary, driving under the influence, criminal mischief, and resisting arrest. Here is how the media played it:

- “Former Bergen Catholic Wrestling Star Charged with Assault, Carjacking in Manasquan.” Star-Ledger
- “Ex-Bergen Catholic High School Wrestling Star Lukas Iorio Accused of Wild Rampage on Jersey Shore.” The Record
- “Former Bergen Catholic Wrestler Charged with Attacking 5 in Jersey Shore Rampage.” Cliffviewpilot.com
- “Manasquan Charges ex-Bergen Catholic Wrestler with Beach Carjacking, Wild Behavior.” Myfoxny.com

All the italics were added. To its credit, CBS reported it fairly: “New Jersey High School Wrestling Champ Accused in Bizarre Rampage.” It is not biased to mention in a news story that Iorio went to a Catholic school, but to put it in the

headline is a different story.

“Female Catholic Priest Celebrates Mass at St. Francis House” is the headline in today’s *Columbian Missourian*. Of course, this never happened. What happened is that yet another woman – a senior citizen, of course – played make-believe and had herself “ordained.” The Harbor Country News ran a story billed as “Wife, Mother & Now Priest.”

MLive, a blog post, told readers, “Michigan’s First Woman Priest in Dissident Catholic Sect: ‘My Job is to Give Witness.’” At least it mentioned “dissident Catholic Sect.”

The *Columbian Missourian* not only ran the most dishonest headline, it ran a totally biased story. The caption to her photo begins by saying, “Janice Sevre-Duszyńska, a female priest, led a mass at St. Francis House.”

The first paragraph of the story said: “In the middle of a living room, a table is set like an altar, with wine and bread prepared for Holy Communion. At the head is a priest dressed in a black shirt, jeans and sandals, hair tied behind the head revealing a gold earring hanging from her ear. She has a purple stole around her neck, which rests on her lap as she sits.”

In the next paragraph we learn that she is “an ordained Roman Catholic priest with one exception: The Roman Catholic Church does not recognize her status as a priest.” Of course, the only thing that counts is the “one exception.” It could also be said that the Roman Catholic Church does not recognize those who dress up as the Pope on Halloween to be the Pope.

The media game, naturally, is to whip up public sentiment against the Catholic Church for its teaching on ordination. It never does the same with regards to the role of women in the Orthodox Jewish community, or in Islam.

It was reported today in the *New York Times* that New York City

Mayor Bill de Blasio spoke before an Orthodox Jewish gathering on Tuesday night. He singled out for praise a lawyer who is chief counsel to Agudath Israel. Now it is true that David Zwiebel has a good record of interfaith dialogue with Catholics, but it is also true, as reporter Michael Powell said, that he has played a pivotal role in arguing that those who learn of rabbis in the Orthodox community who sexually molest minors should not report these crimes to the authorities.

The extent of this scandal, and the reprisals taken against those who break ranks and go to the authorities, is huge, yet receives comparatively little media coverage.

Can anyone imagine de Blasio congratulating a prominent Catholic lawyer in the Archdiocese of New York for instructing Catholics not to report cases of priestly sexual abuse to the authorities? More important, Zwiebel's advice is, in fact, followed. So why aren't the media all over this? If Cardinal Dolan said that all such allegations will be handled in-house, and not reported to the authorities, it would be front-page news around the world.

These are just three examples from today. All the Catholic League has ever wanted is a level playing field. We are nowhere near achieving it.

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