MEDIA POLITICS EXPLAIN POPE COVERAGE

A cardinal holds a beatification ceremony in Algeria for 19 monks, nuns and other Catholics who were killed during Algeria's civil war in the 1990s.

Pope Francis addresses an international conference celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights wherein he highlights the rights of the unborn.

It is not a stretch to say that most Americans would think that the second story would merit the most coverage. They would be wrong.

The first story on the beatification ceremony was picked up by the Associated Press, *New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Florida Times-Union, Post-Courier, Sunday Telegraph, Washington Post, and the Winston-Salem Journal*. All these newspapers ran at least a part of the AP story by Nicole Winfield.

Not a single newspaper in the nation picked up the AP story on Pope Francis' address.

What's going on? Abortion. That's what.

Some may say that there is no news here: everyone knows the Catholic Church opposes abortion. But for the pope to give the rights of the unborn the prominence he did while celebrating an historic event—on a subject where there are dozens of other human rights that could have been mentioned—this is at least as worthy of note as the Algerian story.

Moreover, in its release on the pope's address, the Vatican News listed 18 human rights that the Holy Father has spoken about in recent years. It listed at the top, "The right to

life, particularly of the unborn and the elderly." It also cited, in its introductory commentary, the pope's critical remarks on ideological colonization (or gender ideology), i.e., the belief that male and female are interchangeable, not rooted in nature.

On economic issues, Pope Francis typically holds to a more liberal interpretation, but on moral issues he skews toward a more conservative position. This explains why the media give him plenty of coverage when he speaks on the former and are so dismissive when he speaks on the latter.

Media politics are quite evident.