

NEW YORK TIMES HIRES NEW FACT CHECKER

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on fact-checking at the *New York Times*:

The *New York Times* has added a new fact-checker to its staff. Hopefully, the new person will take his job more seriously than his colleagues have.

On November 30, I contacted the "Corrections" editor at the *New York Times* offering proof that there were two serious errors, both in the same sentence, in a news story by Cara Buckley; the subject was Harvey Weinstein. There has been no correction, nor contention that I am wrong.

In her November 30 story, "Tainted Gold? This Year's Awards Season," Buckley said the following about Weinstein. "He arranged for Philomena Lee, who was forced by Irish nuns to give up her son for adoption, to meet the pope in the final weeks of the awards campaign for the 2013 film about her."

I emailed the following reply: "In the attachment you will see that Lee voluntarily (she was 22) assigned her baby to the care of the nuns. No one forced her to give up her baby. The source is from a book by Martin Sixsmith, upon which the movie was based."

"You will also see evidence that Weinstein failed to get a meeting with the pope," I said. "The best that could be arranged was to have Lee be a part of the general audience; she shook his hand behind a barricade." I even sent a picture of her standing behind the barricade shaking the pope's hand.

Why does this matter? Both statements are factually wrong, and both have the effect of feeding a negative portrait of Catholicism. Moreover, these falsehoods will be repeated by

future writers.

Good luck to the new fact-checker. He has his work cut out for him.