

NY TIMES PIECE ON ST. SERRA NEEDS CORRECTION



Bill Donohue comments on a front-page article that appeared in yesterday's *New York Times* and his request for a correction:

Yesterday morning I emailed the following letter to *New York Times* reporter Laura M. Holson about her article, "Sainthood of Serra Reopens Wounds of Colonialism in California":

You said that "Historians agree" that Fr. Serra had Indians "tortured to death." I have done research on Serra and written about him, yet I know of no historian who makes such a claim. Please name them. I can name many who never made such a claim.

Holson never responded. Today I asked for an entry in the "Corrections" section of the newspaper, and I also contacted the public editor. This is a serious issue: when a reporter blithely says that "Historians agree," readers take it that there is at least a consensus among historians about the subject. But such is not the case on this issue. The only persons given to such an accusation are radical activists, not professional scholars.

To read a list of the most authoritative books on Fr. Serra, click [here](#).

Not one of them accuse this saintly priest of torturing Indians. Holson quotes Steven Hackel in her article, and though he is somewhat critical of Fr. Serra, he never makes such a claim. The one person who says torture took place, Elias Castillo, never indicts Fr. Serra. None of the other books come even close to accusing Fr. Serra of torture. Quite simply, it is a lie.