

POPE'S REMARKS ABOUT GAYS DISTORTED

Recently, Pope Francis made some remarks about gays while he was aboard the papal plane from Armenia to Rome. The following media outlets reported, either in the headline or in the story, that the pope recently said the Catholic Church owes gays an apology:

New York Times, AP, *Washington Post*, ABC News, CNN, *USA Today*, *New York Magazine*, Slate, NPR, *Daily Beast*, *Huffington Post*, BBC, *Daily Mail*, Reuters.

They are all wrong.

After the pope initially said, "I think that the Church must not only ask forgiveness...to the gay person who has been offended," he quickly clarified what he meant. He pointedly said that "when I say the Church, I mean Christians! The Church is holy, we are sinners."

In other words, the teachings of the Church are not the problem—the Church is "holy"—it is the words and deeds of those Christians who have sinned that is the problem.

Why is this important? The headline in a recent *New York Times* said it all: "Gay Catholic Groups Want Vatican to Act After Apology." This is a game: The media, led by the *New York Times*, misrepresented what the pope said, thus teeing it up for dissident and ex-Catholics to demand reforms. This is dishonest—the premise is false to begin with. The pope drew a distinction between the institution of the Church and the individuals who comprise it. Ergo, no action is required.

In most cases, both the news headline and the text of the story got it wrong. In some cases, the story correctly offered the pope's clarification, but the headline was wrong. No

matter, the public is being deceived and the truth is being distorted.