

# PROTEST OF BIAS YIELDS FAVORABLE RESULT

On March 12, the Long Island newspaper, *Newsday*, ran a headline that caught the attention of the Catholic League. It said, **"Ex-Altar Boy on Trial."** But upon reading the piece, it was clear that the past association of the 26 year-old killer had no relevance to the story whatsoever.

William Donohue called the paper's editor, Anthony Marro, and asked him to explain this oddity. Though at first Marro tried to offer an explanation of what might have happened (the altar boy status could have been taken from court records), he proved to be fair once he investigated the story. Indeed, he admitted that there was no defensible reason for mentioning the killer's previous status as an altar boy. The content and tone of his remarks assured Donohue that this would not happen again.

*Newsday* published the following letter on March 26, sent by Dr. Donohue:

"On March 12, there was an article that read, **"Ex-Altar Boy on Trial."** It addressed the behavior of a 26 year-old man accused of kidnapping, murdering and mutilating the body of a Queens woman. But the reader searches in vain to find the connection between the accused and his former status as an altar boy. Was he also a stringer for *Newsday*, and if so, would such an incidental association be recognized in the article, much less in its headline?

"The Catholic League has no problem with stories that mention the religious affiliation of someone in the news, but it expects that when this is done, it will bear some relationship to the story. There are lots of policemen,

to take one example, who exercise tremendous courage in saving people's lives—and many of them have been altar boys, too—but we would never see a story titled, “Ex-Altar Boy Cop Saves Lives.”