

The “New York Times” shows its bias once again

Media bias is something everyone seems to be complaining about these days, so it is hardly noteworthy to learn that Catholics feel mistreated as well. But just how much media bias is there against Catholics? Is it more or less than the bias that is directed at Others? According to Hilton Kramer, the bias that the media have against Catholics has no rival anywhere in the population. And he should know: Kramer has spent his life in the media, formerly as a reporter for the *New York Times*, and now as a writer for the *New York Post*. Indeed, Kramer now charts the ideological corruption of his former employer in his weekly “*Times Watch*” column.

Kramer offered his comment in a discussion I had with him on a New York radio talk show. He did not get a chance to elaborate but I suspect that Kramer would probably agree that much of the bias is subtle these days. I offered an example and it is one that he readily acknowledged as media bias against Catholics. Here’s what happened.

On January 4th, the *New York Post* editorialized against the anti-Semitism that marked a Kean College speech by Khalid Abdul Muhammad, spokesman for the Nation of Islam [for our response, see front page in this issue]. That was great except that the editorial never mentioned that Mr. Muhammad also attacked Catholics in his speech.

A phone call to the *Post* found that the newspaper based its editorial on a December 23rd news story in the *New York Times*. We checked the *Times* and discovered that the *Post* did not intentionally omit criticism of the anti-Catholic slurs that were made: no criticism was offered because the *Times* never cited Catholics as one of the groups that was targeted by the speaker. Interestingly, the *Times* did mention the attack on

Jews, whites and homosexuals, and in fact even quoted passages to substantiate the story; it is likely, therefore, that the reporter had a copy of the transcript of the speech when he wrote his piece.

To be certain that Catholics were mentioned in the speech, Karen Krugh, my assistant, went to Kean College and listened to a tape of the more than three-hour speech. What she found was appalling. Here's a small sampler: "Go to the Vatican in Rome when the old no-good Pope – you know that cracker, somebody need to raise that dress up and see what's really under there – when the old Pope was shot, he didn't pray in front of no white Mary."

Why didn't the *New York Times*, the so-called "newspaper of record," make mention of the attack on the Pope? It wasn't due to the brevity of the remarks: Mr. Muhammad spent more time blasting Catholics than he did blasting homosexuals. No, as Kramer agreed, the reason why Catholics didn't merit the attention of the *Times* had less to do with oversight than it did the politics of the newspaper.

The problem with the Catholic Church, as the cultural elite would have it, is that it is too obstructionist, too ready to stand in the way of the social engineers. And because the Church won't bend to the progressive agenda, it gets dumped on. Or, as in this case, when it does get dumped on, it goes unreported. None of this has anything to do with callous indifference to Catholic-bashing. What's at work is more invidious. Put plainly, if the politically correct police have assigned a victimizer status to the Catholic Church, then the Church cannot readily be transformed into a victim. That would muddy the message and confuse the reader, and that is not something the *New York Times* would ever want to do.