

Study alleges bias in coverage of abortion

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — An exhaustive, 18-month study conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* has revealed that major U.S. news media are biased in favor of abortion rights, despite attempts at fair and balanced coverage.

"Abortion bias seeps into news," the newspaper said in announcing the study results. It noted that abortion opponents are "insistent that media bias manifests itself, in print and on the air, almost daily. A comprehensive *Times* study ... confirms that this bias often exists."

Written by reporter David Shaw, the *Times* study of major newspapers, newsmagazines and network TV news programs totaled some 12,000 words and filled five articles published in the newspaper July 1-4.

"Responsible journalists do try to be

fair, and many charges of bias in abortion coverage are not valid," the study reported. "But careful examination of stories published and broadcast reveals scores of examples, large and small, that can only be characterized as unfair to the opponents of abortion, either in content, tone, choice of language or prominence of play."

For example, the *Times* study determined:

- "The news media consistently use language and images that frame the entire abortion debate in terms that implicitly favor abortion-rights advocates."

- "Abortion-rights advocates are often quoted more frequently and characterized more favorably than are abortion opponents."

- "Events and issues favorable to abor-

tion opponents are sometimes ignored or given minimal attention by the media.

- "Many news organizations have given more prominent play to stories on rallies and electoral and legislative victories by abortion-rights advocates than to stories on rallies and electoral and legislative victories by abortion-rights opponents."

"Television is probably more vulnerable to charges of bias on abortion than are newspapers and magazines," Shaw reported. "But throughout the media, print and broadcast alike, coverage of abortion tends to be presented — perhaps subconsciously — from the abortion-rights perspective."

As an example of this bias, Shaw cited coverage of the Supreme Court's 1989 Webster ruling, which upheld abortion regulations in the state of Missouri. "ABC News termed the decision 'a major setback for abortion rights,'" Shaw noted. "Couldn't it also have been called 'a major victory for abortion opponents?' Yes."

In addition, "virtually all the media refer to anti-abortion legislation as 'restrictive,'" because it would restrict a right to abortion, Shaw wrote. "But abortion opponents would describe the legislation as 'protective' — 'protective' of the fetus."

Similarly, "abortion-rights advocates would like to be known as 'pro-choice,'" Shaw noted. Abortion opponents, meanwhile, "would like to be known as 'pro-life.'"

"So why not use both 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice'?" Shaw asked. "That would be a balanced use of clear, simple terms that everyone recognizes and understands."

"For a long time, most in the media bought at least half that argument," Shaw said. They used 'pro-choice.' But not 'pro-life,'" he said.

Many newsrooms still cling to the "pro-choice" terminology, though some reporters disagree with such policies, the study found.

Shaw wrote that news organizations are making changes.

In his own newsroom, for example, Shaw said, "eight years after the *Times* decided that 'pro-life' was an unacceptable term," the managing editor has "issued a memo to the staff declaring that 'pro-choice' ... will no longer be acceptable."

Shaw wrote that "'pro-life' is widely perceived as an emotionally loaded term that stacks the deck by implicitly suggesting the other side is 'anti-life' — or 'pro-death.' So most in the media have long used the terms 'opponents of abortion' or 'anti-abortion' instead.

"But 'pro-choice' is also an emotionally loaded term that stacks the deck," he added.

Although the broadcast networks used "pro-choice" frequently in 1989 and "pro-life" hardly at all, all three say that they are moving away from "pro-choice" or have already done so, Shaw said.

"Pro-choice" sometimes slips into some newspaper and television stories, though, despite these policies; 'pro-life' rarely shows up," Shaw's study found.

Atlanta prelate steps down; overcome by failing health

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope John Paul II last week accepted the resignation of Archbishop Eugene A. Marino of Atlanta, the nation's first black archbishop, who stepped down for health reasons.

The pope appointed 52-year-old Auxiliary Bishop James P. Lyke of Cleveland, another of the nation's 13 black bishops, as apostolic administrator of the Atlanta archdiocese while the see is vacant.

Pope John Paul also accepted the resignation of Bishop Leo T. Maher of San Diego, who recently turned 75. Bishop Maher was succeeded by Coadjutor Bishop Robert H. Brom of San Diego.

The pope named Father Francis E. George, an Oblate of Mary Immaculate and coordinator of the Cambridge Center for the Study of Faith and Culture in Cambridge, Mass., as bishop of Yakima, Wash.

The announcements were made in Washington July 10 by Monsignor Rino Passigato, charge d'affaires at the U.S. apostolic nunciature.

Citing stress, Archbishop Marino in May temporarily relinquished his duties after he was diagnosed as suffering from exhaustion and being in danger of cardiac stress after suffering chest pains while traveling to New York.

He was resting at a New York retreat center under the care of two physicians and a psychologist in mid-June, according to Father Edward Dillon, Atlanta archdiocesan vicar general.

In a statement issued July 10 by Archbishop Marino, who served as archbishop of Atlanta for two years, the 56-year-old prelate said he needed "an ex-

tended period of spiritual renewal, psychological therapy and medical supervision."

Archbishop Marino's resignation was in accord with canon law provisions allowing for the resignation of a bishop when he is less able to perform his duties due to ill health or another serious reason.

At a July 10 news conference at the Catholic Center in Atlanta, Bishop Lyke read from a prepared statement that he came to Atlanta to "carry on the ministry begun by Archbishop Eugene Marino, a devoted and dedicated bishop of our church, a friend, colleague and mentor."

Answering questions from the press, Bishop Lyke said it was somewhat unusual for a bishop to be appointed apostolic administrator of a vacant see. Often, he said, such a post is left vacant during an extended search for the next archbishop.

He said he saw the appointment as "a sign that the Holy Father has great concern for the Archdiocese of Atlanta."

Eugene Antonio Marino was born in Biloxi, Miss., on May 29, 1934. He studied at Epiphany Apostolic College in Newburgh, N.Y., from 1952-55, at Mary Immaculate Novitiate in Newburgh from 1955-56, and at St. Joseph's Seminary in Washington from 1956-62.

He was ordained a Josephite priest June 9, 1962.

Archbishop Marino was elected to a four-year term as vicar general of the Josephite Fathers and was serving in that capacity when he was named auxiliary bishop of Washington on July 15, 1974.



AP/Wide World Photos
MINERS STRIKE — A protesting miner at a July 11 rally in Donetsk, in Ukraine, shows his support for a general strike. Hundreds of thousands of miners walked out for 24 hours across the Soviet Union.

Covenant House board names president to succeed Fr. Ritter

By Tracy Early
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — A nun who is an associate director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., has been named president of Covenant House, effective Sept. 1.

Sister Mary Rose McGeady, a member of the Daughters of Charity, was elected at a special meeting of the agency's board July 10. The appointment was announced the following day.

Ralph A. Pfeiffer Jr., chairman of the board and of the search committee, said that Sister McGeady had been chosen out of 120 candidates.

"We are extremely fortunate in being able to enlist the abilities of an experienced, knowledgeable and highly regarded professional in the child care field," he said.

Sister McGeady succeeds Franciscan Father Bruce Ritter, who founded Covenant House in 1969 to serve homeless youngsters. He resigned Feb. 27 following allegations that surfaced last December about sexual and financial improprieties.

New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams is still investigating a \$900,000 trust fund Father Ritter set up without informing the board or filing required reports.

Covenant House's acting president, Monsignor William J. Toohy, deputy director of New York archdiocesan Catholic Charities, will continue until September. He was appointed to the position by Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York at the board's request.

Sister McGeady told Catholic News Service that although Covenant House had lost some donor support and been forced to make cutbacks, she found the program "alive and well in its essentials."

"I'm very impressed with the quality of the program and the commitment of the staff," she said. "I hope to continue the good work that's been begun here."

Sister McGeady, 62, said the Covenant House board was still engaged in working out a contract with her order, but that she was open to a five-year commitment.

She will not receive a salary directly, she said, but the board will compensate her order, and she will continue to live at her present residence with other members of her community.

Father Ritter lived in a private apartment at Covenant House, and received a salary of \$98,000. He had been putting \$60,000 of his salary into the trust fund.

Sister McGeady lives with her community at a Vincentian-run parish with a predominantly Hispanic membership in a predominantly black Brooklyn community.

She was wearing a blue ribbon symbolizing a racial harmony campaign promoted by New York Mayor David N. Dinkins in the wake of recent tensions.

A native of Hazelton, Pa., Sister McGeady said her ancestors came to the United States from County Donegal, Ireland, in the 1840s to escape the potato famine.

She grew up in Washington and entered her order — an international order with 37,000 members in 75 provinces — in 1946 at Emmitsburg, Md.

Dominican Nuns

RETREAT CENTER

MONASTERY OF MARY THE QUEEN
1310 W. CHURCH ST.,
ELMIRA, NY (14905)
607/734-9506

The Center is run by the Dominican Nuns and used for small groups of women or individuals seeking prayer and solitude in a monastic atmosphere. There are available six private rooms, a kitchen, a sitting/reading room and the nuns chapel. Meals are self-prepared from supplies provided.

Contact Person:
Sister Joan, O.P.
Call: 9-11 a.m. & 6-8 p.m.

\$2.00 \$2.00

Epiphany Irish Festival
Epiphany School Complex
Stevenson St. • Sayre, PA

Sat./Sun., August 4 & 5
1p.m.-11p.m., Saturday
12p.m.-10p.m., Sunday

Continuous Irish Entertainment
featuring Pat Roper
(King of Irish Festivals)
Tommy Doyle Band -
Martin Flynn

Food, Beverages,
Gifts, Souvenirs

For Info:
(717) 888-2208

This coupon
good for \$2.00 off
all tickets sold at
the gate.

\$2.00 \$2.00