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Further clarification on Agence France Presse (AFP) and false reporting on Opus Dei

The following is a statement by Béatrice de La Coste, of the Office of Information of Opus Dei in France, regarding a legal case that has been brought against two directors of the Dosnon Catering School.

09/25/2011

Since June 6 the AFP has disseminated throughout the world, in various languages, at least eight news stories about a legal case, incorrectly reporting that Opus Dei is implicated in the case.

As I have made clear on numerous occasions, no representative of Opus Dei has been called to appear in court. All of the accusations made against Opus Dei by the lawyer Rodolphe Bosselut and his client have been dismissed by the court. Furthermore, the French court has taken no action against Opus Dei whatsoever.

By spreading accusations against Opus Dei that have been rejected by the court, France Presse has propagated falsehoods to its clients and to the general public.

France Presse has repeated as true accusations that were examined and rejected by the judges. In this way,

the Agency has failed to follow elementary professional norms for covering court proceedings. These are universally recognized standards for communications professionals that the Agency acknowledge in their own reference texts.

France Press has acted, in fact, as a spokesperson for the lawyer for one side in the case, and has distributed to the world inaccurate information, reproduced afterward by numerous means of communication that accepted the Agency's reports in good faith.

In this way France Press has spread an inaccurate picture of a Catholic institution, without providing us an opportunity for dialogue.

In all these months, in fact, no representative of France Press has called the information office of Opus Dei. The contacts have all been at the initiative of this office, to inform and

to clarify the facts. An analysis of the news stories of France Press would show that France Press has given voice to one side only, leaving the other only a few lines of marginal significance: It would be a good case study for a school of communication.

I am aware of the complexity of the work of the Agency, and I know that France Presse counts on excellent professionals on its staff. But it is reasonable to ask this question: Why such intense interest – eight stories in only a few months – about a labor case that concerns a small professional school with an established track record, a school that confidently awaits a positive decision of the court?

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