

Response to AP story by Rachel Zoll  
*September 24, 2007*

In order to be accurate and provide a truthful account concerning the recent ecumenical service at the Morial Convention Center, the following needs to be understood. There was no attempt to “snub” the event when Episcopal Archbishop Rowan Williams was here (in New Orleans). Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes was unable to attend because of a previous commitment as a speaker at a Jewish/Muslim/Christian dinner at the Sheraton Hotel. Instead, the archbishop invited Archbishop Williams to visit at his residence, but that possibility was not able to be realized because of the tight schedule for the visiting prelate.

Archbishop Hughes also asked Baton Rouge Bishop Robert Muench to represent the Catholic Church community in Louisiana. Bishop Muench planned and came prepared to sit on the arranged platform. Because of confusion where the other platform people were vesting, he simply sat with the assembly. Overall there were 200 Episcopal bishops at the service, and only six were on the platform with Archbishop Williams. The place where he was seated happened to be closer to the platform than were the 88 Episcopal bishops who came down during the service were seated. The location of his seating was not and should not be interpreted as any disrespect, disregard or slight to the service, the participants or to anyone else.

The Catholic Church has enjoyed good relations with the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. We hope these good relations will continue. Hopefully, this unfortunate misrepresentation can be placed behind us for the common good.

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