

Sinead rips pope's picture on 'SNL'

NEW YORK (AP) — The NBC switchboard was still getting calls Monday from people who couldn't believe their eyes when singer Sinead O'Connor tore up a picture of the pope on *Saturday Night Live*.

"There was an immediate viewer response that continued on Sunday and continues today," said NBC spokesman Curt Block.

From the show's conclusion through Monday, the network received more than 900 calls from people who didn't like the show — and seven who did.

"I was offended; the executive producer, Lorne Michaels, likewise was offended and surprised," said Block. "I haven't talked to the cast."

"I want to emphasize it was a spontaneous act on her part and unauthorized," he said.

The segment was aired nationwide, including on the West Coast, where the show is tape delayed.

"There were discussions after the show on what to do. One of the thoughts was that in editing it out, it could even draw more attention to it," he said. "In hindsight, seeing what the reaction has been, we might have

managed it differently." O'Connor, who was in England on Monday, wants the action to speak for itself, said spokeswoman Elaine Schock. The stubble-haired Irish singer, appearing early Sunday, stood behind a Rastafarian scarf and several candles while singing "War," a song by the late Jamaican performer Bob Marley, who also was a critic of Catholicism.

"We have confidence in the victory of good over evil," O'Connor sang.

"Fight the real enemy," she said. Then she held up an 8-by-12 photo of the pope and slowly ripped it into several pieces.

O'Connor paused, then blew out the candles and walked away. A commercial break followed.

"There was total silence in the audience: no hissing or booing, no scattered applause," said Block. "In the control room, there was surprise."

At the dress rehearsal Satur-

day afternoon, O'Connor tore up a picture of a child. "While that might be offensive to some viewers, we could allow that to go on the air," said Block.

That night, "when she went to the stage with a picture in her hand, no one thought anything of it," he said.

After the number, O'Connor immediately went to her dressing room, reappeared for the "goodnight" segment, then left the building within 10 minutes.

"To me, what she did was an act of hatred and promoted intolerance," said Joseph Zwilling, a spokesman for New York's Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

The singer has publicly railed against the church-state relationship in Ireland, including prohibitions on divorce and abortion and warring among Catholics and Protestants. The singer sometimes wears a T-shirt bearing the phrase, "Recovering Catholic."

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Tornadoes undetected by old radar

PINELLAS PARK, Fla. (AP) — Outdated weather equipment is to blame for the lack of an early warning before killer tornadoes raked the Tampa Bay area, the region's chief meteorologist said Monday.

"The current technology is definitely archaic," said Robert Balfour, chief meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Ruskin on the east side of Tampa Bay.

"The best we can do with this radar is detect it as it's happening. It wasn't designed to detect tornadoes. It was designed to detect rainfall," he said. "There was no indication of a tornado."

Tornadoes swooped across Pinellas County on Saturday, killing three women and leaving a path of wreckage through residential neighborhoods in Pinellas Park and the Largo area. One woman was missing.

The storm injured 53 people, leaving six hospitalized, most with fractures. It also destroyed 125 homes and damaged 350 others.

Balfour and his boss, Paul Hebert, the service's Florida manager in Miami, found no fault with the way forecasters did their job. "In my opinion they did as well as they could with the information and equipment they had," Hebert said.

The Ruskin office put out warnings after receiving two calls reporting a tornado on the ground.

Weather service offices are getting new radar units that measure air movement inside clouds and can give up to a 40-minute warning of tornadoes. Two have been installed in Florida at Melbourne, on the state's east coast, and Eglin Air Force Base, in the Panhandle. The 35-year-old system at Ruskin isn't scheduled to be replaced until 1995.

Meanwhile, authorities continued to search for Amelia Riehl, 80, who disappeared during Saturday's storm.

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