

DETROIT FREE PRESS BASHES CATHOLICS

The September 26 edition of the *Detroit Free Press* ran a cartoon by Mike Thompson on the subject of vouchers that was blatantly anti-Catholic. All six cells ridiculed school vouchers, but it was the last one that crossed the line with Catholics. In reference to a "Vouch-O-Matic" machine that destroys the constitution, sucks millions out of public education, blinds the voters and churns out wooden nickels, the sixth graph read, "To Order, Rush Your Tax Dollars To: The Roman Catholic Church c/o Kids First! Yes! ORDER NOW!"

Our response to the press was as follows:

"If there is one public policy issue that cannot be discussed without anti-Catholicism rearing its ugly head, it is school vouchers. Every time this issue is put to the voters, some bigot conjures up fears of a Catholic windfall. So it is not surprising that in Michigan, where a ballot initiative on vouchers is pending, that Catholic bashers would surface again. And they did, with the Detroit Free Press leading the way.

"The offensive cartoon by Mike Thompson in yesterday's paper is not an isolated incident. Indeed, he got his cues from Ron Dzwonkowski, editor of the editorial page, and publisher Heath Meriwether: the editorial on school vouchers in last Saturday's Detroit Free Press ended with the crack, 'Catholic priests are expected to preach at least one of their sermons on vouchers with the theme 'eyes wide open.' Amen.' This editorial obviously gave Thompson the green light to bash Catholics, and he did just that.

"The *Detroit Free Press* owes Catholics an apology. Even Geoffrey Fieger would have to agree with us on this one."

Dzwonkowski defended the cartoon in a column he ran on September 28. You can write to him at Detroit Free Press, 321 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, Michigan 48226 or e-mail him at dzwonk@freepress.com.