

# DETROIT FREE PRESS IS AN ABSOLUTE DISGRACE

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a news story in the January 2 *Detroit Free Press*:

Let's say you are a reporter who detests the Catholic Church (there are more than a few out there), and would like to do an article that reflects badly on it. You come across a story that may qualify, but it is rather routine: it is about high school boys acting inappropriately.

Not satisfied that it will really put the Church against the wall, you decide to enhance the piece by trotting out a story about a noted Catholic public figure (Brett Kavanaugh) who was accused of acting offensively when he was in high school. It happened decades ago in some other part of the country, and the charges were never corroborated by anyone, but that doesn't matter. It can be made to fit.

Still not satisfied this will embarrass the Church, you add a story about a Catholic priest who, while having nothing to do with the original story, is serving time for what he did in the 1990s.

The story then ropes back to high school boys today in two Detroit Catholic schools who did something really newsworthy: they got into a brawl following a hockey game.

This 2679-word cut-and-paste "news story" appeared in the January 2nd edition of the *Detroit Free Press*.

If I were the editor of this media outlet, and I also hated the Catholic Church, I would reject this story as a sophomoric piece of journalism that would convince the reader that we have a blatant bias against Catholicism. Yet it passed muster and was printed.

To say this story is disjointed would be an understatement: forcing unconnected stories—stuffing them together without any segue—is what we would expect from a high school student hoping to finally make the honor roll.

If a reporter did a story on African American high school students who acted inappropriately, and added to it a story on O.J.—jamming in a story about Bill Cosby—and ended with a note about brawling black high school athletes, it wouldn't pass the smell test. The odor of bigotry would be in the air.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Education found that between 2013 and 2016, Detroit Public Schools listed 45 criminal cases of sexual misconduct, and 233 incidents of sexual harassment involving students.

Worse, the district had no Title IX investigation procedure. Moreover, just a few years ago, *USA Today* did a major study of sexual misconduct in the public schools in every state, rating them on several measures. Michigan received an overall score of “F.”

Those who work at the *Detroit Free Press* have no interest in sticking it to the public schools, which is why they would never do to them what they did to the Catholic Church today. They are a disgrace to the profession of journalism.

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