

# League Scores Against Florida's SUN-SENTINEL

On February 24, Fort Lauderdale's *Sun-Sentinel* yielded to pressure from the Catholic League by issuing an apology and a pledge not to run any more anti-Catholic ads. The League raised objections on February 23 regarding the February 9 publication of a four-page ad that had been paid for by a Seventh Day Adventist splinter group. It was one of the fastest victories in the League's history.

The ad accused the Catholic Church of seeking to create a New World Order and portrayed the Pope as a satanic force. The apocalyptic ad was replete with statements regarding "Earth's Final Warning," blaming the Catholic Church for ushering in the "Days of Darkness" and "Days of Peril." It tried to convey the preposterous message that Pope John Paul II and President Clinton were conspiring together to take command of the world.

By the time the Catholic League was informed of this incident, some of our members in the area, along with others, had already registered their complaints with the newspaper. But not even the Diocese of Palm Beach was able to bring the paper to its senses. Accordingly, the Catholic League contacted the radio and television stations in the area, the opposition newspaper, and the nation's major media outlets registering its outrage and its demands. We demanded nothing less than "an apology to Catholics and a pledge that no such ads will ever be accepted again." We added that "If this is not forthcoming, the Catholic League will launch a public ad campaign of its own, one that will directly target the *Sun-Sentinel*."

The news release also questioned whether the vice-president and director of marketing, Jim Smith, would have acceded to other groups that wanted to promote bigotry. We asked if the

newspaper would publish ads submitted by the Ku Klux Klan or the American Nazi Party.

The Catholic League is pleased with the response of the *Sun-Sentinel* and is not interested in conducting a public ad campaign against the newspaper. But while this issue has been closed, the larger issue of anti-Catholic bigotry in South Florida is not. That is why we will be starting a chapter in the area.