

MISSISSIPPI MUDSLINGING

Two complimentary articles about Catholicism that recently appeared in the *Picayune*, a Mississippi newspaper, was responsible for setting off a firestorm of anti-Catholicism stemming from local Baptists. One of the two articles gave good coverage to the work of Father John Noone and the other tried to unify local Christians. Both were met with strong rejection, first by Concerned Baptists from Pearl River & Hancock Counties, and second by Brother James McCraney of Sones Chapel Missionary Baptist Church.

The statement by Concerned Baptists, which appeared in the *Picayune*, was not anti-Catholic so much as it was a strong defense of the Baptist tradition. Included in the defense, not unexpectedly, were comments like "We reject papal authority" and "We reject the teaching of the actual presence of Christ's body and blood in communion (Holy Eucharist)."

Brother Craney, however, did not settle for repeating standard Protestant teachings. He took to the airwaves denouncing the Catholic Church.

For example, on April 20, Brother McCraney said on his radio program, "The Bible Truth Show," that Catholics should be wary of accepting any teachings from "a man who calls himself Father but dresses like mama." He called priests "liars from Hell" and "serpents in the pulpit" for consecrating the Eucharist; Transubstantiation was labeled an "ungodly" doctrine. Brother McCraney added that the Catholic Church was "the mother of harlots" and "the source of all untruth."

The league has asked Brother McCraney to cease and desist from fomenting division between Catholics and Baptists. We are awaiting his response.