

AMERICAN RED CROSS APOLOGIZES FOR CENSORING RELIGIOUS SPEECH

In a news release March 11, the Catholic League pledged to contact the leaders of over 100 organizations asking them to join us in dropping all support for the American Red Cross. We did just that—we faxed all of the organizations on our list. And also we contacted the Red Cross.

Our complaint centered on the decision of the headquarters of the American Red Cross to defend its Orange County (CA) chapter in prohibiting students from Orange County High School of the Arts from singing “God Bless America” and “America the Beautiful” at a Red Cross luncheon this past Sunday. The Red Cross opposed the songs citing its “sensitivity to religious diversity” and its “preference for a music program that would be inclusive and not offend different populations participating in this particular event.”

Yesterday evening, the American Red Cross issued a statement saying “the judgements we made in this case in applying our principles clearly offended some in our community.” It mentioned that “it is important to use reasonable judgement in applying principles to the everyday circumstances we confront.” The news release continued saying “the judgement we made to exclude certain songs from the Sunday program was a mistake.” It then apologized for its decision.

Catholic League president William Donohue remarked as follows:

“We are delighted that reasonableness prevailed at the American Red Cross and we have no interest in continuing our campaign to discredit the organization. While we accept the apology we do not buy the line that this was a ‘mistake.’ No, it was a calculated decision designed to punish religious

speech. The statement, therefore, is intellectually dishonest. But the bottom line is they got the message. One more point. We expect the organization will soon change its name: any group that has 'Cross' in its name is clearly being insensitive to religious diversity."