

CHRISTIAN AND SIKH STUDENTS' RIGHTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on two news stories that emerged this week on the religious rights of students:

Tomorrow, a fifth-grader in a Los Angeles public school will be allowed to sing a song at a talent show that mentions Jesus, but only because his mother acquired the services of the Alliance Defense Fund threatening a lawsuit: he was initially denied the right to sing the song, "We Shine," because it mentions Jesus *too many times* (it was not disclosed how many times it would take to violate the unwritten quota).

Earlier this week, a Michigan public school district overturned a school-board ban on wearing a kirpan, a dagger carried by Sikh students for religious reasons; the new rule says the blade of the knife must be dull, not exceeding two-and-one-fourth inches.

The right of students to sing a religious song at a school event should not even be contested—it's a free speech issue. But dropping the name Jesus is enough to set off the alarms, at least in Los Angeles. On the other hand, no lawyers were necessary to secure an exception to a "Zero Tolerance" policy on students carrying weapons to school in Michigan.

These cases are not an anomaly: in a nation that is 80 percent Christian, Christian students have to fight for their rights more vigorously than Sikh and Muslim students do.

What's at work is more than an anti-Christian bias—what's at work is the logical residue of a highly politicized multicultural curriculum. Quite frankly, it is the animus against the Judeo-Christian ethos that marks Western Civilization that accounts for such disparate treatment. Instead of celebrating our roots, the educrats are bent on trashing them. But they have plenty of tolerance for those who

do not share our heritage. It's as perverse as it is unjust.