

DEVILISH SCHOOLS

We live in strange times. A high school student from suburban Detroit has sued her school arguing that she has a constitutional right to wear the symbol of her faith on campus—the practice of witchery. The ACLU, naturally, is defending the witch, Crystal Siefferly.

It should be known that the ACLU opposes the right of nuns in habit to teach at a public school (Muslim teachers who wear Turbans, however, are okay). The ACLU is also against singing “Silent Night” at Christmas. Given all this, it’s nice to know that their understanding of diversity is inclusive of witches.

If some school officials and parents in White Plains, New York, had it their way, Satanism would be taught in the classrooms throughout the country.

But three courageous Roman Catholic families have sued the Bedford Central School District in an effort to stop what Mary DiBari calls activities that initiate children into “Satanism and witchcraft and other pagan worship.” Some public school officials in this area have previously gotten skittish about students carrying candy canes to school at Christmas, but they are non-plussed about Satanism invading the classroom through surreptitious means.

What’s been going on in Bedford schools is a blend of New Age programs, pop psychology, non-Christian spirituality and the occult. This is the determination of William Coulson, a highly respected psychologist (and Catholic League member) from California. Dr. Coulson testified that the “net effect of these programs is destructive. It’s psychotherapy applied to children who don’t have enough life experiences to find a fund of answers to draw from within themselves.”

If the schools can tolerate witchery, surely they can tolerate students who say an innocent prayer in the huddle before a

football game. Right? Wrong.

A federal appeals court in Houston has ruled that such prayers—even though they are student-led—are unconstitutional. It is unclear whether there will be an appeal, but it should be noted that the Fifth Circuit's jurisdiction covers Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, home of fervent football fans. Also unclear is whether the same judges who delivered this decision would have been so intolerant had the issue been a moment of silence initiated by a Satanist fullback.

Finally, we have the case of Eight Corners School in Scarborough, Oregon: they banned the celebration of Valentine's Day this year. Here's how Bill Nemitz, columnist for the *Portland Press Herald*, put it:

"That's right, kids. Forget about the crush Johnnie has on Susie that's been repressed since September, waiting for its moment in the midwinter sun. Forget about the cute rhymes, the smiley faces, the heart-shaped nuggets of chalk-candy that set pulses racing with verbal confections like 'UR Cute' and 'Be Mine' and 'Hot Stuff!' Forget about the cards, the envelopes, the cryptic notes beneath the signatures..." All this is because school officials determined that St. Valentine's Day was a religious celebration.

These four cases have two things in common: a) a willful disregard for the plain meaning of the First Amendment and b) a hatred of Christianity. The devil, they say, is in the deed.