

SCHOOL MAKES AMENDS

The school year ended last June on a bad note for a Ramapo School District student named Alex Caruso. But over the summer things improved markedly when the Hilburn, New York school acted responsibly.

Caruso was faced with a scheduling conflict between a band concert he was expected to be in and a trip to an amusement park that his parish had planned for Altar Servers. At first, Caruso was going to be penalized for not attending the band concert. What made this so odious is that other students who said they could not make the concert for other reasons were not threatened with punishment. The Catholic League stepped in and sent a letter to the school's principal, Roseanne Needleman.

The league maintained that it was patently unfair to penalize the student because of a scheduling conflict with his parish. We said that although it was not our desire to make a public issue of the case, we would do whatever it took to secure justice. Shortly thereafter the parents of the student received a call from the school promising that there would be no penalties and that the problem would not present itself again in the future.

ACLU GOES BONKERS

It should surprise no one that the ACLU sees red every time it hears the word Jesus. But now it's going bonkers even at the thought that someone might know that it was Jesus who said, "With God, all things are possible." That's why the Ohio affiliate of the Union filed suit in U.S. District Court: it

is trying to stop the state from inscribing these “objectionable” words in granite in front of the Statehouse.

The ACLU reasons that the motto paraphrases a quote from Jesus found in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and that’s enough reason to file suit. “The state is not supposed to pick a favorite religion,” explains ACLU Ohio director Christine Link. We’d love it if the court simply said, “Get a grip, Link, and stop trying to scrub society clean of its Judeo-Christian heritage.” But that would effectively put the ACLU out of business. With God, however, all things are possible.

PUBLIC LOVES VOUCHERS; COURT’S DON’T

When the poor are given a real choice in education, they overwhelmingly opt to send their children to Catholic schools. That’s what was learned in New York City this fall in a novel program.

Last year, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani instituted the School Choice Scholarship Foundation. A lottery was established to allow parents of poor children to qualify for \$1,400 in a grant that would permit them to choose the private school of their choice for their children. More than 22,700 applications were filed—more than twice the expected number—and the result was that 70% of the families of the 1,300 winners chose Catholic schools.

Unfortunately, the courts are still throwing up roadblocks to school choice. Just before the school year began, an appeals court in Wisconsin decided that a voucher program in Milwaukee was unconstitutional because it allowed children to use

vouchers to attend parochial schools. The decision is now on appeal to Wisconsin's Supreme Court.

There surely will be something to celebrate when the courts finally ratify the sentiments of the court of public opinion. Meanwhile, plans like those in New York City will have to suffice.