

THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION AT CHRISTMASTIME

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke out today about the politics of inclusion at Christmastime:

“Students at Spring Grove Elementary School in McHenry County, Illinois recently managed to sing holiday songs without ever mentioning Christ or the Christmas story. In another Illinois community, students in the Woodland District schools were forbidden from singing ‘Jingle Bells,’ never mind ‘Silent Night.’ But lucky for them, they are now allowed to listen to Christmas songs on the school bus (a ban was invoked after one student complained, but was later reversed when parents protested).

“Freedom Elementary School is located in East Manatee, Florida. Its students used to be able to enjoy nativity scenes every year, but now even snowmen have been banished from display. Moreover, at their ‘winter concert,’ only songs about patriotism have been given the OK. In another Southwest Florida school, Braden Middle School, new guidelines forbid ‘celebrating’ the holidays—they can only be ‘recognized.’ Anthony DiBello, the school’s principal, proudly announced that ‘you won’t see any Christmas trees around here.’ As he brilliantly observed, ‘we keep it generic.’

“Students at CASY Country Day charter school in Scottsdale, Arizona have been told that songs like ‘Joy to the World’ are taboo. According to Diane Spero, the school’s music teacher, ‘we don’t do religious songs at all.’ Ruth Argabright, a music specialist in the Mesa Unified School District, says that ‘we’ve tried to be more inclusive as our world opens to us.’

“Schools all across the country are celebrating National Inclusive Schools Week this week. But if anything should be

banned from the schools, it is this invidious application of inclusion. It is one thing to be sensitive to students from diverse backgrounds, quite another to use the concept of inclusion as a weapon to censor true diversity.

“The greatest enemy of diversity today is the politicization of inclusion, and no group has been more abused by this notion than Christians.”