

WINTER CONCERT INANITY

A father with two sons in a public elementary school in the Maryland suburbs of Washington D.C. contacted the Catholic League after attending the school's "Winter Concert." While the man was troubled by the lack of any religious songs at a concert so close to Christmas, one act in particular really concerned him. A class of children sang the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas." In the school's version, however, the word "winter" replaced any instance of "Christmas." Bill Donohue quickly fired off an e-mail to the school's principal, a portion of which appears here:

Assuming I have not been misinformed, this bowdlerizing of a secular Christmas song is absolutely absurd. Is it your belief that non-Christians in attendance would be thrown into shock by lines such as "on the third day of Christmas my true love sent to me three French hens?" Do you really assume that non-Christians are so bigoted as to be bothered by children singing the actual lyrics to this much-loved tune?

Furthermore, is it the opinion of [the school] that the pupils on stage are oblivious to the actual words of the song? And if you do acknowledge that the kids are likely familiar with "The Twelve Days of Christmas," don't you think that such an exercise in censorship sends Christian kids the message that there is something dirty about the word "Christmas?"

Lastly, what exactly are the twelve days of winter? Any twelve days chosen at random, or must they start on December 22? Silly question, perhaps, but it underscores how ridiculous it is to purge the song of its reference to Christmas.

It didn't take long for the principal to write back to Donohue. According to the principal, the school's choral director had previously received complaints from some parents who claimed to be offended by religious songs that were once a

part of the program. In order to avoid such complaints this year, the director not only purged the show of all religious songs, but she even went so far as to strip it of any mention of Christmas in an effort "to make the program as neutral as possible so as not to offend anyone."

Fortunately, the school principal realized that the choir director's actions had the opposite effect, and promised to look into this matter for future years. The principal said she would inform the choir director that Christmas music "is appropriate in the context of our students' performance as long as we are not giving preference to one religion over another."

So in the end, common sense reigned. The Catholic League is grateful to the parent for calling this issue to our attention, and to the principal for listening to reason and pledging to resolve the situation for the future.

Many people feel helpless to combat the multicultural madness that we see each Christmas season. But as this situation shows, it doesn't take much to enact positive change.