

San Rafael Curriculum Advisory Committee  
September 28, 2006

Last year when my 7<sup>th</sup> Grade daughter was working on her assigned reading, she came to me and said, "Dad, this book says that Jesus is the Son of God!". She was startled because I have raised my children to understand that there are many different religious beliefs around the world, she felt that these were very strong words – in a community of people from various backgrounds. She actually felt uncomfortable that this could be a challenge to people of other religious beliefs in the class. I read the book after my daughter was through with her assignment and I was surprised by the strong Christian messages in the novel.

I was raised as a Roman Catholic. I went to Parochial School for twelve years and I taught Catechism to Elementary School Students for one year. When I was teaching those classes, we used children's readers that had a mix of Bible Stories and fictionalized stories about Jesus, written for children that emphasized Christian teachings. The "Bronze Bow" struck me as a middle school version of the books I had used in the classroom when I was teaching Catechism. It is my opinion that this book steps well beyond the boundaries of neutrality as described in the State Curriculum Standards for Public Schools.

I first read the "Bronze Bow" in a Children's Literature class at De La Salle High School in the early 1970's. I read it again when my daughter had finished it in the fall of 2006. It was during this time that I was contacted by other parents with concerns about the "Bronze Bow". Each conversation with parents added to my sense that this book was not an appropriate book about the Roman Period for this class. Toni Pelligrini has done a wonderful job of teaching our kids in her class, throughout the year the students dress up as historic characters and make special presentations in class, and at the end of the year the class holds a banquet with everyone in period dress and they share food from their various world cultures. I can't imagine any of the characters from the "Bronze Bow" being portrayed in that classroom setting. This would just magnify the issues that parents have raised about this book.

Davidson's Principal often talks to parents about the importance of students "doing their best", "being the best of the best" and "striving for A's, B's". As parents, we ask the same of our teachers and administrators. As a Catholic, the continued use of this book as required reading in our public schools makes me very uncomfortable.

Our students deserve the best possible teaching materials and a school environment where respect is emphasized.

Sincerely,  
Armando Quintero