French court orders cross to be removed from JPII statue

by Perry West

France's top administrative court, the Conseil d'Etat has ordered a cross to be removed from a statue of Pope Saint John Paul II in Ploërmel, a small city in France's Brittany region.

The statue, nearly 25 feet tall, portrays Pope Saint John Paul II praying beneath an arch adorned with a cross. The memorial was erected in Ploërmel in 2006.

The court order decision provoked a strong response from the late pontiff's native Poland.

Poland' prime minister, Beata Szydlo, offered to have the statue relocated to Poland, to save the statue from "the dictates of political correctness" and "secularization of the state."

"Our great Pole, a great European, is a symbol of a Christian, united Europe," she said, according to the Telegraph.

Since its arrival, the statue has been a source of controversy, drawing some criticism from locals and the secularist National Federation of Free Thought, which campaigned for the statue's removal.

The court stated that the cross' "presence in a public location is contrary to the law", Le Point reported.

Prime Minister Szydlo responded that religious censorship is undermining the values of Europe and is a nuisance to Europeans. Secularization and the dictatorship of political correctness is "alien to our culture, which leads to terrorizing Europeans in their everyday life," she said.

The ruling has also received backlash on Twitter, where people have been protesting the court's decision by using the hashtag #montretacroix (show your cross). France's conservative parties have decried the decision, labeling the ruling as "madness" and "destructive to the country's history."

Patrick Le Diffon, the mayor of Ploërmel, called the statue a work of art and opposed its dismantling. However, the mayor said he would not like to start a religious battle and mentioned the possibility of bypassing the problem by selling the public land to a private investor.

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