



French Court Orders Removal of a Cross from the Monument to St. John Paul II. Says It Violates Secular Nature of the State

A French high court ruled that a cross on top of a monument to Saint John Paul II in a public square in the city of Ploërmel, saying it violates the secular nature of the state.

After France's highest administrative court ruled that a cross surmounting a statue of Saint John Paul II must be removed, the city's former mayor has written an open letter criticizing the ruling as wrong-headed and contrary to France's best interests.

"Taking away that cross is an attack on a part of our culture," he said in a two-page [missive](#) that begins simply "Chers amis."

As Breitbart News [reported](#) earlier this week, France's *Conseil d'Etat* ordered the elimination of a cross from a monument to Saint John Paul II in a public square in the city of Ploërmel, Brittany, saying it violates the secular nature of the state.

The court said that the statue of the Polish Pope could remain but the large cross above the monument had to be removed, a ruling that provoked consternation even outside French borders.

The Polish Prime Minister, Beata Szydło complained of “censorship” and said that if the cross must come down the statue should be transferred to Poland where it will be appreciated.

“The Polish government will try to save the monument of our compatriot from censorship, and we will propose to transfer it to Poland,” she said, adding that Pope John Paul “is a symbol of united Christian Europe.”

The former mayor, Mr. Paul Anselin, now heads up a private association called “Don’t Touch My Pope” and has reached out to the current mayor, Patrick Le Diffon, urging him to sell the plot of land to his group or a religious congregation if he is worried about the monument’s placement on public land. If he had done so sooner, Anselin writes, the current problem probably wouldn’t exist.

Mr. Anselin seems to think the current mayor isn’t fighting hard enough to save the monument, judging from certain comments. “What today’s politicians are missing is a pair of balls,” he [said](#).

In his letter, Anselin said that his first reaction to the court’s ruling was one of “great sadness and sorrow,” noting that such a thing has never been done before. “Brittany is a land of Christian roots,” he said, “a tolerant and generous Christianity.”

“The decision would have been unlikely even if the *Conseil d’Etat* had relied strictly on the law,” he said, “but they failed to take into account a circular letter regarding the application of the law of 1905 that prescribed acting with discernment, taking into consideration local circumstances.”

When the former mayor commissioned the monument, he writes, "it was first of all in homage to the man who brought communism down, naturally with the strength of the Catholic Church in Poland," and thus, "putting a cross over the head of a pope seemed like the most normal thing in the world to me."

"There is also a cultural problem that is fundamental," he writes. "Taking away that cross is an attack on a part of our culture."

Anselin says that together with their lawyer, he is exploring all possible avenues to save the monument, including the European Court of Human Rights.

The former mayor also states that his association is organizing a "great, peaceful demonstration" in December "to show our determination." He intends to invite leaders of other monotheistic religions as witness that they do not find the placement of the cross offensive.

"Whether they are Jews or Muslims," he writes, "they know well that France's roots are Christian, and even more especially those of Brittany, marked by Catholicism."

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