



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEKLY  
from  
**Americans for Freedom of Religion**

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*"Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword or shooting them with a sharp arrow." Proverbs 25:18*

### **New Attempts to Cancel God, Religious Freedom, and Prayer in America**

#### **False Claims that "In God We Trust" is a Christian Nationalist Project:**

"The national motto, In God We Trust, asserts our collective trust in a sovereign God," said a Texas State Senator after schools started to receive donated posters of the motto that they will be required to display in accordance with a new state law.<sup>(1)</sup> Senate Bill 797 requires schools to display the posters in a "conspicuous place" as long as they are "donated" or "purchased by private donations" which has resulted in signs being displayed across the state.<sup>(2)</sup> Those opposed are arguing the law imposes religion on students. "Alone, (the posters) are a basic violation of the separation of church and state. But in the broader context, it's hard not to see them as part of the larger Christian nationalist project," said Sophie Ellman-Golan of JFREJ.<sup>(3)</sup> However, no group has yet spoken out against the national motto, In God We Trust, being printed on every dollar bill and coin. Nor has any group acknowledged that the national motto does not specify a Christian or Jewish or Muslim or any other denomination God. Since a Christian nationalist project does not exist, many see this objection to the posters as an attack on Christianity itself.

#### **False Claims the Catholic Rosary Prayers are "An Extremist Symbol":**

A writer for the widely read *The Atlantic* magazine has recently gained much attention with his claim, "Just as the AR-15 rifle has become a sacred object for Christian nationalists in general, the rosary acquired a militaristic meaning for radical-traditional Catholics. On this extremist fringe, rosary beads have been woven into a conspiratorial politics and absolutist gun culture. These armed radical traditionalists have taken up a spiritual notion that the rosary can be a weapon in the fight against evil and turned it into something dangerously literal."<sup>(4)</sup>

"It looks to me like the guy who is politicizing the Rosary and treating it as a weapon in the culture war is ...(writer) Daniel Panneton," said Professor Robert George, Princeton Un. and former chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. "... it's hard to miss the classic anti-Catholic tropes in the piece..."<sup>(5)</sup>

"The politically elite core in media ... mean to topple every natural and supernatural sign (of Western civilization)," said Professor Chad Pecknold of Catholic University of America.<sup>(6)</sup>

"The article is a long-running stream of inaccuracies, logical fallacies and distortions," said Dominican Fr. Pius Pietrzyk. "The notion of 'spiritual combat' has been with the church from time immemorial. ... In no way does the notion of Rosary as 'combat' imply physical violence."<sup>(7)</sup>

(cnn.com, 8/21/22(1); foxnews.com, 8/20/22(2); axios.com, 8/21/22(3); theatlantic.com, 8/14/22(4); nregister.com, 8/16/22(5)(6)(7); deseret.com, 8/16/22