

HIGH COURT OKAYS CROSS ON STATE LAND

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a Supreme Court decision on religious liberty handed down today:

The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 7-2 decision, rendered an important First Amendment victory by upholding the right of patriots to erect a Christian symbol on public lands. Militant secularists, led by the American Humanist Association, wanted it demolished.

One hundred years ago, family members of those who died in World War I drew up plans for a memorial. Six years later, in 1925, the American Legion erected a 40-foot cross in Bladensburg, Maryland on state property. It was meant to give recognition to all those who perished, not just Christians.

Here is what the plaque says: "The Memorial Cross Dedicated to the Heroes Of Prince George's County who gave their lives in the great war for the liberty of the world."

Writing for the majority, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito admitted that the cross is "undoubtedly a Christian symbol, but that fact should not blind us to everything else that the Bladensburg Cross has come to represent." He cogently observed that "destroying or defacing the cross that has stood undisturbed for nearly a century would not be neutral and would not further the ideals of respect and tolerance embodied in the First Amendment."

Alito was being kind. It could also be said that destroying the cross would be an expression of intolerance: It would be an assault on the free speech rights of those who erected it and those who support it today.

It must also be said that the same anti-religious activists

who object to a huge cross on public property would defend the right of gay-pride extremists to erect a huge phallic symbol on public property. That would be their idea of freedom.

Score one for our side today in the ongoing culture war.