

NO PROBE OF USAFA NEEDED

Recently the Catholic League issued a news release regarding an incident at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) that was troubling. At issue was a remark by USAFA Superintendent Lt. Gen. Michael Gould: he was upset with a wooden cross placed at the site of a pagan worship area.

We objected to Gould's characterization that the placement of the cross was "destructive" and "different than someone writing graffiti on the Cadet Chapel." We followed up by asking for a Congressional probe given past problems with the USAFA and the rights of Catholics on campus.

Following our news release, Bill Donohue spoke to Father Robert Bruno, the Catholic Chaplain at the Air Force Academy. He convinced Donohue that positive steps had been taken to ensure the religious liberty rights of all cadets, and that Lt. Gen. Michael Gould has played a central role in that effort. Accordingly, we called off our request for a probe and contacted Sen. James Webb, Rep. Susan Davis and other members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee asking them to discontinue their investigation.

We noted, however, that there are outside influences that are inimical to religious liberty near campus namely Mikey Weinstein, president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation and graduate of the Academy. Weinstein called the cross at the pagan site tantamount to having a swastika in the Jewish center. With people like this closely tied with the Academy, we are making sure we continue to monitor the situation.