

Why We Don't Object

We received several phone calls and e-mails about a situation in Albany, Oregon. A public school principal suspended two teenage boys for refusing to remove crucifixes and rosary beads from around their necks. Because the educator had reason to suspect the students' wearing of these religious symbols was related to gang activity, the Catholic League has no problems with his action.

Though a flat-out ban of religious symbols worn by students would certainly be objectionable, this is not the case here. The principal has stated that religious items are permitted. However, he reserves the right to order their removal on a case-by-case basis, should he have reason to believe they are meant to indicate gang affiliation.

It is unfortunate that gangs are a problem in our country's schools, and unfortunate that many gangs pervert Catholic symbols and devotionals in order to identify themselves and intimidate others. The Oregon principal seems to be doing what he must to protect all of his students, and keep the kids focused on education.