



“Satanic Temple” Group Launched at U.S. Naval Academy

A “Satanic Temple” study group has been approved by top brass at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. But according to the *Navy Times*, while academy officials had provided the group with a room on campus for “study,” someone announced via e-mail that the group would be holding “satanic services” on campus, a revelation that prompted clarification from academy officials.

“A group of Midshipmen with beliefs aligned with those practiced by the Satanic Temple ... requested a space where they could assemble to discuss and share their common beliefs,” Cmdr. Alana Garas, an academy

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spokeswoman, explained. However, she added, “the request was for a ‘study group’ space, not for holding ‘satanic services.’”

The Satanic Temple has been recognized by the IRS for tax-exempt status as a church. The organization “engages in religious and political activities, most of which reflect a left-wing ideology and individual centered self-worship,” reported CNSNews.com.

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In 2017, reported CNSNews, the Satanic Temple group “held a Satanic Mass apparently to demonstrate its opposition to the presidency of Donald Trump. The mass reportedly included an invocation ritual, a destruction ritual, and a bloodletting ritual.”

The *Military Times* reported that Garas “cautioned students who follow the ‘politically active’ religion from participating in its political side, lest it appear that their actions are endorsed by the Pentagon. ‘Midshipmen have the right to assemble to discuss their beliefs as they choose, but, to be clear, in accordance with Department of Defense policy, military members will not engage in partisan political activities, and will avoid the inference that their activities may appear to imply DoD approval or endorsement of a political cause,’ she said.”

In response to the academy’s clarification and warning, Lucien Greaves, one of the Satanic Temple’s founders, said that “the notion that members of the Satanic Temple within the Naval Academy could be denied the right to hold services because we are non-theistic and/or politically active has absolutely no credible basis in law or common sense. The Satanic Temple is no more a political cause than the Catholic Church or Southern Baptists.”

Greaves charged that if the academy intends to ban midshipmen “of a particular belief from holding services because their church speaks to social issues of political relevance,” then it must also “deny the services of Catholics for their church’s political lobbying against abortion, the services of Mormons for their political activism related to gay marriage, and most every Protestant denomination for both.”

The Satanic Temple insists that its mission is to “encourage benevolence and empathy among all people, reject tyrannical authority, advocate practical common sense and justice, and be directed by the human conscience to undertake noble pursuits guided by the individual will.”

However, the group’s ideas concerning benevolence, empathy, and nobility appear to be decidedly at odds with any rational understanding of those terms. According to LifeSiteNews.com, the Satanic Temple’s “Religious Reproductive Rights” campaign focuses on undermining pro-life laws by claiming they violate the freedom of religion. In 2015, reported LifeSite, the group “sued the state of Missouri over restrictions on abortion, claiming that ‘the question of when life begins is absolutely a religious opinion,’ and that informed consent laws violated their religious liberty to obtain immediate abortions. In 2019 they began further proceedings on the same issue.”

Additionally, reported the pro-life and Christian news site, “the organization has attracted attention through several high profile black masses — blasphemous rituals that typically involve the desecration of a consecrated host, which the Catholic Church teaches is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ — and their statue of Baphomet outside the Arkansas capitol building in protest to an installation of the Ten Commandments.”

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