

Faith Digest: Cross on Mount Soledad can stay for now

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The decades-long battle over a cross erected on public land in California will drag out even longer now that the Supreme Court declined to hear the case. The court said the case first must go to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals before the high court will consider it. The conflict in [Mount Soledad Memorial Association v.](#)

[Trunk](#), is over a 43-foot cross that sits atop Mount Soledad on public land in San Diego. The cross was erected in the 1950s and later became a veterans' memorial. A veterans' group that maintains the cross asked the Supreme Court to let it leapfrog over the 9th Circuit after



a lower federal court ruled last December the cross should come down. The Mount Soledad cross has a long history of legal wrangling. The first challenge came in 1989, before the land surrounding it became a veterans' memorial. In December, a federal court in San Diego ruled the cross should come down because it violates the First Amendment's Establishment Clause and promotes one religion—Christianity—over others. But the same court granted a stay, allowing the cross to remain until the veterans had a chance to appeal. The decision by the Supreme Court to send the case back to a lower court could mean the case will last at least another two to three years.

Vatican financial watchdog signs accord. In its latest bid to tackle corruption and increase transparency, the [Vatican's](#) financial watchdog signed a bilateral accord to exchange information with its counterpart in

the United States. Officials with the financial information authority announced it endorsed the agreement with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, an independent body in the U.S. Treasury Department responsible for regulating and supervising domestic and foreign banks. It marks the latest example of the authority's efforts to build international cooperation and prevent a repeat of the corruption scandals that have engulfed the Vatican bank, known as the Institute for Religious Works. The announcement came less than a month after Pope Francis dismissed the five-man board of the financial watchdog in a controversial move that underscored his hard line on cleaning up Vatican finances. The Vatican watchdog expects further agreements with financial supervisors and regulators around the world as it strengthens its own regulatory infrastructure in the fights against money laundering and financing terrorism.