

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2022

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland,

The recent attacks on Christian churches are a diabolical attack on Americans' sacred right to freely worship and assemble. As Attorney General, you are responsible for both enforcing the law and investigating any violations against the law. I urge you to investigate these reported attacks on churches with the utmost fervency.

Ever since the draft opinion from Supreme Court Justice Alito in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* was leaked, pro-abortion advocates have taken to vandalizing churches, disrupting church services, and in one instance, stealing a tabernacle.

This past Mother's Day, protestors outside Old St. Patrick's Cathedral disrupted a pro-life Rosary procession. According to a National Review reporter who was there, a protester disrupting the procession was dancing and spinning on the ground with baby dolls attached saying "God killed his kid, why can't I kill mine" and "help me abort my babies. My babies are all wet."¹ On the same day in Los Angeles, the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels' holy mass was interrupted by protestors just prior to taking Communion². On May 5th, vandals spray-painted and smashed windows of Sacred Heart of Mary Church in Boulder, Colorado.

Such acts are not new. In fact, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has identified that "at least 129 incidents have occurred across 35 states and the District of Columbia since May 2020. Incidents include arson, statues beheaded, limbs cut, smashed, and painted, gravestones defaced with swastikas

¹ Lopez, Kathryn Jean. "Abortion Enthusiasts Block the Front Door of Lower Manhattan Church." National Review, National Review, 7 May 2022, https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/abortion-enthusiasts-block-the-front-door-of-lower-manhattan-church-saturday-morning/?utm_source=recirc-desktop&utm_medium=homepage&utm_campaign=right-rail&utm_content=corner&utm_term=first.

² Bukuras, Joe. "Costumed Protesters Disrupt Mother's Day Mass." Catholic News Agency, Catholic News Agency, 9 May 2022, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/251176/costumed-protesters-disrupt-los-angeles-mass>.

and anti-Catholic language and American flags next to them burned, and other destruction and vandalism.”³

Pro-abortion groups’ rhetoric has grown increasingly extreme over the years. The group “Rise Up 4 Abortion Rights” has stated that it applauds efforts to disrupt church services. The group tweeted on February 27 “cheers to those who dressed as ‘Handmaids’ and disrupted mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral in SF to indict the Catholic Church’s role in the push to ban abortion & enslave women.”⁴ The group also reportedly said that it wants to “to create a situation where those who run this society have to fear the loss of legitimacy if they go forward with revoking abortion rights.”⁵ And it aims to “To step outside the confines of ‘official’ politics and fill the streets with our fury”⁶.

In another example, the group “Ruth Sent Us” publicly stated its intentions to burn the Eucharist in protest. A tabernacle containing the Eucharist was stolen from St. Bartholomew Catholic Church in Katy, Texas. Stolen Eucharists are often used to celebrate what are called “black masses” and other satanic rituals⁷. To put this in perspective as to how offensive this is, Catholics believe, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, that the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ is contained and present in the Eucharist⁸ and that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.”⁹ Ruth Sent Us’ intent to burn the Eucharist poses a threat to Catholic churches simply for their Christian faith.

As you may be aware, Corpus Christi, Texas is the largest city in my district and its name translates literally to “Body of Christ.” The namesake and rich cultural history of Corpus Christi morally forbids me from not voicing the concerns of Christian churches and their parishioners across our country who are becoming the target of profane and vulgar acts.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has defined hate crime as “a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.”¹⁰ This definition puts religious hate crimes squarely within your department’s purview. While pro-abortion advocates have a Constitutional right to peacefully protest in public, the actions and rhetoric of these groups constitute hate crimes since they are targeting communities based on their religious beliefs.

Americans are growing increasingly fearful of these attacks reaching their churches. What steps are you currently taking in response to investigate the newly reported instances of hate crimes against Christian churches?

³ “Backgrounder: Attacks on Catholic Churches in the U.S.” USCCB, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/religious-liberty/Backgrounder-Attacks-on-Catholic-Churches-in-US>.

⁴ Ruth Sent Us, Twitter, https://twitter.com/RuthSentUs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor.

⁵ Hasson, Peter. “Pro-Choice Group Targeting Churches Has Links to Revolutionary Communist Party.” Fox News, FOX News Network, 9 May 2022, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/pro-choice-group-targeting-churches-links-revolutionary-communist-party>.

⁶ “About Us - Rise up 4 Abortion Rights.” Rise Up 4 Abortion Rights. - Abortion On Demand & Without Apology, 9 May 2022, <https://riseup4abortionrights.org/about-us/>.

⁷ “Black Mass.” Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/black-mass>.

⁸ Catechism of the Catholic Church - Paragraph # 1374, <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/para/1374.htm>.

⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church - Paragraph # 1324, <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/para/1324.htm>.

¹⁰ “Learn about Hate Crimes.” The United States Department of Justice, 9 May 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/learn-about-hate-crimes>.

The leaked draft opinion has and will continue to result in religious hate crimes. Without any investigative action from the Department of Justice, these attacks will become more commonplace and further endanger the lives of Americans. In the strongest terms possible, I urge you to acknowledge the rise in anti-Christian hate crimes and investigate these crimes utilizing the full authority of your position and the extensive resources of the DOJ at your disposal.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Cloud', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Cloud
Member of Congress