News



A statue of St. Michael the Archangel is seen at the Church of St. Michael in New York City in 2017. (OSV News/Gregory A. Shemitz)



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Former President Donald Trump is infamous for his enthusiastic use of Twitter (now X). Throughout his time on the social media site, he's used it to attack his political opponents, endorse NFTs, sell watches and sneakers, and now — to share Catholic saint imagery.

Sharing an image of St. Michael on his feast day, Sept. 29, Trump tweeted the words of the St. Michael Prayer — without further context or elaboration.

St. Michael is regarded as the defender of the Catholic Church, and is often depicted as a spiritual warrior and a leader in the fight between good and evil. Before the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council, the St. Michael Prayer was a fixture at the conclusion of every Mass since its composition by Pope Leo XIII in the late 1800s. Beginning in 2018, the prayer has returned to use in some dioceses in the United States after gaining renewed interest in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis.

In evoking the prayer, which features language referencing spiritual warfare and battle, one could argue that Trump, the Republican presidential candidate, is attempting to ingratiate himself with Catholics who believe they are "under attack" from secular society.

The responses from Trump's followers to his message likened this election to the same good vs. evil battle referenced in the St. Michael Prayer, with some pledging their support for the upcoming "battle." A few commenters opined that God was on "their side." Others were surprised and confused by the reference.

This isn't the first time that Trump has tweeted an out of context Catholic image, though.

On Sept. 8, the day Catholics celebrate the Nativity of Mary, Trump tweeted an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe saying, "Happy Birthday Mary!"

It's worth noting that Trump used an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe — an image of Mary from her appearance in Mexico in 1531 — and not an image of Mary of Nazareth. This nuance seemed lost on both the former president and the majority of those who commented on the post.

Some 10 days earlier, Trump had enraged pro-life Catholics by voicing his support for public funded treatments for in vitro fertilization, and criticized Florida's six-week abortion ban as being "too short." Our Lady of Guadalupe is considered the patroness of the unborn.

Despite Trump's fluctuating position on abortion, pro-life Christians flocked to the comments on both tweets, sharing AI-generated images of Jesus with the former president, or lauding Trump as a warrior against evil. Others simply responded with an affirming "amen," including a prominent Catholic Twitter priest.

After being banned on most social media platforms for his alleged role in fomenting the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection, Trump has been back on X since Aug. 12, 2024. He was reinstated shortly after Elon Musk purchased Twitter, but became active again after Joe Biden dropped out of the presidential race. Trump has since received the enthusiastic endorsement of Musk.

Prior to that, Trump could only be found on Truth Social, a Twitter alternative co-owned by the former president himself. He still occasionally posts there.

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Trump is not just courting Catholics on social media, though. The former president will be attending the annual Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner, an event focused on raising money for Catholic Charities. Kamala Harris has opted not to attend.

In criticizing his opponent for not attending the event, Trump took to Truth Social instead of X to say: "It's sad, but not surprising, that Kamala has decided not to attend. I don't know what she has against our Catholic friends, but it must be a lot, because she certainly hasn't been very nice to them, in fact, Catholics are literally being persecuted by this Administration."

Repeating his oft-used line about any demographic he is discussing that date, Trump also made an appeal to Catholics on an intellectual level.

"Any Catholic that votes for Comrade Kamala Harris should have their head examined," he said.

To date, Trump has not posted a reference or observance of any other religion or faith denomination, fueling rumors (or perhaps, prayers) on social media that the former president might be interested in converting — though there is no indication of that.

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