

Jesus Erased: Porsche Facing Backlash Over Ad's Omission

Luxury car brand Porsche has found itself in hot water following the release of an advertisement celebrating 60 years of the Porsche 911.

The advertisement has drawn criticism for apparently editing out the Cristo Rei—a statue of Jesus Christ that stands as a prominent Christian symbol overlooking the city of Lisbon, Portugal.

The German company, renowned for its high-end sports cars, launched a campaign last week commemorating six decades of “very fast years” for the Porsche 911 and introducing a special edition model, the 2024 Porsche 911 S/T. The ad, spanning about two and a half minutes, showcases the evolution of the iconic 911.

A version of the ad posted on the company’s website features the 911 cruising across the screen against the backdrop of the bridge and river adjacent to the Cristo Rei. However, the 92-foot-tall statue of Jesus is conspicuously absent from the concrete pedestal it usually graces. This edit was spotted by a social media user, whose post highlighting the omission quickly went viral. In response, Porsche issued a statement to FOX Business, explaining, “In an early version of a film created in Europe, the Cristo Rei Statue does not appear. We are truly sorry and can fully understand the hurt this has caused. This film has been removed.”

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To address the backlash, Porsche uploaded a revised version of the 60th-anniversary video on its YouTube account. This

version restores the presence of the statue of Jesus Christ atop the pedestal overlooking the Tagus River, which separates the Portuguese cities of Almada and Lisbon.

The statue, known as the Santuário de Cristo Rei or the Sanctuary of Christ the King, was erected in 1959 as an expression of gratitude for Portugal's neutrality during World War II. The monument depicts Christ with outstretched arms, blessing the city of Lisbon.

This incident involving Porsche aligns with a pattern of institutions facing backlash for decisions that remove Christian symbols. In 2017, budget supermarket Lidl faced criticism for airbrushing Christian crosses from packaging to maintain a "religiously neutral" stance. More recently, the London School of Economics faced backlash for changing its Christian term names, evoking accusations of being ashamed of Britain's history and culture. Other universities, such as Swansea University and the University of Kent, have also been accused of downplaying Christian heritage in favor of secular alternatives.

The controversy surrounding the Porsche advertisement reflects a broader tension between maintaining cultural heritage and faith, and adapting to the demands of a secular world. As Christian symbols face erasure or alteration, it raises questions about the preservation of tradition, faith and values in an ever-evolving landscape, and continuing attempts to erase images of Jesus from society at every turn. {eoa}

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