

Midshipmen Rejoice: Jesus Returning to the Merchant Marine Academy

There's something powerfully telling about a room full of future American leaders erupting in applause—not for funding, not for policy changes, but for Jesus. That's exactly what happened at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's Battle Standard Dinner on Apr. 3, when Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy stood before the midshipmen and boldly declared, "Can we bring Jesus up from the basement?"

The crowd's response was electric. "Let's not put Jesus in the basement! Let's get Him out! Let's bring Him up!" Duffy said, triggering the loudest applause of the night. Taken aback by the passion in the room, he smiled and said, "You want Jesus up from the basement? Alright, great! That was the loudest applause we got!"

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As reported by The Christian Post, the painting in question—Christ on the Water, created in 1947 by merchant mariner Hunter Wood—was removed from its place in Wiley Hall following a 2023 complaint from the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. The group demanded the removal of the painting, which it called a display of "sectarian" religious imagery.

Initially covered with a curtain, the painting was ultimately moved to a flood-prone basement, prompting an outcry from midshipmen, alumni, and members of Congress.

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To the midshipmen, this wasn't just art—it was personal.

One midshipman told The Christian Post, “I remember many times when I used to pray underneath that painting when I was on the verge of failing a class, or I had big tests or I was worried about something.” Another recalled how its presence gave comfort during difficult moments, saying, “People would look up to that painting and say, ‘Everything’s going to be all right. Jesus is looking after me.’”

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This moment is more than just a symbolic gesture. It’s part of a broader return to truth, faith, and courage in places where it once felt absent. With Jesus back at the forefront, we’re witnessing change—not just at the academy, but across the nation. And as one midshipman put it, “Finally, the fight is somewhat close to over.”

Let’s not miss what this represents. The cheers weren’t just for a painting—they were for the hope and strength that Jesus brings. And now, more than ever, that hope is rising.

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