

Philippine ban on rosaries in vehicles draws ire



Religious items on dashboards do not cause accidents, priest says

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A ban in the Philippines on rosaries and religious icons hanging from vehicle dashboards if they block a driver's line of sight, has come under fire from a Catholic priest and a group of jeepney drivers.

The items can still be placed on the rear view mirror, however, as long as these are coiled up so they don't swing around, according to the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

The confusion following the implementation on May 19 of the Anti-distracted Driving Act, which focused on the use of communication devices and other electronic gadgets while driving, was extended to religious items on dashboards, *Inquirer.net* reported.

A priest claims that rosaries and small religious statues in vehicles do not cause accidents.

While he agreed with prohibiting the use of cell phones when driving, Father Jerome Secillano said he did not agree with the LTFRB ban on rosaries and religious statuettes in cars.

"The LTFRB is absolutely missing the point by prohibiting the display of small religious images in cars," said Father Secillano, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' permanent committee on public affairs.

Father Secillano pointed out that it was not the rosaries that caused accidents on the road, but mechanical problems and the drivers' ignorance and abusive behavior on the road.

Piston, an association of jeepney drivers and owners, said no data showed that rosaries and religious trinkets caused accidents. "Do not meddle with the drivers' faith in God," its president, George San Mateo said.

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