



Threat Target/Facilitation Platform  
FBI Richmond  
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**(U//FOUO) Interest of Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists in Radical-Traditionalist Catholic Ideology Almost Certainly Presents New Mitigation Opportunities**

**(U) Executive Summary**

(U//FOUO) FBI Richmond assesses the increasingly observed interest of racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) in radical-traditionalist Catholic (RTC)<sup>a</sup> ideology almost certainly<sup>b</sup> presents opportunities for threat mitigation through the exploration of new avenues for tripwire and source development. FBI Richmond makes this assessment with high confidence<sup>c</sup> based on FBI investigations, local law enforcement agency reporting, and liaison reporting, with varying degrees of corroboration and access.

(U//FOUO) In making this assessment, FBI Richmond relied on the key assumption that RMVEs will continue to find RTC ideology attractive and will continue to attempt to connect with RTC adherents, both virtually via social media and in-person at places of worship. Indicators that would cause FBI Richmond to revise the judgments or confidence levels in its assessment include increases or decreases in RMVE subjects’ attendance at RTC or traditionalist Catholic places of worship; increases or decreases in RMVE subjects’ activity on social media platforms and forums maintained or frequented by RTCs; or the public distancing of prominent RTC or traditionalist Catholic personalities or institutions from RMVE ideologies. FBI Richmond assesses RMVE interest in RTCs is likely to increase over the next 12 to 24 months in the run-up

<sup>a</sup> (U) Analyst Note: RTCs are typically characterized by the rejection of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) as a valid church council; disdain for most of the popes elected since Vatican II, particularly Pope Francis and Pope John Paul II; and frequent adherence to anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ, and white supremacist ideology. Radical-traditionalist Catholics compose a small minority of overall Roman Catholic adherents and are separate and distinct from “traditionalist Catholics” who prefer the Traditional Latin Mass and pre-Vatican II teachings and traditions, but without the more extremist ideological beliefs and violent rhetoric. Vatican II took place from 1962-1965 and essentially shaped the modern Roman Rite Catholic Church. It was intended to help the church respond to global cultural changes in the aftermath of World War II and resulted in significant reforms to the liturgy, attitudes toward non-Christian religions, roles and responsibilities of the laity, views on religious freedom, etc.

<sup>b</sup> (U) See Appendix B: Expressions of Likelihood.

<sup>c</sup> (U) See Appendix C: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information.