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Pope Francis appeals for religious freedom in Ukraine

In his words following the Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis expresses his fears over Kyiv's decision to ban the Orthodox Church linked to the Moscow Patriarchate. He appeals: "Let no Christian Church be abolished directly or indirectly."

By Vatican News

Following the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis expressed his fear regarding religious freedom in Ukraine with reference to the parliament's recent decision to ban the Orthodox Church linked to the Moscow Patriarchate.

"I continue to follow with sorrow the fighting in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. And in thinking about the laws recently adopted in Ukraine, I fear for the freedom of those who pray, because those who truly pray always pray for all. A person does not commit evil because of praying. If someone commits evil against his people, he will be guilty for it, but he cannot have committed evil because he prayed. So let those who want to pray be allowed to pray in what they consider their Church. Please, let no Christian Church be abolished directly or indirectly. Churches are not to be touched!"

Kyiv's decision

The bill voted on 20 August in Kyiv by an overwhelming majority gives the parishes concerned nine months to sever ties with the Russian Orthodox Church, an action that drew an immediate reaction from the Moscow Patriarchate, which commented that it was a "clear violation of internationally recognised human rights in the field of religious freedom."

Prayers for peace

Pope Francis again called on everyone to pray for an end to wars, mentioning Palestine, Israel, Myanmar, and every part of the world suffering from them. He emphasized, "the people are asking for peace! Let us pray that the Lord will give us all peace."

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