



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Pope Leo Deplores Worldwide Religious Persecution

In a wide-ranging address to the Vatican diplomatic corps Jan. 9, Pope Leo XIV deplored attacks on religious freedom— “the first of all human rights,” he reiterated from Pope Benedict XVI, “because it expresses the most fundamental reality of the person.”

“Recent data,” Pope Leo said, show that “sixty-four per cent of the world’s population suffers serious violations of this right.” He urged that religious freedom be “fully respected” for all religions, and reiterated the Holy See’s “categorical rejection of all forms of antisemitism, which unfortunately continues to sow hatred and death.”

And “persecution of Christians,” he emphasized, “remains one of the most widespread human rights crises today, affecting over 380 million believers worldwide,” who “suffer high or extreme levels of discrimination, violence and oppression because of their faith.”

He also called out a more “subtle form of religious discrimination against Christians,” prevalent “even in countries where they are in the majority, such as in Europe or the Americas.” “There,” he said, “they are sometimes restricted in their ability to proclaim the truths of the Gospel for political or ideological reasons, especially when they defend the dignity of the weakest, the unborn, refugees and migrants, or promote the family.”

He linked this ideological religious persecution to another troubling phenomenon: “words los(ing) their meaning,” so that “reality itself becomes debatable and ultimately incommunicable.” “In the West,” he said, “a new Orwellian-style language is developing which, in an attempt to be increasingly inclusive, ends up excluding those who do not conform to the ideologies that are fueling it.”

“We need words once again to express distinct and clear realities unequivocally,” he urged. “This should happen in our homes and public spaces, in politics, in the media and on social media.” The Pope’s address here: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7crztz>

Listen to Rick Hinshaw and Dr. Jim Dolan engage in an in-depth discussion of Pope Leo’s address to the Vatican diplomatic corps. <https://tinyurl.com/3fdnvm5>

“How strangely will the Tools of a Tyrant pervert the plain Meaning of Words!”

- Founder Samuel Adams

“Language is a key battleground for national and cultural conflict.”

- Marc Shell , Harvard Professor