



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Religious Freedom Week June 22-29: Declared by the USCCB

Religious Freedom Week begins Monday, June 22—the feast of Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, martyred for refusing an oath of supremacy proclaiming King Henry VIII supreme head of the Church in England. They gave their lives for freedom of the Church and of individual conscience.

During this annual event, the Committee for Religious Liberty of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) invites us to pray, reflect, and act to promote religious freedom. This year, the bishops highlight domestic and international threats to religious freedom:

- They urge us to respond to Political and Anti-Religious Violence in America by examining our consciences and availing ourselves of the sacrament of Confession if we have been untruthful or uncharitable in our political discourse.
- Gender Ideology, the bishops note, “has corroded religious liberty in recent years,” suppressing religious expression on human sexuality and sexual difference. In response, “it is crucial that Christians evangelize the culture.”
- While recognizing legitimate differences among Catholics regarding immigration policy, the bishops express concern over current deportation policies making some immigrants fearful to attend worship services, or those in detention being denied access to religious services.
- Religious discrimination: Various federal programs, the bishops note, unduly burden or discriminate outright against the participation of religious organizations. For example, a recent Federal Scholarship Tax Credit school choice initiative lacks religious freedom protections to assure that religious schools are included; and various federal grant programs exclude religious organizations from participation, despite Supreme Court rulings prohibiting discrimination against religious organizations simply because they are religious.

Internationally, the bishops cite “extremist violence”—kidnappings and killings, attacks on churches and murder of worshippers, violent displacement of millions, “in a number of countries on the African continent”; and the Ortega regime’s brutal repression of the Church in Nicaragua, with “bloody assaults against parishes and chapels,” kidnappings, “politically calculated desecrations of the Blessed Sacrament,” expulsion of bishops, priests, and the papal nuncio, and monitoring and recording of sermons during Masses.

For more information, and opportunities to respond:

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/religious-liberty/religious-freedom-week>