

# Religious Freedom Week 2024

## Pray—Reflect—Act

### June 22—Respect for Sacred Spaces

**Pray** that all people of faith would be free to gather in houses of worship without fear.

#### **Reflect**

The very nature of a sacred space is that it is set apart from other spaces as a place to seek communion with the divine and thus should be treated with respect. In a pluralistic society such as ours, respect for sacred spaces is especially vital for the sake of civil peace, which is part of the common good. In recent years, a wave of vandalism and arson has hit Catholic churches and statues. There have been over 320 attacks so far, and that number steadily continues to grow. Christians are not alone in defending their sacred spaces. The terrorist attacks against Israel and ensuing outbreak of war caused antisemitic incidents in the U.S. to skyrocket, including shocking displays of open hatred, with acts of anti-Muslim hatred committed as well. There is no greater threat to religious liberty than for one's house of worship to become a place of danger, and the country sadly finds itself in a place where that danger is real. We Catholics can express our solidarity with the whole human family by working to build a culture where all houses of worship are treated with respect.

#### **Act**

Religious communities express their faith through their sacred art and architecture. Sacred spaces and devotional art all testify to the strength and hope of these diverse communities. How has this legacy affected you? Share an image of your favorite church building or other house of worship, devotional art, or other sacred sign of faith with us on Twitter!

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