

CHURCH

## Pope speaks with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill



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*The Pope and Patriarch discussed the “humanitarian aspects of the current crisis”*

Pope Francis and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill had an exchange “via remote communication” on March 16, 2022, reported the communications service of the Russian Church’s Department of External Relations.

Later in the day, the Holy See released its own statement about the meeting.



Le pape François et le patriarche russe Kirill ont échangé ce mercredi 16 mars sur le conflit en Ukraine.

#### Vatican Media

The two exchanged views in a video conference on the “war in Ukraine and the role of Christians and their pastors who must do everything for peace to reign,” the Holy See Press Office reported.

The Pontiff thanked Kirill for the meeting. “The Church must not use the language of politics, but the language of Jesus,” the Pope agreed with the Patriarch, reports the Holy See.



## Moscow Patriarchate

The Russian Orthodox Church reported that the Pope and Patriarch discussed the “humanitarian aspects of the current crisis” and shared their hope that the “ongoing negotiation process” will bring about a “just peace” as soon as possible.

The Russian statement says that during the meeting, the Patriarch “expressed his satisfaction at the possibility of having this meeting,” the first since the beginning of the conflict.

*Those who pay the bill for the war are the people, they are the Russian soldiers, and they are the people who are bombed and who die.*

Stressing their belonging to “the same holy people who believe in God, in the Holy Trinity, in the Holy Mother of God,” the Pope encouraged their two Churches to unite “to help peace, to help those who suffer, to seek ways of peace, to stop the fire,” the Holy See says.

Both sides, reports the Holy See and the Moscow Patriarchate, emphasized the importance of the ongoing negotiation process.

Pope Francis finally said, according to the Holy See, that “those who pay the bill for the war are the people, they are the Russian soldiers, and they are the people who are bombed and who die.”

## **Other elements**

Kirill met with the nuncio (the pope’s representative) in Russia, Archbishop Giovanni d’Aniello, on March 3.

In addition to the Pope and the Patriarch, the meeting was attended by Metropolitan Hilarion, Chairman of the Department of External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Igor Nikolaev, member of the Secretariat of External Relations of the Orthodox Church for inter-Christian relations. On the Catholic side, Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Father Jaromir Zadrapa, a member of the Council, were also present.

During the meeting, “a number of topical issues concerning bilateral interaction” were

between the two Christian leaders. They met for the first time in Cuba in 2016.



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