

Religious Freedom Week 2023

Pray—Reflect—Act

June 22

Pray that Christian witness in the face of attacks on our churches will convert hearts to faith in Jesus Christ, and that people of all faiths would be free to gather in sacred spaces without fear.

Reflect

The very nature of a sacred space is that it is set apart from other spaces as a place of divine worship 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. That wave rose following the leaked draft of the Dobbs decision, and it crested after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, allowing states to regulate abortion. June and July of 2022 saw a huge spike in anti-Christian and anti-life attacks on churches. There have been over 250 attacks so far, and that number steadily continues to grow. But Catholics and other Christians are not alone in defending their sacred spaces. In Arizona, Native American tribes have been fighting to preserve Oak Flat, a space that has been used for prayer and worship since time immemorial, from being destroyed by a copper mining company. The circumstances in these two cases are different, but the underlying principle is the same: attacks on sacred spaces, whether from political ideology or commerce, are harmful to religious freedom. A culture that embraces the divine gift of freedom will respect sacred spaces.

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, devotional art, or other sacred sign of faith with us on Twitter! @USCCBFreedom
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