

Religious Freedom Week 2023

Pray—Reflect—Act

June 24

Pray for our Catholic sisters and brothers who are suffering in Nicaragua.

Reflect

The Church in Nicaragua—by far the most trusted and the last remaining independent civil society institution in the country, ever since the regime of Daniel Ortega and his wife and Vice President Rosario Murillo imprisoned and exiled virtually the entire political opposition—is facing a critical intensification of religious persecution. Since 2018, when the Nicaraguan bishops supported civil society's right to protest unpopular government policies, the Church in Nicaragua has been facing a systematic and persistent campaign of aggression from the government and pro-government operatives, with churches being attacked with deadly force, priests and religious imprisoned or exiled, the Apostolic Nuncio expelled, and, in February 2023, the unjust sentencing of Bishop Rolando Alvarez of Matagalpa, Nicaragua, to 26 years in prison. In February 2023, the regime exiled 222 political prisoners, including 11 priests, to the United States. The viciousness of the persecution is highlighted in the numerous acts of desecration against the Blessed Sacrament that have been committing by pro-government forces and the banning of traditional processions by the majority Catholic population during Holy Week. These are politically calculated acts of psychological and spiritual terrorism against the faithful in Nicaragua. They are intended to send a message to the bishops, priests and faithful that the regime will go to any length to quash and silence the moral voice of the Catholic Church in the country.

Act

In addition to the political turmoil, Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in Latin America that is often beset with natural disasters. Catholic Relief Services began working in Nicaragua in 1964. Support CRS's agricultural, emergency relief, health, and youth job training programs to help save lives.

www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek!

