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Oct 11 · 19 tweets · [P\\_Kallioniemi/status/1712072875753013412](https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1712072875753013412)

In today's #vatniksoup I'll introduce the head of the Catholic Church and the bishop of Rome, Jorge Mario Bergoglio AKA Pope Francis (@pontifex). He's best-known for praising Russian imperialism and for failing to condemn Russia for their genocidal war in Ukraine.

1/18



As most of you know, Pope is the head of the Catholic Church, and thus holds significant religious and political power and influence. For example, in the 21st century, Pope Francis played a key role in brokering the 2015 improvement in relations between the US and Cuba.

2/18



Francis has also advocated for the decriminalization of homosexuality worldwide and has also been sympathetic toward the LGBT community. Additionally he has called for action against climate change.

RELIGION

# Pope suggests blessings for same-sex unions may be possible

October 3, 2023 · 1:49 AM ET

By The Associated Press



Cardinal Joseph Zen, a vocal opponent of attempts by Beijing and the Vatican at rapprochement, is shown presiding

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# Climate change: Pope Francis warns world 'may be nearing breaking point'

6 days ago



Climate change



GETTY IMAGES

Storm Elias in Greece is one of a number of recent devastating weather events that have been blamed on climate change

In light of this, it seems strange how Pope Francis has acted after Russia launched their full-scale invasion in Ukraine. To be fair, Francis visited the embassy of Russia in Rome to condemn the attack, and additionally called President Zelenskyy. But soon after this...

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# In unprecedented move, Pope makes personal appeal in remarkable Russia embassy visit

Pontiff breaks protocol to deliver his message of concern to Russia, later assures top Ukrainian Greek Catholic leader he will do 'everything I can' to help.

By NICOLE WINFIELD

26 February 2022, 5:25 am | 0



FILE - Pope Francis meets Russian President Vladimir Putin on the occasion of their private audience at the Vatican on June 10, 2013. Pope Francis went to the Russian Embassy on Friday, Feb. 25, 2022 to personally "express his concern about the war," the Vatican said, in an extraordinary, hands-on papal gesture that has no recent precedent. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia, Pool)

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis went to the Russian Embassy on Friday to personally "express his concern about the war" in Ukraine, in an extraordinary, hands-on papal gesture that has no recent precedent. Francis later assured a top Ukrainian Greek Catholic leader he would do "everything I can" to help.

## Ukraine's President Zelensky tweets thanks for pope's call of support

Feb 26, 2022

by [Christopher White](#)



..the weirdness began. In Mar 2023, just one day after more than 80 missiles and drones were launched at Ukrainian cities, bringing death and destruction, he stated the war was fueled by "several imperial interests".

World

## Pope says Ukraine war fuelled not just by 'Russian empire'

Reuters

March 10, 2023 8:29 AM GMT+2 · Updated 7 months ago



Pope Francis holds the weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, March 8, 2023. REUTERS/Guglielmo Mangiapane [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)

In May 2022, he suggested that Russia's invasion was "somehow either provoked," continuing that he's "simply against reducing complexity to the distinction between good guys and bad guys". He also claimed that NATO was "barking at the gates of Russia".

# Pope says NATO may have caused Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Francis says transatlantic military alliance was 'barking' at Russia's door.



Since the invasion of Ukraine, Francis has repeatedly criticized the invasion, while avoiding naming Putin explicitly | Alberto Pizzoli/AFP via Getty Images

BY HANNAH ROBERTS

MAY 3, 2022 | 4:16 PM CET | 2 MINUTES READ



# Pope Francis: Russian war in Ukraine was ‘perhaps provoked’

Pontiff echoes his previous controversial remarks about NATO expansion facilitating the Kremlin's invasion.



The pope's comments come a month after he said that NATO may have "perhaps facilitated" the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine by "barking" at Russia's door. | Tiziana Fabi/AFP via Getty Images

BY LUANNA MUNIZ

JUNE 14, 2022 | 5:21 PM CET | 2 MINUTES READ

In an interview published Tuesday, Pope Francis said Russia's war in Ukraine was "perhaps somehow either provoked or not prevented" — controversial remarks that will raise eyebrows internationally.

He made the remarks during an interview with Jesuit magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica* conducted in mid-May but published Tuesday.

"Someone may say to me at this point: but you are pro-Putin! No, I am not," Francis said. "It would be simplistic and wrong to say such a thing. I am simply against reducing complexity to the distinction between good guys and bad guys, without reasoning about roots and interests, which are very complex."

The pope also recalled a conversation he had before the war with an unnamed head of state — a "wise man" — who told Francis he was concerned about NATO and Russia.

"He said, 'They are barking at the gates of Russia. The situation could lead to war,'" the pope said. "That head of state was able to read the signs of what was happening."

In Aug 2022, Francis described the killing of Alexander Dugin's daughter, Darya Dugina, as "a case of innocents paying for the Russo-Ukrainian War". Ukraine criticized this, stating that Dugina was "one of ideologists of (Russian) imperialism" and not an innocent victim.

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Europe

## Ukraine envoy criticises pope over comments on Russian killed by car bomb

By Philip Pullella  
August 24, 2022 3:02 PM GMT+3 · Updated a year ago



[1/5] Pope Francis meets with Ukraine's ambassador to the Vatican, Andriy Yurash during a private audience at the Vatican, April 7, 2022. Vatican Media/Handout via REUTERS [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)

VATICAN CITY, Aug 24 (Reuters) - Ukraine's ambassador to the Vatican on Wednesday criticised Pope Francis for referring to Darya Dugina, daughter of a prominent Russian ultra-nationalist, who was killed by a car bomb near Moscow, as an innocent victim of war.

It is highly unusual for ambassadors to the Vatican to criticise the pope publicly.

In Nov 2022, Francis gave an interview to Christian magazine called America. When asked about his "seeming unwillingness to directly criticize Russia," and why he was "preferring instead to speak more generally of the need for an end to war, an end to mercenary activity..."



## Exclusive: Pope Francis discusses Ukraine, U.S. bishops and more

The Editors  
November 28, 2022



*Editor's Note: On Nov. 22, 2022, five representatives of America Media interviewed Pope Francis at his residence at Santa Marta at the Vatican. Matt Malone, S.J., the departing*

...rather than Russian attacks," he stated that "Generally, the cruelest are perhaps those who are of Russia but are not of the Russian tradition, such as the Chechens, the Buryati and so on."

9/18

*Gerard O'Connell: Holy Father, about **Ukraine**: Many in the United States have been confused by your seeming unwillingness to directly criticize Russia for its aggression against Ukraine, preferring instead to speak more generally of the need for an end to war, an end to mercenary activity rather than Russian attacks, and to the traffic in arms. How would you explain your position on this war to Ukrainians, or Americans and others who support Ukraine?*

When I speak about Ukraine, I speak of a people who are martyred. If you have a martyred people, you have someone who martyrs them. When I speak about Ukraine, I speak about the cruelty because I have much information about the cruelty of the troops that come in. Generally, the cruelest are perhaps those who are of Russia but are not of the Russian tradition, such as the Chechens, the Buryati and so on. Certainly, the one who invades is the Russian state. This is very clear. Sometimes I try not to specify so as not to offend and rather condemn in general, although it is well known whom I am condemning. It is not necessary that I put a name and surname.

These utterly racist remarks reduced the Kremlin's responsibility on the atrocities in Ukraine, maybe somehow suggesting that the soldiers from the big cities don't commit any war crimes. He's also pondered whether it's "right for Western powers to arm Ukraine."

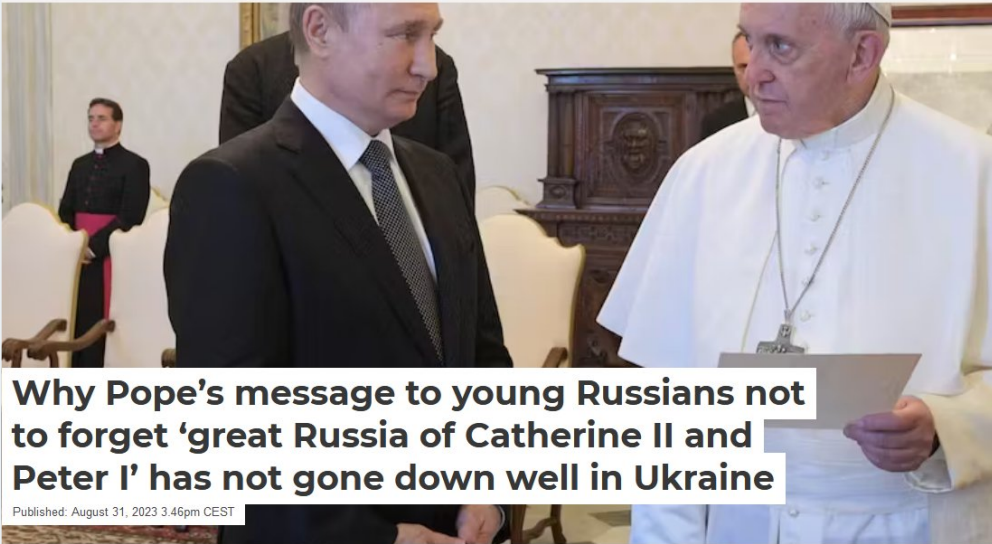
10/18

In the interviews, he also pondered whether it's right for Western powers to arm Ukraine, explaining he had been trying to assess the roots of the conflict and the reasons pushing Putin to engage in such brutal warfare. "I have no way of telling whether his rage has been provoked," he wondered aloud, "but I suspect it was maybe facilitated by the West's attitude."

In Aug 2023, the Pope sent a video greeting to the All-Russian Meeting of Catholic Youth in St Petersburg. During the speech, he addressed the youth by saying that "You are the descendants of great Russia: the great Russia of Saints, rulers, the great Russia of Peter I,...

11/18

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**Why Pope's message to young Russians not to forget 'great Russia of Catherine II and Peter I' has not gone down well in Ukraine**


Published: August 31, 2023 3:46pm CEST

Pope Francis with Vladimir Putin in 2019: the Pope has angered Ukrainians with a speech that seems to back Putin's idea of a 'glorious Russian empire'. EPA-EFE/Alexei Druzhinin/Kremlin

Email Pope Francis's [video speech](#) to the All-Russian Meeting of Catholic Youth in St Petersburg, urging them to "not forget their heritage" has caused quite a stir.

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Pope Francis's [video speech](#) to the All-Russian Meeting of Catholic Youth in St Petersburg, urging them to "not forget their heritage" has caused quite a stir. What struck a bitter chord internationally – and especially in Ukraine – about the remarks he delivered on August 25 was not so much its religious contents, but its tone-deaf praise of the heritage of "Mother Russia", which he urged his listeners to never give up.


*You are the descendants of great Russia: the great Russia of saints, rulers, the great Russia of Peter I, Catherine II, that empire – educated, great culture and great humanity*

The positive invocation of Russia's imperial legacies, has been regularly used as a [historical justification](#) for the military invasion of Ukraine. So it now feels particularly insensitive – and somewhat unaware of the politicisation of religion in Russia's imperial and present-day discourses.

..Catherine II, that empire – educated, great culture and great humanity." These legacies have often been used by Putin as a justification for his brutal war in Ukraine, and it's yet another tone-deaf statement from Francis regarding the war in Ukraine.

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## How Catherine the Great may have inspired Putin's Ukraine invasion

Published: March 14, 2022 4:52pm CET

The monument to Catherine II (Catherine the Great) in Pushkin, Russia. (Shutterstock)

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ADARIS *Great journalism deserves to be heard*

Author

James Krappil  
Associate Professor

Francis' efforts to bring Russia closer to the Vatican began already in Feb 2016, when he met with Russia's Patriarch Kirill in Havana, Cuba. This was the first time leaders of the Catholic Church and the Moscow Patriarchate met, ...



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# Unity call as Pope Francis holds historic talks with Russian Orthodox Patriarch

13 February 2016



The two leaders exchange a joint declaration on religious unity at Marti International airport in Havana

... and it was a big propaganda win for both Kirill and the Kremlin. At this time, Russia was already waging war in both Syria and in Ukraine, and some considered this meeting to "indirectly give a boost to Mr. Putin," and his imperialistic war efforts.

14/18

For Francis, the meeting was an ecumenical and diplomatic coup that eluded his predecessors but that also opened him to criticism that his embrace of the Russian patriarch would indirectly give a boost to Mr. Putin as he wages a war in Syria and continues to meddle in Ukraine.

In Moscow, the Russian news media made little effort to hide the government's role in enabling the historic encounter. In an editorial this week, *Vedomosti*, a business newspaper, said, "The meeting would not be possible if the interests of the Russian Orthodox Church did not coincide with those of the Kremlin."<sup>1</sup>

It is of course common knowledge that Patriarch Kirill AKA Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundyayev is not the holiest of men. In fact he used to be part of the KGB. Also, his fortune is estimated to be around 4

billion USD, and he owns a lavish palace in Gelendzhik.

15/18





Most of Kirill's wealth came through corruption, when his church was given a privilege for duty-free importation of cigarettes during the 90s.

16/18

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In today's #vatnik soup I'll introduce a KGB agent and a billionaire who disguises himself as a holy man. His name is Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundyayev, but he's better known as Patriarch Kirill. Gundyayev is a close ally of Putin and he has called Putin's rule a "miracle of god" 1/8



8:05 AM · Nov 22, 2022

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Moscow Patriarchate

Russian Resurrection (so-called)

Sergianism

## Patriarch Kirill: Why he was called the "Tobacco Metropolitan"

March 13, 2009 NFTU NEWS 0 Comments

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Maybe we should devote a tag just to the Russian Patriarch. Click the title for the Full Link. **NFTU**

Many Westerners know little about the new Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Father Kirill. Many Russians know him as a great orator and a host of a weekly TV show "Pastor's Word." However, very few know that Kirill (Vladimir Gundyayev by passport), a billionaire and a former KGB operative, made his fortune in tobacco, alcohol, and oil sales. His activities were among the main reasons why not-for-profits in Russia lost tax-deductible status. The new Orthodox leader is fond of playing with stocks, car racing, downhill skiing, and breeding exclusive kinds of dogs. He owns villas in Switzerland and a penthouse with a view of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow.

Kirill graduated with honors from Leningrad Spiritual Academy in 1969. In 1970, he earned his master's degree, and after several minor positions was appointed a personal secretary to Mitropolit Nikodim, chief of the external church relations. Since that moment, Kirill became the face of the Orthodox Church in all foreign trips to Western Europe. According to vlasti.net website, Kirill's colleagues and competitors linked all his travels to his work for the Soviet KGB where he was known by nickname "Mikhailov." Starting in 1972, Kirill/Gundyayev/Mikhailov became more involved with the countries of the Middle East. In 1975, at a forum in Nairobi, he defended the Soviet Union and downplayed dissidents' letters by making historic claims that people of faith were not persecuted and there were no human rights abuses based on religion in the Soviet Union.

To be fair, Francis has also strongly condemned the war on many occasions. He's warned pro-war Kirill to not become "Putin's altar boy", he's stated that Ukraine has "a lawful right to defend itself." But these statements became irrelevant after the Pope praised Russia's..



World

# Pope acknowledges his Russia comments were faulty

By Philip Pulella

September 4, 2023 6:03 PM GMT+3 · Updated a month ago



[1/3] Pope Francis holds a news conference aboard the papal plane on his flight back after visiting Mongolia, September 4, 2023. [Ciro Fusco/Pool via REUTERS](#) [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)



# Pope Francis warns pro-war Russian patriarch not to be 'Putin's altar boy'

By Della Gallagher, CNN  
Updated 10:51 AM EDT, Wed May 4, 2022



...imperialistic past, blames the poor and uneducated for the cruelties in Ukraine, and states that the war in Ukraine may have been provoked by NATO. In the end, the former are quickly forgotten, whereas the latter are used as propaganda for years to come.

29 AUG, 14:15

## Kremlin welcomes Pope's words urging youth to maintain, uphold Russia's historical legacy

"The Pope knows Russian history, and that is very good. [Our history] is quite deep; its roots go very deep," Dmitry Peskov said

MOSCOW, August 29. /TASS/. The Kremlin has lauded a statement by Pope Francis on the heritage of Great Russia, which strongly resonates with the positions of the Russian state and society, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

On August 25, the pontiff spoke online to attendees of the National Meeting of Catholic Youth of Russia being held in St. Petersburg, urging the audience not to forget the historical legacy and heritage of Great Russia, mentioning such rulers as Peter the Great and Catherine the Great.

"The Pope knows Russian history, and that is very good. [Our history] is quite deep; its roots go very deep," Peskov said, noting that this heritage is not limited to 18th-century sovereigns Peter I and Catherine II, but "is much older." According to the Kremlin spokesman, the government, public associations, schoolteachers and university instructors are now engaged precisely in "transmitting this heritage to our young people on a continuous basis, reminding them of it." "And the fact that the pontiff's call is in unison with these efforts is extremely encouraging," Peskov concluded.

16 SEP 2022, 08:36

## Pope describes arms supplies to Ukraine as political decision

According to him, the use of weapons in self-defense has a moral justification, but does not lead to peace

VATICAN, September 16. /TASS/. Arms supplies to Ukraine are a political decision, Pope Francis told reporters en route from Kazakhstan on Thursday.

In his opinion, the use of weapons for self-defense can be morally justified, but will not lead to peace.

"It is a political decision that can be accepted from the moral point of view, on the condition of being moral. There are lots of conditions <...>, but [it] would be immoral if there are intentions to provoke a greater war, to sell weapons, or get rid of weapons that are no longer needed. The morality of such an act is determined by its reasons. It is legitimate to defend oneself," the Pontiff said.

In his opinion, the concept of a 'just war' requires further consideration.

"Everyone has been talking about peace, the UN has been talking about peace for 70 years, but how many wars are being waged worldwide right now?" Pope Francis said, citing the events in Ukraine, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the Syrian conflict, the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict and the situation with the Rohingya people in Myanmar.

In his opinion, "weapons production is the license for murder," while "if no weapons are produced for just one year, the problem of famine can be solved."

"The war in itself is pure terror; but we are breathing it in and out now. It appears that when there is no war, there is no life," the head of the Roman Catholic church said.

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### Vatnik Soup

#vatniksoup is a Twitter thread series (and a hashtag!) where I'll introduce pro-Russian actors and propagandists from around the world, be they so-called "independent journalists", politicians, mili...

<https://vatniksoup.com>

# Pekka Kallioniemi



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