
Nordic countries: Luxembourg, Bishops' Plenary in recent days. Support for Ukraine, but “need to seek peace”. Mgr Kozon, “synodality is not an option”

Over 200,000 refugees from Ukraine have sought refuge in the Nordic countries since February 2022, including in Iceland where their numbers have increased twentyfold in recent years. This information comes from the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops of the Scandinavian countries, who have gathered in Luxembourg for their Spring Plenary Assembly in recent days. The Bishops addressed three topics in particular: the preparation of the second phase of the Synod, with Bishop Czeslaw Kozon of Copenhagen unequivocally stating that: “Synodality is not an option, it is what we need at this time to overcome divisions and polarizations”. The second theme was the conflict between Israel and Hamas: from northern Europe, there was a heartfelt appeal for “an immediate ceasefire in the Middle East. Negotiations are urgently needed for the release of hostages and the provision of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip”, the Bishops wrote in a statement. “International efforts can pave the way for a new political course leading to a lasting peace through dialogue, as is necessary for other regions of the world devastated by war. The third theme of the Bishops' Plenary was the Russian attack against Ukraine, which became the subject of a statement applauding the “resilience of Ukraine and the efforts made by people of goodwill to feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted, and heal the sick”. The document states that “the Russian aggression is a source of concern also for our countries” since “a few days ago, Russia announced the deployment of troops along the Finnish border”. We need fortitude, clarity of thought and a long-term vision for European stability. Although the presence of, and coexistence with, Ukrainians who have arrived in northern Europe is enriching, it is nevertheless necessary to “seek peace in our world wounded by sin”, which “also means speaking truth to power”.

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