



U.S. and European Bishops Offer Prayers for U.S. - Russia Arms Control Meeting

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WASHINGTON/BRUSSELS – Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on International Justice and Peace, and Bishop Rimantas Norvila of Vilkaviškis, Lithuania, president of the COMECE¹ Commission on the External Relations of the European Union, have issued a joint statement as senior officials from the United States and Russia are scheduled to meet in Vienna, Austria on June 22 to discuss nuclear arms control and the fate of the New START Treaty.

Their joint statement follows:

“We offer our prayers and invite Catholics and all those of faith to join in praying for fruitful dialog that will advance necessary arms control and disarmament, promoting a more peaceful and just world.

“If the New START Treaty is allowed to expire in February 2021, the United States and Russia will have no legally binding, verifiable limits on their strategic nuclear arsenals for the first time since 1972, which might also have significant implications for European security and global peace.

“As U.S. and European bishops said in 2017²: ‘*For many, the horror of a potential nuclear war receded from consciousness with the end of the Cold War, but recent geopolitical developments remind us that our world remains in grave danger.*’ In an increasingly multipolar and complex environment, may this meeting be marked by wisdom, trust-building and cooperation in making arms control and nuclear disarmament a high priority.

“As Pope Francis reminded us during his recent visit to Japan: ‘*May prayer, tireless work in support of agreements and insistence on dialogue be the most powerful ‘weapons’ [...] to build a world of justice and solidarity that can offer an authentic assurance of peace.*’”³

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¹ The Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union

² <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/war-and-peace/nuclear-weapons/nuclear-disarmament-seeking-human-security-2017-07-06.cfm>

³ http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191124_messaggio-arminucleari-nagasaki.html