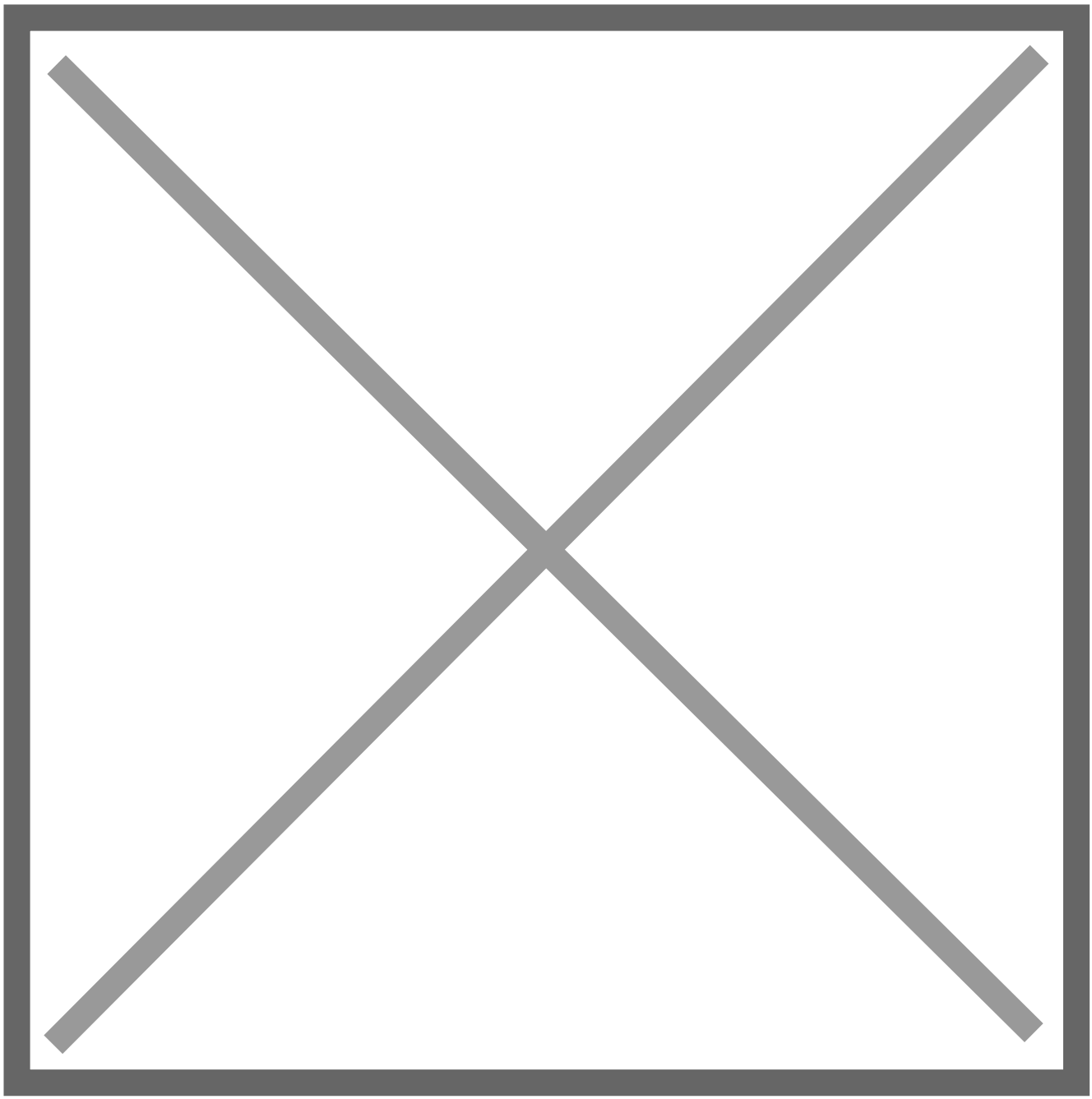
News



Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of Minsk, Belarus, is pictured in a file photo. Kondrusiewicz says the Vatican is working on helping his reentry into Belarus after he had been turned away at the border. (CNS/Bob Roller)

Carol Glatz

View Author Profile



Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — October 21, 2020

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

A Belarusian archbishop who has been denied entry back into his own country said the Vatican was doing everything in its power to resolve the situation and help him return.

To live in "forced exile" is difficult, Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of Minsk told SIR, the news agency of the Italian bishops' conference, Oct. 20.

"I can only live in spiritual unity with my people in prayer. I can always repeat, 'Thy will be done,'" he said during a brief stay in Rome.

Kondrusiewicz, president of the Belarusian bishops' conference, was barred from reentering his country from Poland Aug. 31.

The previous weekend, he had a statement read in Belarusian churches warning that the country could be on the brink of civil war because of violence and demonstrations protesting the Aug. 9 presidential election. President Alexander Lukashenko declared himself the winner for a sixth term in the widely disputed election.

The archbishop told SIR that he met Oct. 19 with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Vatican foreign minister.

Asked about the meetings, the archbishop, who is a Belarusian citizen, said, "I can only say that the Vatican will do everything possible for my return home."

He said he had been able to participate and pray online with the faithful in Minsk as they took part in the global campaign, "One million children praying the rosary," Oct. 18, sponsored by Aid to the Church in Need International.

"These initiatives are a very great spiritual support for me. The people's prayer is also a sign that the bishop must be with his people," he said.

When asked about protests in Belarus calling for Lukashenko's resignation, the archbishop said, "Our hope is always for a peaceful solution to the problem that we are experiencing today."

Gallagher had visited Minsk in mid-September for talks with Lukashenko's government and meetings with bishops.

Speaking Sept. 12, Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei said talks with Archbishop Gallagher had covered events since the election, and he gave no information about the future of Archbishop Kondrusiewicz.

On Sept. 15, the Belarusian Interior Ministry confirmed the archbishop's passport had been canceled to prevent its "unjustified use," but said his Belarusian citizenship remained valid.

Parolin told journalists in Rome Sept. 15 that the Holy See insisted to Belarus the archbishop "be allowed to return to his see and continue to be the guide of his flock, certainly reaffirming the role of the church, which is to be a promoter of dialogue, reconciliation and peace."

Advertisement