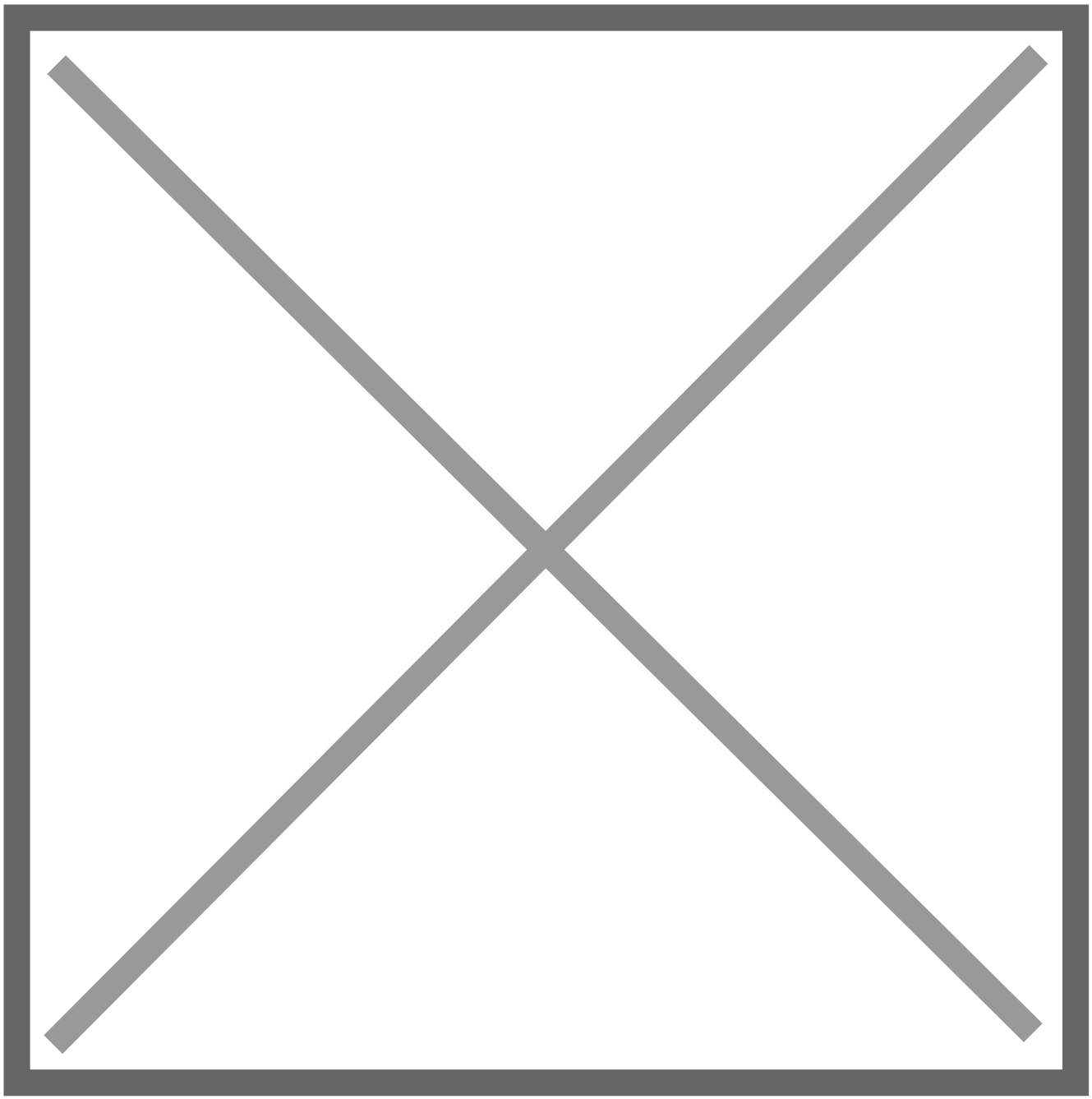
News



Pope Francis greets the crowd as he leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican June 13, 2021. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

by The Associated Press

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

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

Vatican City — June 21, 2021
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Pope Francis on June 20 decried the suffering of refugees in Myanmar and pleaded that houses of worship be respected as neutral places to take shelter.

He told the public gathered in St. Peter’s Square for his customary Sunday noon remarks that he was joining his voice to that of the Asian nation’s bishops in also calling for humanitarian corridors.

Francis lamented that thousands of displaced people in Myanmar are "dying of hunger." Violence, including ravaging of villages, has become endemic since the army seized power in February, ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

A nonviolent civil disobedience movement is challenging military rule, but the junta’s attempt to repress it with deadly force has fueled resistance.

Francis noted that Myanmar's Catholic bishops last week launched an appeal, "calling to the attention of the entire world, the heart-wrenching experience of thousands of persons in that country who are displaced and are dying of hunger." He added he was joining the churchmen's call for humanitarian corridors to allow safe passage for those fleeing.

Echoing the bishops, Francis also insisted that "churches, pagodas, monasteries, mosques, temples, just as schools and hospitals, be respected as neutral places of refuge."

The pope then prayed for peace in Myanmar before noting that Sunday was World Refugee Day, an initiative promoted by the United Nations.

"Let's open our heart to refugees,"' the pope said. "Let make ours their sadness and their joys, let's learn from their courageous resilience," Francis said.

That way, he said, "all together, we will grow a more human community, one big family."

Advertisement