Vatican
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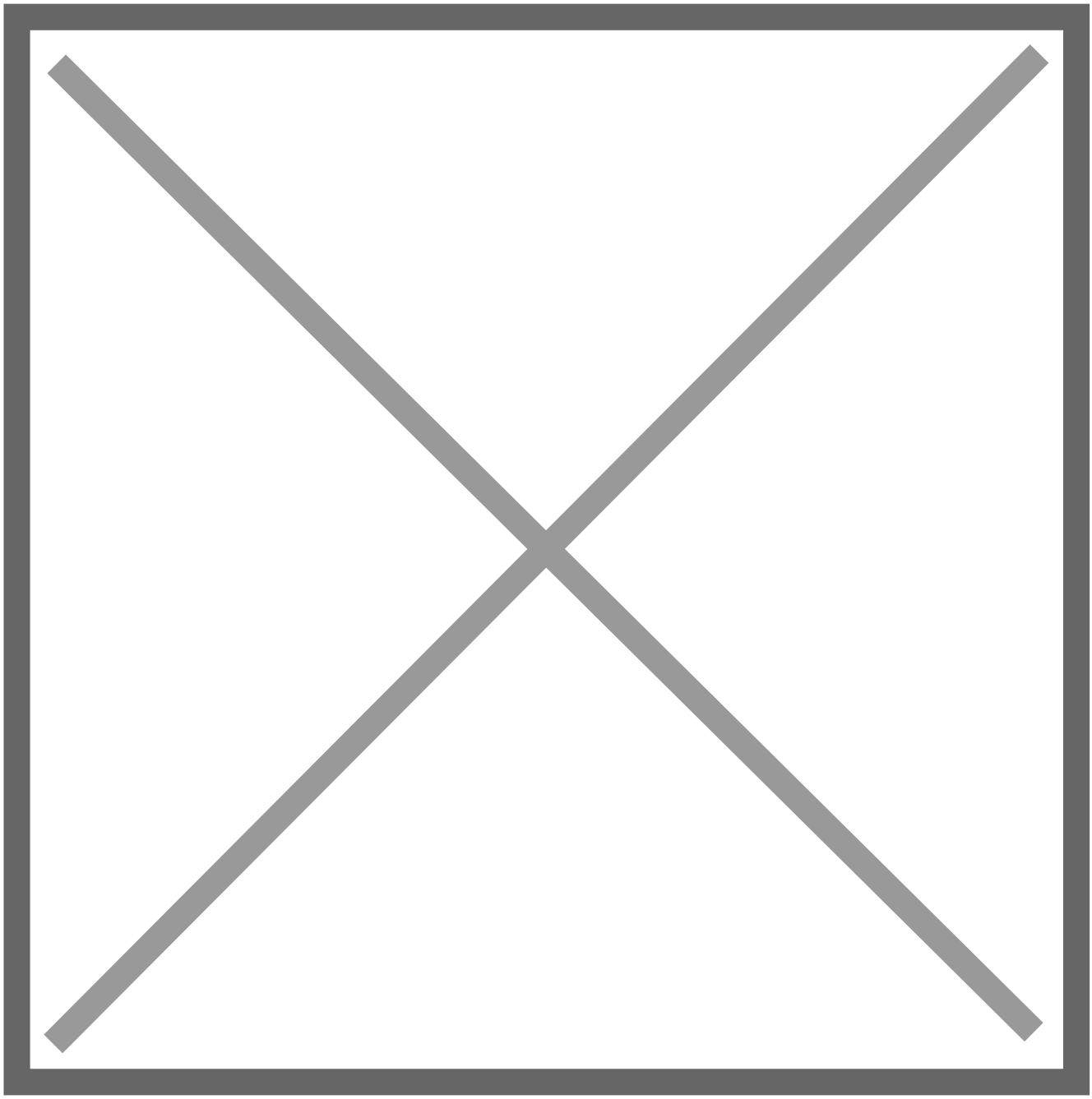

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, addresses the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, in this Nov. 2, 2021, file photo. (CNS photo/Daniel Leal-Olivas, Reuters pool)



by Christopher White

Former Vatican Correspondent (2021-2025)

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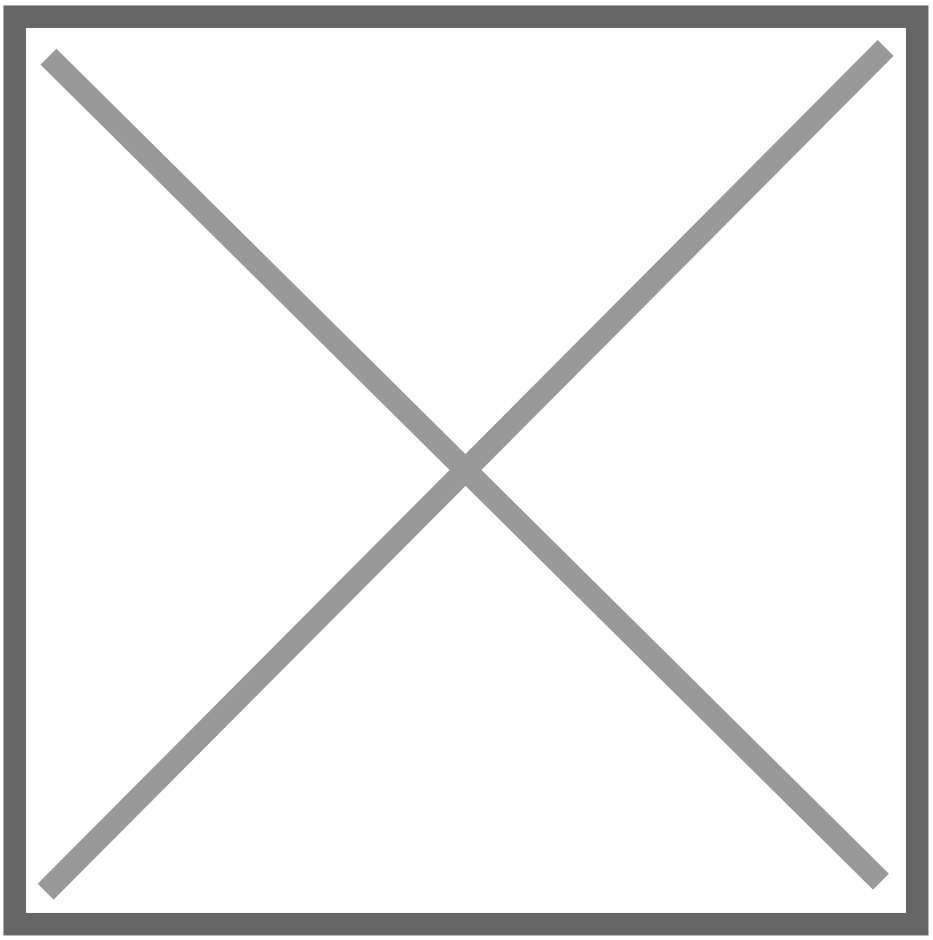
Less than 24-hours after Russia began a full-on invasion of neighboring Ukraine, the Vatican warned of the threat of international destabilization, while maintaining "there is still time for goodwill, there is still room for negotiation."

"There is still room for the exercise of a wisdom that prevents the prevalence of partisan interests, protects the legitimate aspirations of each and spares the world from madness and saves the world from the folly and horrors of war," said Vatican secretary of state Cardinal Pietro in a Feb. 24 video message.



Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, addresses the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland, in this Nov. 2, 2021, file photo. (CNS photo/Daniel Leal-Olivas, Reuters pool)

Parolin, the Vatican's top diplomat, recalled Pope Francis' words one day earlier during his Feb. 23 general audience, when the pope called on all parties to "refrain from any action that causes even more suffering to the populations," which he said "destabilizes the peaceful coexistence" and "discredits international law."

"This appeal acquires a dramatic urgency after the beginning of Russian military operations in Ukrainian territory," Parolin said in his video. "The tragic scenarios that everyone feared are unfortunately becoming reality."

The Italian cardinal's words marked the first time the Vatican, which strives to remain steadfastly neutral in global conflicts, had officially identified Russia as undertaking military exercises.

In his statement, Parolin reiterated the pope's call for a day of prayer and fasting on Ash Wednesday, March 2. In an earlier statement on Feb. 24, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said the global Anglican communion would be joining Pope Francis' call for a day of prayer and peace between Russia and Ukraine.

"We believers do not lose hope," said Parolin.

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