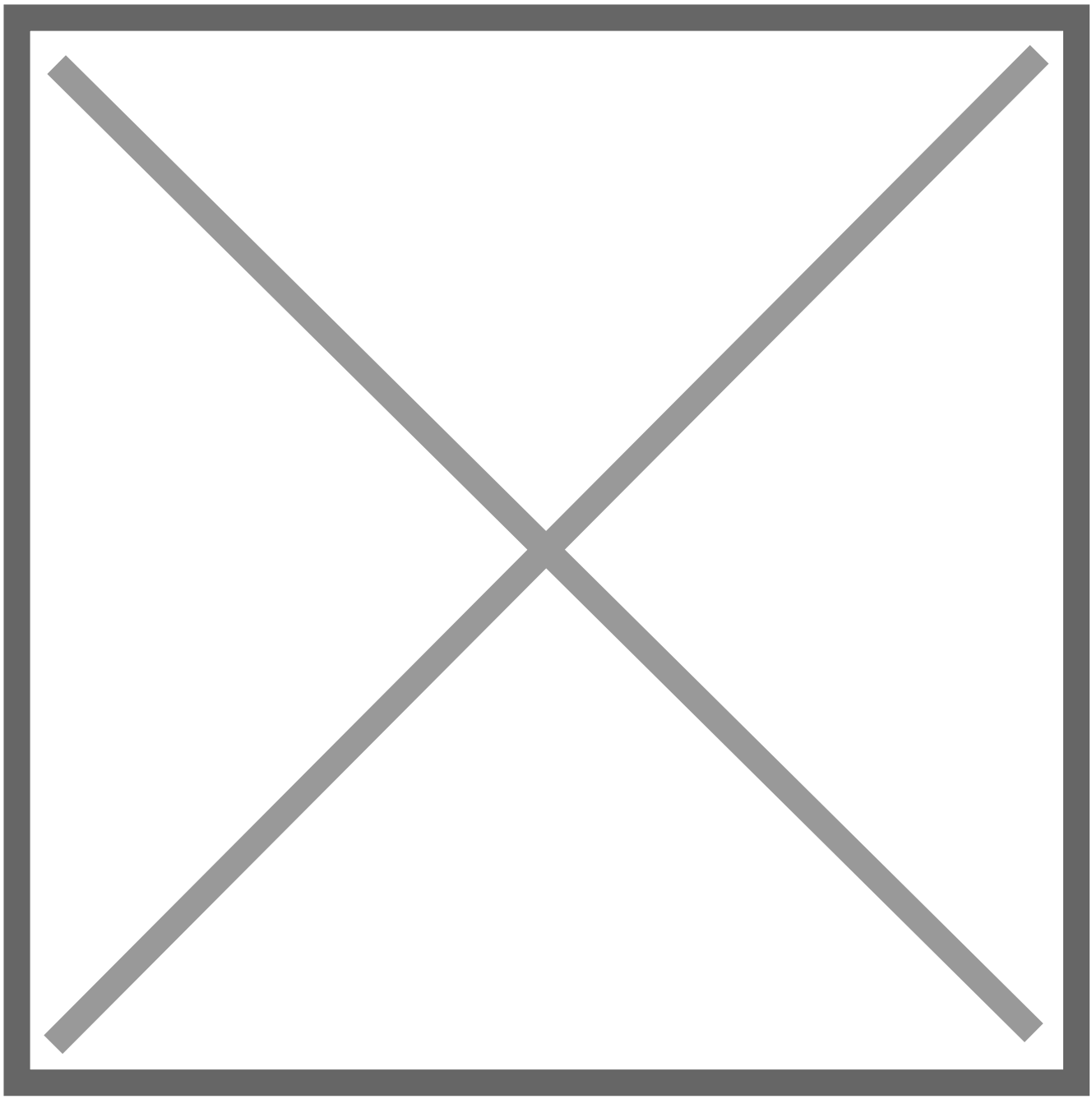
Vatican



Pope Francis speaks with Andrii Yurash, Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See, during a meeting for the ambassador to present his credentials to the pope at the Vatican April 7, 2022. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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Vatican City — April 7, 2022

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Andrii Yurash, Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See, presented his credentials to Pope Francis April 7. He also met with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

Vatican Media images from the meeting showed Yurash presenting the pope with several gifts, including a traditional Ukrainian decorated round loaf of bread and a sheaf of wheat wrapped in a ribbon of the colors of the national flag: blue and yellow.

Ukraine, known as the "breadbasket of Europe," is the fifth largest exporter of wheat; Russia is the world's largest. Together, the two countries provide 19% of the world's barley supply, 14% of wheat and 4% of corn, making up more than one-third of global cereal exports, according to the European Commission's spring 2022 report.

The meeting marked the official beginning of Yurash's tenure, even though, as an exception to protocol, he had been functioning as ambassador since early March. His appointment had been announced in mid-December.

He has been providing images and details of his many meetings, interviews and diplomatic efforts in Rome on his Twitter feed @AndriiYurash.

After his meeting April 7 with the pope, he tweeted that it was an "incredible honor & privilege" to present his credentials and that he had an "inspiring & extremely motivating conversation" with the pope and Parolin.

He said it has shown him yet again that the Vatican is a "sincere partner" of Ukraine "doing everything possible to stop the war."

Born Jan. 17, 1969, in central Ukraine, he has a degree in journalism and taught journalism at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, including teaching in the department of radio broadcasting and television. He earned his doctorate in political science in 1996.

He served as vice-director, then director, of the department of religious and ethnic affairs of Ukraine's Ministry of Culture from 2014 to 2020. He then led the department of religious affairs concerning the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, at the secretariat of the cabinet of ministers from 2020 to 2022.

He is a member of the All-Ukrainian Association of Religious Scholars and is a co-founder of the International Association for the Study of Religion in Central and Eastern Europe (ISORECEA).

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