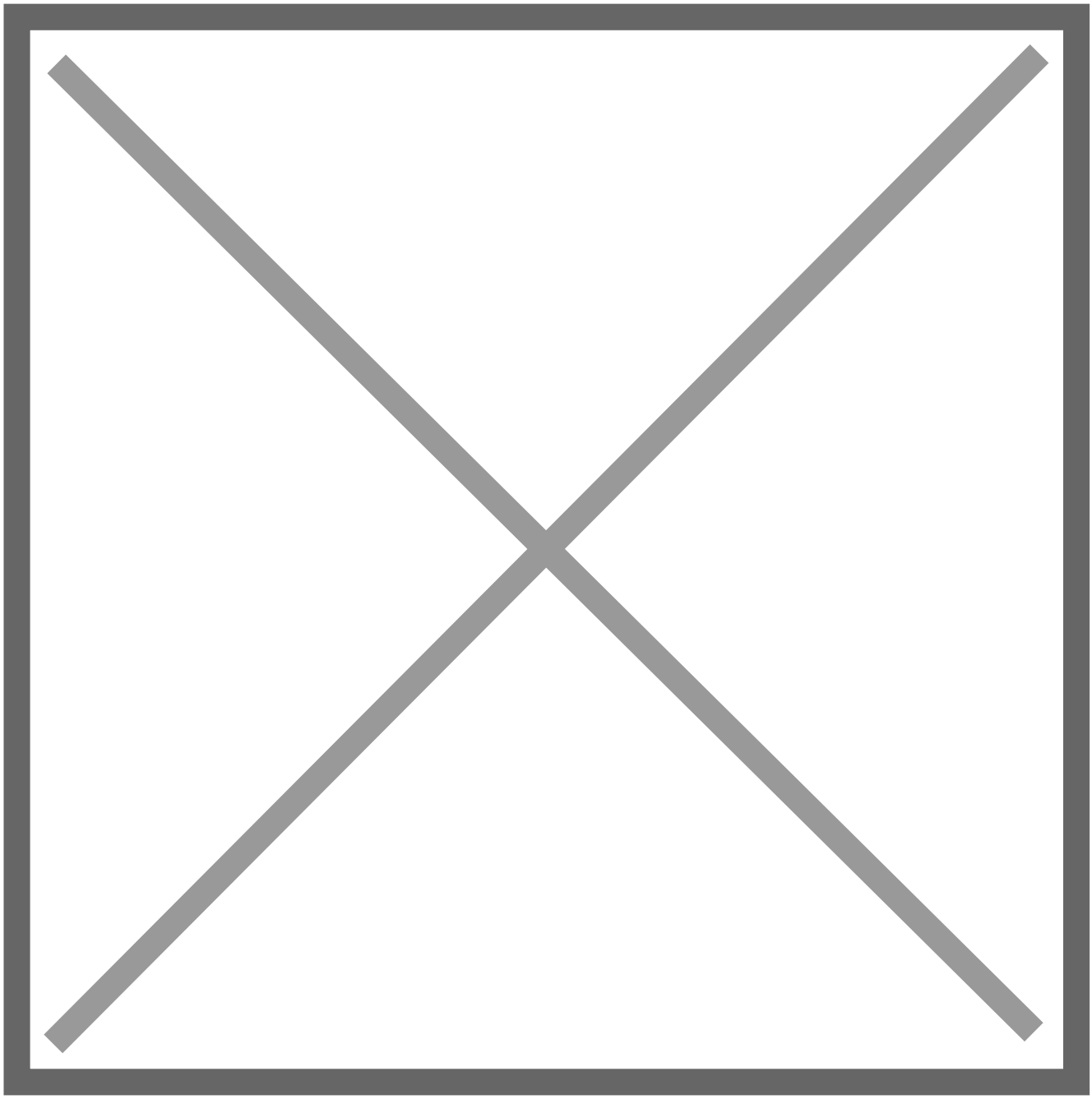


Pope Francis arrives to lead an audience with members of the U.S.-based Papal Foundation at the Vatican April 28, 2022. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



by Catholic News Service

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Pope Francis praised members of the U.S.-based Papal Foundation for helping the Catholic Church build "a culture of solidarity and peace," including by providing assistance to victims of the war in Ukraine.

"As we are witnessing in these days the devastating effects of war and conflict, you increasingly see the need to provide care and humanitarian assistance to its victims, to refugees and to those forced to leave their homelands in search of a better and more secure future for themselves and their loved ones," the pope told members of the foundation April 28.

"Your work helps to bring the love, hope and mercy that the Gospel proclaims to all who benefit from your generosity and commitment," the pope told the foundation's major donors, who are called Stewards of St. Peter, and members of the board of trustees.

Although the six active American cardinals resident in the United States are part of the foundation's board, only Cardinals Seán O'Malley of Boston and Timothy Dolan of New York were part of the group's pilgrimage to Rome.

For the year ending June 30, 2021, the foundation reported distributing grants of just over $9.8 million and scholarships of $794,000. Since its founding in 1988, the Papal Foundation and its Stewards of St. Peter have allocated more than $200 million in grants and scholarships around the world to more than 2,000 projects selected according to priorities set by the pope.

The group's 2021 report highlighted the foundation's help to build a center for faith formation in Burundi, the construction of an orphanage in the Philippines, the renovation of a retreat house in Chile and the expansion of a church-run health

center in Rwanda.

The scholarships provided by the foundation enable close to 100 priests, religious sisters, religious brothers and laity to study at one of the pontifical universities in Rome.

"From its inception," the pope told the foundation members, "solidarity with the successor of Peter has been a hallmark of the Papal Foundation. I ask you, please, to pray for me and for my ministry, for the needs of the church, the spread of the Gospel and the conversion of hearts."

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