Vatican
Vatican News



Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, center, blesses the altar of the confession during a penitential rite inside St. Peter's Basilica, Saturday, June 3, 2023. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

by Associated Press

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Vatican City — June 5, 2023

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The head of St. Peter’s Basilica performed a special rite June 3 after a man stripped naked and hopped on the main altar with the words "Save children of Ukraina" written on his back.

Cardinal Mauro Gambetti performed the penitential rite following the desecration of the altar with other priests and members of the faithful.

According to Vatican News, a Polish man approached the basilica's high altar on June 1 at closing time, undressed and jumped up on the marble altar. Photos of the incident showed the bald man in just black socks and sneakers with his back to the pews.

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The man didn’t resist when gendarmes approached and took him to the Vatican police station. He was handed over to Italian police, who issued an expulsion order requiring him to leave Italy, Vatican News reported.

It was the latest incident of disturbances at the Vatican in recent months. Last summer, climate activists glued their hands to a statue in the Vatican Museums to draw attention to climate change; they are now on trial for aggravated damage in the Vatican City State tribunal.

Last month, a man in a car rushed the gates of Vatican City at night, speeding past gendarmes who fired on the vehicle. He made it into an internal courtyard of the Apostolic Palace before being stopped. He was sent to a nearby hospital for psychiatric care.