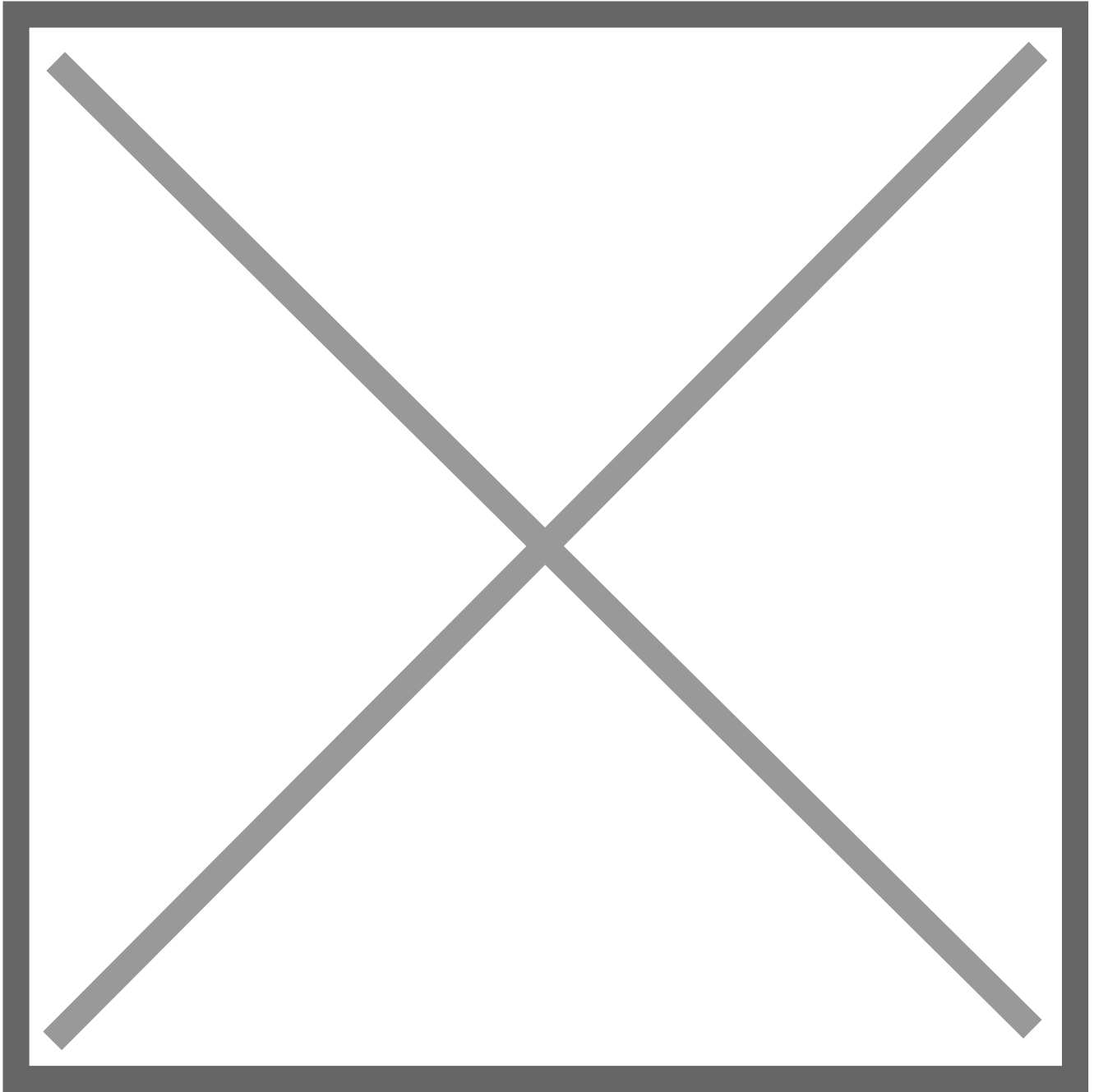


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Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minn., gives the keynote address during the USA National Jubilee Pilgrim Gathering at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome July 30, 2025. Barron is among President Donald Trump's new nominations to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, according to USCIRF announcement Sept. 16. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

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President Donald Trump's new appointees to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom include Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, the commission said Sept. 16.

Spokespersons for USCRIF and other religious freedom advocates previously told OSV News they were eager for Trump to make nominations to the commission after several previous commissioners reached the end of their terms in May.

In a statement posted on X, Barron wrote, "I was honored to accept President Trump's invitation to serve on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom."

"This agency, formed by act of Congress over thirty years ago, is designed to advise both the President and Congress on matters pertaining to the defense and enhancement of religious liberty around the world," he said. "The Commission, by intention, is strictly bi-partisan, its members chosen by leaders of both major political parties."

"Distinguished Catholics who have served on this body over the years include Professor Robert George, Ambassador Mary Ann Glendon, Fr. Thomas Reese, S.J., Archbishop Charles Chaput, and Bishop William Murphy," he continued. "I feel

privileged to join their company."

Barron was previously named by Trump to the Department of Justice's Religious Liberty Commission. That commission has presented a draft of its final report to Trump, but has a still-outstanding final meeting to approve it, per the DOJ website.

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Trump's other nominations to USCIRF, an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission that monitors religious freedom around the globe, were Andrew Brunson, an evangelical pastor who did ministry in Turkey and was imprisoned there, and Joe Grogan, previously a top domestic policy adviser to Trump during his first term.

USCIRF also said Trump nominated Jane "Cissie" Lynch, the daughter of the Rev. Franklin Graham and granddaughter of the late Rev. Billy Graham, both evangelical leaders, to be the ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, a key, related role at the Department of State. That role requires Senate confirmation.

Asif Mahmood, chair of USCIRF, welcomed the nomination and appointments in a statement.

"President Trump's announcement is a vital step in advancing the human right of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) abroad. USCIRF calls for a swift confirmation process for IRF Ambassador-Designate Lynch," Mahmood said. "Filling these roles demonstrates the ongoing commitment of the United States to international religious freedom as a priority in foreign policy."

CeCe Heil, the commission's vice chair, added, "With these appointments, USCIRF's full bipartisan composition further supports our efforts to advance religious freedom abroad for all. We look forward to working together."