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**THE DILEMMA OF PEACE AND JUSTICE: FOREIGN
POLICY OF VATICAN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE
RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR**

Abstract

This study examines Pope Francis' and the Vatican's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war, its impact on international politics, and internal processes in Ukraine. An analysis of Vatican statements regarding the war in Ukraine and reactions from other countries and Ukrainian society has been conducted. The research also aims to clarify Pope Francis' influence on Ukraine's internal political situation. The article's purpose is to investigate the Vatican's influence on the processes and course of the Russian-Ukrainian war, international politics, and Ukraine's domestic policy. The article employs a complex of methods: historical analysis to study the evolution of the Vatican's position (2014–2024), content analysis of Pope Francis' statements, comparative method to juxtapose different parties' positions, systemic approach to examine the Vatican's influence on international and domestic politics of Ukraine, expert evaluation method, and statistical analysis of sociological data. This allowed for a comprehensive study of the Vatican's position's impact on the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war and its perception by the international community. Research period: 2014–2024, focusing on two stages: 2014–2022 (hybrid war and low-intensity conflict); 2022–2024 (full-scale war and expectations of a radical change in the Vatican's position). Key findings: The Vatican does not recognize Russia as an unequivocal aggressor and does not condemn its actions. Pope Francis seeks reconciliation and proposes that the conflicting parties engage in negotiations. The Vatican's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war is based on: Catholic dogma, where evil has no substantial nature; Pope Francis' ideological views (anti-Americanism, Latin American context); the general tendency in the

Catholic Church towards forgiveness, established by John Paul II, and pacifism. The Vatican does not significantly influence world states' decision-making. The Pope's position may influence public opinion in countries with high levels of religiosity. In Ukraine, the Vatican's position lacks unequivocal support from Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic communities and Ukrainian citizens in general. The Vatican's stance on the Russian-Ukrainian war is amorphous as it lacks a clear moral assessment and equates the aggressor with the victim; consequently, criminal actions are condemned, but not their cause (Russia).

Keywords: Vatican, Ukraine, war, international politics, Catholicism.

Introduction

In the 2020s, global politics entered a new phase of intensifying the intensity of interstate interaction by aggressive means. Accordingly, statements regarding international politics are made by both the Vatican and, effectively, the Catholic Church. Catholics have a long history of participation in international and political processes. The Catholic Church has been both an element and a tool of political governance and a direct actor, that is, a subject of political life both at the international and domestic levels. We will not delve into the entire history of either the Catholic Church or the historical events of the 20th century, which was extremely rich in this context. However, we are interested in how exactly the Vatican (universal Catholicism) can influence international politics, political and social institutions of states, and indeed the domestic policies of individual states. Thus, the aim of the research is to determine the correlation and influence of the universal Catholic Church on geopolitical processes and the related internal processes in individual states. It should be noted that the Vatican has its own point of view and position regarding most political, military, and geopolitical conflicts or dialogues occurring in the modern world [1, p. 732]. Therefore, even if we analyze the last two decades, it will be very voluminous material. Therefore, we will focus on the conflict of the highest intensity and scale since World War II, both in terms of casualties and the size of military formations — the Russian-Ukrainian war. The purpose of the article is to clarify how the Vatican influences the processes and course of the Russian-Ukrainian war, international politics, and the internal state policy related to this high-intensity conflict. To achieve the research goal, it is necessary to clarify the essence and intensity of the Vatican statements regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war starting from 2014, and pay particular attention to the statements after the start of full-scale war in 2022. Next, it is necessary to analyze the reasons for the Vatican's position on the issue of the Russian-Ukrainian war, whether there is a dynamic change in the position, and whether these reasons are doctrinal, social, political, or depend on the pontiff's personal ideological preferences. And the last task that leads us to the research goal is to clarify the influence of Vatican international policy on the ways of regulating the Russian-Ukrainian war and its course both at the domestic and international levels, geopolitical processes directly affecting the

course of military operations and related to their conclusion. In fact, we are talking about the national resilience of the Ukrainian state subjected to military aggression, and how the Vatican's position influences the ability of the state and society to resist and recover from the influence of a comprehensive crisis situation, namely war.

Research methods

In the process of writing this article, a complex of scientific research methods was employed. The historical analysis method was used to study the evolution of the Vatican's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war from 2014 to 2024. Content analysis was applied in examining the statements of Pope Francis and official Vatican documents. The comparative method was utilized to juxtapose the positions of the Vatican, Western countries, and Ukrainian society regarding the war. A systems approach allowed for the consideration of the Vatican's position's impact on international politics and Ukraine's internal political situation as interconnected elements. The expert evaluation method was applied in analyzing the reactions of political leaders and experts to the Pope's statements. Statistical analysis was used in examining sociological data on Ukrainians' attitudes towards the Vatican's position. The synthesis of the obtained results allowed for the formulation of conclusions regarding the influence of the Vatican's position on the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war and its perception by the international community.

Results and Discussion

As a matter of fact, during the period which we have defined for the study, namely from 2014 to 2024, there was a series of statements from the pontiff regarding the "confrontation" in Ukraine, as the Vatican defined it until 2022. In particular, such a position is reflected in the Havana Declaration of 2016 by Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church [2].

The statements and positions of the Vatican concerning the Russian-Ukrainian war can be divided into two parts: these are statements of 2014–2022 and of 2022–2024. Accordingly, the first stage of the Russian-Ukrainian war is characterized by low intensity of conflict and predominantly hybrid forms of aggression, while the second stage involves high intensity and a large-scale war that has come to Europe.

The statements of the first stage are characterized by the use of tolerant language, where one of the states is not recognized as an aggressor, but emphasis is placed on the existence of conflict in Ukraine, from which people suffer due to economic and humanitarian crises. Therefore, the Pope and the Catholic Church, in general, see themselves as mediators who can resolve the conflict according to Christian dogmas and principles [2].

Thus, it is not surprising that Pope Francis held meetings with president Putin (2013, 2015, 2019) and made joint statements. The last two meetings took

place after the start of the Russian war against Ukraine in 2014, and accordingly also concerned Ukraine. In fact, we can speak of cooperation between the Russian authoritarian regime and universal Catholicism, namely the Vatican. Because the terminology used by the Holy See corresponds to Russian narratives and positions regarding the war in Ukraine. Firstly, this concerns the non-recognition of Russia as a party to the conflict, and accordingly meetings with Putin — these are meetings of parties not involved in the conflict, but rather as mediators seeking to resolve it. At least, this is the thesis promoted by Russia. Thus, such meetings de facto confirmed that the Vatican does not recognize Russia as an aggressor, the cause of the war, or even a party to the conflict. And the Pope himself makes for a positive result his wish is aimed at Putin: “Sincere and great efforts to achieve peace”. And to culminate this whole incomprehensible to Ukrainians position of the Pope, his gift to Putin — a medallion with the image of “angel of peace”, which looks hypocrisy or moral ignorance [3]. Therefore, it is not surprising that Pope Francis is compared with Pius XII, who was accused of ambiguous position on fascism and Nazism. However, in this case it should be noted that Pius XII did not meet with Hitler and did not recognize him as an “angel of peace” and a peacemaker, and Pope Francis for the benefit of peace meets with those who started the war. Moreover, it is no wonder that the world did not expect the slightest precision of the Vatican regarding this painful issue. On that score, American diplomat Kenneth Hackett noted that the Pope “can say more about concern for territorial integrity” [4]. Thus, the pacifism of Pope Francis, condemning the war as an essential evil in any dimension, in fact recognizes those who start wars with peacekeepers and thereby provoke new wars and aggressive policies of states seeking moral or political economic revenge. Pope Francis’s statement about the “fratricidal war” (July 4, 2015) so upset Ukrainian society that during a personal meeting with the Pope, Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishops directly stated that Ukraine “is a victim of Russian military aggression”, and “some media describe the conflict as a “civil war”, and even the Pope himself recently spoke of a “fratricidal conflict”, which does not accurately reflect the reality unfolding in Ukraine today” [5].

In this regard, it is worth noting that the Vatican is a state, and the statements of the Vatican can be considered as the international policy of this state. However, the matter is that this state is quite specific: reinforcement of this state occurs exclusively through migration, as there is celibacy in the clergy of Catholics. The Vatican is actually the governing and central body of the entire universal Catholic Church. Therefore, we cannot separate the position of the Vatican from the position of Catholicism, because the Vatican is actually both a state and the highest body of central authority existing in the Catholic hierarchy.

The second stage is associated with the beginning of a full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine in 2022. At this stage, one should expect a radical change in the Vatican’s position or at least a renewal of the position on the Russian-Ukrainian

war. After all, if we consider the Vatican as a state, it would be possible by analogy to extrapolate the behavior of most Western countries such as the European Union, Canada, the United States of America, Australia and others, who clearly supported Ukraine and condemned the aggression, or rather the war that Russia started against Ukraine. Accordingly, if we are talking about the expectations of Ukrainian society, they have been related to the fact that the Catholic Church recognizes Russia as an aggressor and condemns it as the one who started the war. Of course, this is the position of the public, which does not go into subtleties of the Vatican diplomacy. In fact, thousands, and in 2024 hundreds of thousands of victims of the Russian aggression, dozens of destroyed cities, the aggressive nature of the war by Russia were to contribute to the more unambiguous position of Pope Francis. Instead, we did not see such a cardinal step, but saw the continuation of the policy of reconciliation. The essence of this policy is that the Vatican does not see those who are clearly right and those who are clearly wrong. That is, it does not approach the parties fighting from the position of their assessment as evil and good. In fact, the point is that the real world is imperfect, people are imperfect, they can make mistakes, but they must adhere to Christian teaching. If they have violated it, they should have a chance to correct their mistakes, and accordingly these imperfect people and imperfect states should sit down at the negotiating table and make a mutual compromise. Moreover, mutual forgiveness was clearly expected. Besides that, this tendency of the Catholic Church was laid down in the 20th century by John Paul II, who apologized for many actions of the Catholic Church: from the Crusades to the genocide of certain ethnic groups, colonialism, and more. Researchers count more than 100 such apologies [6; 7, p. 172–183]. Therefore, the approach to the Russian-Ukrainian war has not fundamentally changed, and the words “war”, the “perpetrator of the war”, and the “aggressor” were not mentioned, and there was no concretization that it was specifically Russia.

Instead, Pope Francis made some moves that stirred public opinion in Ukraine. This primarily included the procession in Rome in 2022: a woman of the Ukrainian origin and a woman of the Russian origin together held a cross, which was perceived in Ukraine as equating the victim and the aggressor. Moreover, during the same event, the thesis of “fraternal peoples of Ukraine and Russia” was voiced, which is a Russian propaganda narrative [8]. A similar action was planned for 2023 with children, but the scenario of the event became public knowledge, causing outrage among Ukrainians, and was not implemented [9]. He also prayed for those affected in Ukraine by military actions, but did not specify the cause of these sufferings.

Moreover, when speaking to Russian Catholics in 2023, the Pope mentioned Great Russia, the great achievements of Russian artists, rulers of the Russian Empire, and in no way condemned the imperialism of the Russians and the war they are

currently supporting [10]. Again, the reaction of the public in Ukraine was sharply negative on this issue.

Even the meeting with the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, did not shed clarity on the Vatican's foreign policy position and directly on the position of the Pope [11]. Thus, there is a perception of Russia and Ukraine as parties to the conflict, making mistakes, and accordingly, they should negotiate with each other to cease hostilities and restore peace. And the blame for the war is placed on both sides. However, the evil in this case is the war itself, and not those who started it. Accordingly, the war must be stopped by any means. However, this is an unacceptable position for Ukrainians, and the President of Ukraine "asked to condemn Russian crimes in Ukraine, as there can be no equality between the victim and the aggressor" [12].

And, of course, one cannot fail to mention the resonant statement by Pope Francis that Ukraine should have the "courage of the white flag" for peaceful negotiations with Russia. It should be noted that the reaction to this statement was sharply negative both from Ukrainians and from the leaders of foreign states that are helping Ukraine defend itself from Russian military aggression. The Pontiff was reminded that both the beginning and the end of the war depend on the decision of President Putin [13]. Accordingly, once again, the Vatican stated that the Pope did not mean what Ukrainians and the leaders of the EU countries heard from him [14].

The reaction of the European leaders was theoretically and practically reasoned, based on considerations of moral duty, justice, humanity, and unambiguity. It was also interesting because it indirectly indicated the influence of the Vatican on the societies of European countries and the West in general, as politicians were not concerned about losing electoral points. This indicated the insignificant influence of the Vatican on the political institutions and organizations of Western countries, and therefore potentially little influence on the national stability of these states.

In particular, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Radosław Sikorski, noted, "How about, for balance, calling on Putin to muster the courage and withdraw his army from Ukraine"

[15]. President of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, entered into a debate from a moral point of view and remarked, "One cannot capitulate to evil. It must be fought and defeated, so that evil raises the white flag and capitulates" [16]. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Annalena Baerbock, said that she "did not understand" the Pope's comments and suggested that he should visit Ukraine to see the damage caused by Moscow [17].

From the Ukrainian side, the statements were no less resolute, not only from the political leadership but also from the church hierarchy. The President of Ukraine, when talking about Ukrainian chaplains at the front, noted: "Here is what

the church is — it is with the people, not 2,500 kilometers away, dealing with virtual mediation between those who want to live and those who want to destroy you” [18]. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in its statement noted: “Ukrainians cannot give up, because surrender means death. The intentions of Russia and Putin are clear and straightforward. In Putin’s consciousness, there is no Ukraine, Ukrainian history, language, or independent Ukrainian church life” [19]. “Pope Francis should look at the world realistically and have the courage to negotiate capitulation with Lucifer for the Catholic Church”, sarcastically remarked Andreas Umland, a political analyst at the Stockholm Center for Eastern European Studies [17].

On the one hand, we have already noted that this is a general trend of the second half of the 20th century, which still appeared under the rule of John Paul II, and now it can be called a policy of apology. Another reason may be the Latin American origin of the current pope (Argentina) and strong anti-American sentiment in the countries of the region. This aspect is important precisely because Ukraine is perceived as not just an ally, but a puppet of the United States, and therefore Ukraine is not considered as an independent force. From this point of view, not Ukraine and Russia are fighting, but the United States are fighting Russia over Ukraine. The foreign policy of the United States in the Latin American region is perceived as a manifestation of imperialism. It should be mentioned that in the 50–80s of the 20th century there was a mass movement of left forces, which were widely supported by the public. Even now we can call frankly socialist and anti-American countries which are Bolivia, Cuba and Venezuela. During the armed struggle of the left forces on their side became Catholic priests who again are a factor affecting the current Pope, as he grew up in such a cultural environment. It should not be forgotten that it was in Argentina that Ernesto Che Guevara was born and raised, who together with Fidel Castro were the embodiment of the revolution in all Latin America. Therefore, it is quite probable that the attitude to the Russian-Ukrainian war on the part of the Catholic Church is now not unambiguous, in the sense of supporting Ukraine’s position, since Ukraine is perceived as a puppet of the United States, who have the image of a country that professes colonial foreign policy. And accordingly, if you support Ukraine in this paradigm, then you support American imperialism. On the other hand, one must take into consideration that the decision not to support Ukraine may be influenced by the internal church situation within Catholicism itself, namely that the majority of Catholic parishioners live not in developed Western countries, but in developing countries. If the Vatican unequivocally supports a country associated with Western dominance and imperialism, it may go against public opinion prevailing in developing countries, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Another factor that may influence the Vatican’s position is dogmatics and religious doctrines. It may appear that contemporary Catholicism upholds the basic position expressed by St. Augustine regarding the nature of good and evil. Namely,

that there is no substantial evil, only good. Evil is a deficiency of good; it is the absence of good. If the void where good has vanished is filled with good again, evil disappears [20, p. 36]. From this perspective, it correlates with the position that there are no essentially evil people; they become so. For example, they become dictators simply because they lack good, or lack pastoral guidance, or because someone offended them, or they have faced difficult life circumstances. Accordingly, one must strike for the souls of these people and not immediately condemn them, but engage in dialogue with them, understand them, in order to lead them towards good. It is perhaps within this paradigm that the Vatican's foreign policy position regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war fits clearly. Consequently, they perceive Putin not as unequivocal evil. They hope that complex circumstances have led to the existing absence of good. For instance, "unjust international policies from the West" towards Russia have forced him to act in such ways.

However, if this is the case from a doctrinal standpoint, then it is unclear why Ukraine is being accused. Essentially, one must either acknowledge Russian propaganda and believe that Ukrainians have been committing military crimes against Russian-speaking individuals for the past 30 years or... there is no other alternative. For this doctrinal scheme to work, it must be also acknowledged that both Russia and Ukraine, along with the Ukrainian leadership, are evil, and therefore they must come to terms and choose the path of good. Since their evil is essentially generated by the fact that they have found themselves in difficult circumstances, such as geopolitical ones.

It should be noted that in Catholicism, there exists the theory of a just war, which clearly defines which country is the aggressor and which country is the victim [21, p. 28]. Here, war is actually seen as a tool, not just an evil, as recognized by the current Pope. Thus, war can be just. War can be just in cases when a country defends itself from external aggression, when a country defends its way of life, its right to belief, in this case, the Christian faith. However, it is evident that this very concept is not currently dominant, and in principle, it is not used by the higher clergy of Catholicism.

And of course, the Vatican's inclination towards a principled pacifist position should be noted, where any war is recognized as evil [22, p. 158]. Accordingly, the cause or purpose of the war is not important. More precisely, the moral judgment of war as evil does not depend on this. That is, even if a war is fought to eliminate evil (totalitarian dictator, human rights violations, genocide), it is evil, not a tool that uses good.

So, what is the reason for such a foreign policy position of the Vatican

It seems that it is a combination of all these factors: understanding of good and evil from the perspective of St. Augustine, the ideological position of the Pope, related to his origin from Argentina (leftist views and anti-Americanism as a worldview), and also it is a general tendency of the Catholic Church after the Second

Vatican Council, aimed at reconciliation, forgiveness, and a path not to make new mistakes for which future popes will have to apologize. Therefore, if you take a clear, unambiguous position, it can be recognized as either correct or incorrect. Perhaps, this is the main argument why such a position cannot be expressed, as the likelihood of errors increases. Instead, if your position is “above the situation”, and you only present yourself as a mediator, indicating that everyone can be wrong, and everyone should strive for peace because both sides are imperfect, then you find yourself in an ideal situation where you cannot be accused of immoral wrongdoings.

Our next task is to find out how all this affects political institutions, organizations, international politics, and the domestic political situation in Ukraine. Actually, the Vatican’s foreign policy position does not directly influence the decisions of the world states: neither Western nor developing countries. The Vatican is not an influential player that changes international politics; rather, it uses international politics to benefit its believers in certain regions. This is partially related to its vague and amorphous position on different events, for example, in China or in other countries when there is no direct condemnation of a political regime or a political action. Again, this is partially done to benefit its religious community, so to speak, for development in promising markets. World states see this situation and do not perceive the Vatican as a truly equal partner with whom political negotiations can be conducted that could lead to specific results. Because the entire foreign policy position of the Vatican is “you will achieve no concrete results with us because we try to be above the situation, and we accept nothing: no decisions, to avoid mistakes, and to avoid being accused of cooperation with fascism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and so on.” In fact, this attitude of states towards the Vatican is well illustrated by the criticism from Western countries of Pope Francis for his statements about a “white flag for Ukraine”.

Yes, it does influence if these are indeed parishioners of the Catholic Church, then they listen to the position of the higher clergy, namely the Pope, who, considering the dogma of his infallibility in matters of faith, is an essential element of the worldview position of Catholics in any country of the world. However, through influencing public opinion, there is possible influence on decision-making by the state authorities. If there is a significant Catholic community or majority in a country, then in this case, the position of the Pope becomes quite important and can influence decisions made by individual countries in the geopolitical space. This is where the danger lies, as there is likelihood that due to the position of the Pope, certain states may adopt a pro-russian position, where russia is not seen as an aggressor.

A crucial question here is the level of religiosity and intensity of religious life among citizens in individual countries. Where there is a high intensity of religious life, the Vatican’s position is accordingly important in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Where religiosity has low intensity, the influence of the Pope can be neutralized. The level of religiosity in most Western countries is not high: a

significant number of citizens in certain countries do not recognize religion as very important: Spain (17%), Slovakia (20%), Slovenia (12%), Ukraine (20%), Romania (49%), Poland (37%), Germany (14%), France (14%), Croatia (20%), Canada (15%), Argentina (24), Brazil (45%), and so on [23].

It is indicative that even in the countries where there is a high level of religiosity, and Catholicism dominates and is authoritative, the position of Pope Francis regarding political issues is not accepted by the citizens and therefore does not significantly influence on political life and decisions. For instance, there is sociological research in Poland regarding the pontiff's words about a "white flag" for Ukraine, where 49.7% of respondents strongly and negatively perceive such a position of the Pope, while only 17.7% unequivocally support it [24].

There are significant Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic communities in Ukraine. Consequently, in this regard, the potential influence of the Pope on our internal political situation can be quite significant. However, it should be noted that the analysis of statements by Ukrainian Catholic or Greek Catholic clergy shows that there is no complete support for the Vatican's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war. Rather, there are attempts to justify why the Vatican and the Pope are not unequivocal in condemning Russian aggression, which is associated with genocide and the killing of civilians, especially by brutal methods in the occupied part of Ukraine, which is currently under Russian control. It should be clearly understood that the clergy of the mentioned churches emphasize that such a position was formed by Pope Francis himself, who is infallible only in matters of faith, not in politics or economics.

Accordingly, here we clearly see that the Pope himself cannot directly influence Ukrainian Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic believers. Formally, he does influence, but in fact, he does not. Because Catholic parishioners live in Ukraine and they specifically see who is the source of aggression, who is the victim, and which side commits military crimes. And parishioners wonder how it is possible not to condemn such activities, but to seek ways of dialogue and understanding with a dictator who directly embodies evil and perpetrates it in Ukraine. Therefore, such a foreign policy position of the Vatican leads to a certain distancing from the position of the official higher clergy of universal Catholicism.

How does this affect all other citizens and does it reduce national and social resilience to threats

At the present stage, Ukrainians have clearly defined life priorities, as N. Ishchuk aptly notes: "So we fall asleep wearily to the annoying howls of sirens. And our first thought when we wake up is this: "waking up means being alive". When we called our close and distant neighbors to ask only one question: "How are you?" that actually meant: "Are you alive?" [25]. If we analyze the information space, people's comments, journalistic articles regarding the Vatican's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war, then these positions further consolidate Ukrainians who realize

their distinctiveness and cultural identity. And they consolidate Ukrainians based on the non-acceptance of the position of the Pope, who does not see the real situation, or the misunderstanding of how one cannot see who the aggressor is, who the victim is, how one cannot call evil by its name. Therefore, in this sphere, Vatican statements contribute to the consolidation of Ukrainian society, which sharply opposes itself as those who clearly see good and evil, with those who fundamentally cannot understand this or cannot take a principled position. Moreover, the danger here for Catholics is that in general public opinion perceives this not as a position specifically of Pope Francis, who has his own complex fate, anti-American position. At an intuitive level in the social consciousness of Ukrainians, the Pope appears as a person who is unable to adhere to Christian values, unable to suffer for faith, and unable to understand what justice is. Thus, an interesting effect is observed here: Ukrainians themselves feel a certain moral rightness because each of them concludes that morally they are more adequate than the head of the largest Christian denomination in the world. This opinion is confirmed by a sociological survey of Ukrainians regarding Pope Francis' "peace initiatives" conducted in 2023, which showed either unequivocal non-acceptance of the Pope's position or complete indifference to his statements. Thus, 36.2% are unaware of Pope Francis' position, 23.8% of Ukrainians are offended and condemn his position, 14.1% attach no importance to his position, 10.3% believe that the Pope works in the interests of the kremlin (russia), and only 9.2% support his position that the war should be ended at any cost [26].

Conclusions

The Vatican takes an ambiguous position on the Russian-Ukrainian war, trying to act as a mediator and calling on parties to dialogue and compromises: it does not recognize russia as an aggressor and proposes "peaceful negotiations" without determining the guilty party. This position is stipulated by several factors: pacifist doctrine, a desire to avoid unequivocal assessments to prevent future criticism and apologies, the Latin American origin and anti-Americanism of the Pope, a desire for "reconciliation" and forgiveness. The Vatican's foreign policy weight on the international stage is limited, and the leading states do not perceive it as an equal partner for negotiations. The Pope's position has some influence on Catholic societies, but even in Catholic countries, it faces criticism and lack of support in matters of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In Ukraine, the Vatican's position finds no understanding among believers or in society at large; on the contrary, it consolidates Ukrainians in opposition to aggression and condemns the Pope's indifference to russian crimes. Ukrainian Catholic churches do not fully support the Vatican's position. This reaction is explained by the obviousness of russian aggression and the feeling of moral superiority of Ukrainians over the position of the Holy See. Pope Francis does not use his authority to condemn the aggressor and protect the victim. The Vatican is losing moral authority in the world, particularly in Ukraine.

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ДИЛЕМА МИРУ І СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТІ: МІЖНАРОДНА ПОЛІТИКА ВАТИКАНУ В КОНТЕКСТІ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

Резюме

Досліджується позиція Папи Франциска та Ватикану щодо російсько-української війни, його вплив на міжнародну політику та внутрішньодержавні процеси в Україні. Відповідно здійснено аналіз заяв Ватикану щодо війни в Україні, реакції на них з боку інших країн та українського суспільства. Також завданням дослідження є з'ясування впливу Папи Франциска на внутрішньополітичну ситуацію в Україні. Метою статті є дослідження впливу Ватикану на процеси та перебіг російсько-української війни, міжнародну політику та внутрішню державну України. У статті застосовано комплекс методів: історичний аналіз для вивчення еволюції позиції Ватикану (2014–2024 рр.), контент-аналіз заяв Папи Франциска, порівняльний метод для зіставлення позицій різних сторін, системний підхід для розгляду впливу Ватикану на міжнародну та внутрішню політику України, метод експертних оцінок та статистичний аналіз соціологічних даних. Це дозволило всебічно дослідити вплив позиції Ватикану на перебіг російсько-української війни та її сприйняття міжнародною спільнотою. Період дослідження: 2014–2024 роки, з акцентом на два етапи: 2014–2022 (гібридна війна та низька ефективність конфлікту); 2022–2024 (повномасштабна війна та очікування кардинальної зміни позиції Ватикану). Основні результати дослідження. Ватикан не визнає Росію однозначним агресором та не засуджує її дії. Папа Франциск прагне до замирення та пропонує сторонам конфлікту сісти за стіл переговорів. Позиція Ватикану щодо російсько-української війни ґрунтується на: догматиці католицизму, де зло не має субстанційної

природи; ідеологічних поглядах папи Франциска (антиамериканізм, латиноамериканський контекст); загальній тенденції в католицькій церкві до вибачення, закладеній Іоанном Павлом II та пацифізмі. Ватикан не має значного впливу на прийняття рішень світовими державами. Позиція папи Римського може впливати на суспільну думку в країнах з високим рівнем релігійності. В Україні позиція Ватикану не має однозначної підтримки з боку римо-католицької та греко-католицької громад та загалом українських громадян. Позиція Ватикану щодо російсько-української війни є аморфною, оскільки не містить чіткої моральної оцінки та зрівнює агресора та жертву, відповідно засуджуються злочинні дії, але не їх причина (росія).

Ключові слова: Ватикан, Україна, війна, міжнародна політика, католицизм.

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