



Fair. Faithful. Informed.

[Home](#)
[News](#)
[Movie Reviews](#)
[Editor's Choice](#)
[Videos](#)
[Sunday Scriptures](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[About](#)

Demonstrators burn two churches in Chile on anniversary of protests



A protestor gestures while a church is set on fire during a demonstration against Chile's government in Santiago Oct. 18, 2020, the one-year anniversary of the protests and riots that rocked the capital in 2019. The current protests occurred a week before a referendum on whether to ditch a dictatorship-era constitution. (CNS photo/Ivan Alvarado, Reuters)

By: Catholic News Service

Date: October 19, 2020

SANTIAGO, Chile (CNS) — Demonstrators burned two Catholic churches in Chile, where gatherings to mark the one-year anniversary of mass protests against inequality descended into chaos.



All the News You Need

CNS provides a wide variety of news, information, opinion and texts to assist you in covering the church for your readers, viewers and listeners. We provide news from the U.S., Rome and around the world in both English and Spanish, in both written coverage and video reporting.

Church officials and media reports described the Oct. 18 gatherings through the country as peaceful, but unrest broke out late in the day, with some protesters entering and vandalizing parishes in Santiago, the national capital.

Videos posted on social media showed the spire of Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Santiago burning, then crashing to the ground as a nearby crowd cheered.

St. Francis Borgia Church also was vandalized, and religious items were stolen, a church official said. The parish is home to institutional ceremonies for the "Carabineros," Chile's national police, a force unpopular with protesters over accusations of it employing repressive tactics, including 345 eye injuries from the use of pellets shot from anti-riot weapons, according to a U.N. report.

"These events over the past few hours in Santiago and other cities in Chile show that there are no limits to those that exacerbate violence," the Chilean bishops' conference said in an Oct. 18 statement.

"These violent groups contrast with many others who have demonstrated peacefully. The vast majority of Chile yearns for justice and effective measures that help to overcome inequality. They do not want more corruption or abuse; they expect dignified, respectful and fair treatment."

Archbishop Celestino Aós Braco of Santiago called for an end to the violence Oct. 18, calling it evil and saying, "We cannot justify the unjustifiable."

Chile erupted in protests in October 2019 after an increase in metro fares in the city of Santiago. But the small fare increase belied much deeper dissatisfaction with economic inequality in the country, which had been promoted in recent decades as a development success story with pro-market policies.

Chileans go to the polls Oct. 25 in a referendum on whether to rewrite the nation's constitution, which was drafted during the 1973-1990 regime of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Many of the protests have demanded rewriting the constitution; the bishops have encouraged citizen participation in the



Sales Inquires

Phone: [202.541.3453](tel:202.541.3453)

Email:

sales@catholicnews.com

Main Office

3211 Fourth Street, NE

Washington, DC

20017

Tel 202.541.3250

Fax 202.541.3117

cns@catholicnews.com

Sales Inquires

202.541.3453

sales@catholicnews.com

demonstrations.

"The citizenry that wants justice, probity, the overcoming of inequalities and opportunities to be able to pull ourselves up as a country will not be intimidated by threats of violence and will fulfill their civic duty," the bishops' statement said. "In democracies, we express ourselves with free votes of conscience, not the pressures of terror and force."

The assailing of two parishes comes as Chile's Catholic Church suffers the fallout from accusations of clergy sexual abuse and the hierarchy's improper response to such crimes. A January survey from polling firm Cadem found that 75% of respondents disapprove of the church's performance.



Related Posts





MAIN OFFICE

3211 Fourth Street,
NE Washington, DC
20017

Phone: [202.541.3250](tel:202.541.3250)

Fax: [202.541.3117](tel:202.541.3117)

Email: [Email](#)

[Catholic News](#)

[Service](#)

Web:

CatholicNews.com

QUICK LINKS

[> Privacy Policy](#)

[> FAQ](#)

SPONSORS

Made possible in part by a grant from the Catholic Communication Campaign



SEARCH THIS SITE

[CLICK HERE TO CONTACT US](#)

