



**Statement of Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago and Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, on the Conversion of Hagia Sophia
July 24, 2020**

On this Day of Mourning, we join as brothers in Christ to decry the conversion of the Hagia Sophia by the government of Turkey.

Hagia Sophia has long stood as a reminder of our shared cultural and religious heritage and holds special significance to Christians and Muslims alike. Our regret, however, is not merely over the fate of this significant structure. We are troubled by the government's disregard for religious pluralism in Turkey, and we are particularly concerned because this action represents a visible marginalization and continued attack of the religious freedom of Turkey's Christian communities and other religious minorities.

Together, we join all those who mourn this divisive act and urge the world to stay vigilant in protecting religious minorities and religious freedom in Turkey.

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