

White House Fires Back After Pope Leo Says God Won't Hear Prayers for US Troops

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt pushed back Monday after Pope Leo XIV declared that God does not hear the prayers of “those who wage war.”

REPORTER: "Pope Leo said yesterday, and I quote him, 'God does not listen to the prayer of those who waged war.' Can you comment on that?"

KAROLINE LEAVITT: "Our nation was a nation founded 250 years ago, almost, on Judeo-Christian values. And we've seen, presidents, we've seen,..."

— Fox News (@FoxNews) March 30, 2026

“Our nation was a nation founded 250 years ago almost on Judeo-Christian values. And we have seen presidents, the leaders of the Department of War, and our troops go to prayer during the most turbulent times in our nation’s history, and I don’t think there is anything wrong with our military leaders or with the president calling on the American people to pray for our service members and those who are serving our country overseas,” Leavitt said. “In fact, I think it’s a very noble thing to do.”

“If you talk to many service members, they appreciate the prayers and support from the commander-in-chief and from his cabinet,” she continued.



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Leavitt made the remarks in response to a reporter's question about the pope's comments, which came amid ongoing U.S. military operations in Iran.

Pope Leo XIV, who succeeded Pope Francis, issued a statement suggesting that God turns away from those engaged in warfare. "This is our God: Jesus, King of Peace, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war. He does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them," he said, citing a Bible verse.

The criticism comes as War Secretary Pete Hegseth said during a Christian worship service at the Pentagon, "Let every round find its mark against the enemies of righteousness and our nation. He added, "Give them wisdom in every decision, endurance for the trial ahead, unbreakable unity, and overwhelming violence of action against those who deserve no mercy."

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