# Catholic Church in Scotland supports prayer app Hallow amid controversy



The Catholic Church in Scotland has shown support for a prayer application known as Hallow, which has recently garnered attention due to its promotion by Russell Brand, who is currently facing serious legal charges. Despite the app's controversial association, the Church has stated that it does not have any concerns regarding its use.

Hallow, which was launched in 2018, is designed to assist users with audio-guided Bible stories, meditations, sleep aids, and Christian music, alongside a community focus that includes praying challenges. The app is free to download but offers a subscription model costing approximately £55 annually for additional features. With a strong emphasis on its Catholic audience, the app has gained significant traction, reportedly being downloaded over 22 million times.

In light of recent developments, the app's company announced that it has severed ties with Brand after he was charged with rape and other sexual offences. Brand had previously endorsed Hallow in a social media video, expressing that he would "thoroughly recommend" the platform.

Following this news, the app's CEO, Alex Jones, publicly expressed his concerns regarding Hallow's potential shutdown in the European Union due to regulatory challenges. Speaking on social platform X in February, Jones remarked, “The EU is shutting us down by over-regulation, apparently targeting any religious app, making it effectively impossible for us to operate." He noted that the company had been planning to expand its content offerings in various languages prior to these complications.

The possible EU ban appears to be linked to the Digital Services Act (DSA), which was enacted in February 2023. This legislation imposes restrictions on the processing of “sensitive” personal data, including information related to religious beliefs, necessitating explicit user consent for such data usage.

When approached for a comment on Hallow’s situation, the Catholic Church in Scotland appeared undeterred. Father Gerry Maguiness from the Church conveyed that users can freely access the app’s basic features without any issues, stating, “Just being on the website, it is free. You can opt to buy the app. No difficulty with it.”

Thus far, the Church's position and the ongoing discussions surrounding data regulation and privacy within the EU suggest a complex landscape for religious-based applications like Hallow.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.stmargaretstl.org/news/parish/2024/11/pray-with-hallow-this-advent-for-1/> - This article supports Hallow's partnership with religious institutions and its role in fostering prayer and spiritual growth. It highlights a special offer for parishioners to access Hallow premium at a reduced rate.
* <https://www.riotimesonline.com/hallows-rise-how-a-former-atheist-built-the-worlds-largest-christian-prayer-app/> - The article about Hallow's rise corroborates the app's features, such as guided prayers and meditations, and its success story, including Alex Jones' transformation from an atheist to leading the world's largest Christian prayer app.
* <https://www.pillarcatholic.com/p/i-tried-the-hallow-app-for-two-weeks> - This piece provides insight into Hallow's features, such as Catholic meditation content and its growth, highlighting the app's audio format and user experience, which aligns with the description of Hallow's offerings.
* <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022L0025&from=EN> - The Digital Services Act (DSA) imposes regulations on the processing of sensitive personal data in the EU, which could impact religious apps like Hallow due to its handling of user data related to religious beliefs.
* <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/eu-lawmakers-give-final-approval-to-dsa/> - This article explains the enactment of the DSA in February 2023, which includes rules requiring explicit user consent for sensitive data, potentially affecting apps like Hallow.