

October 24, 2021

***95th World Mission Sunday – October 24, 2021***

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**OVERALL WORLD PICTURE**

**CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS 2021**

**Città del Vaticano (Agenzia Fides) –** As every year, in view of World Mission Day, which this year celebrates its 95th anniversary on Sunday, October 24, 2021, Fides News Service offers some statistics chosen to give a panorama of the missionary Church all over the world.

The tables are taken from the latest edition of the «Church’s Book of Statistics» published (updated to 31 December 2019) regarding members of the Church, church structures, healthcare, welfare and education. Please note that variations are indicated in brackets, increase (+) or decrease (-) compared to the previous year (2018), according to the comparison made by Fides News Service.

Finally, the picture of ecclesiastical circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples is reported.

**World Population**

To December 31, 2019 the world population was **7.577.777.000**, with an increase of 81.383.000 units compared to the previous year. Population growth was registered on every continent, including Europe. Increases were registered above all in Asia (+40.434.000) and in Africa (+33.360.000), followed by America (+6.973.000), Europe (+157.000) and Oceania (+459.000).

**Catholics**

On the same date, December 31, 2019, Catholics in the world numbered **1.344.403.000** unitswith an overall increase of 15.410.000 units compared to the previous year. The increase affects all continents, except Europe (-292.000). As in the past, increases were registered above all in Africa (+8.302.000) and in America (+5.373.000), followed by Asia (+1.909.000) and Oceania (+118.000).

The world percentage of Catholics increased compared to the previous year, to **17,74%.** With regards to the continents, a slight increase was registered in Africa (+0,14), Asia (+0,02) and America (+0,09), decrease in Europe (-0,05) and Oceania (26,34%) remains unvaried.

**Persons and Catholics per priest**

This year the number of persons per priest in the world increased by 215 units, average **14.853.** There are increases in America (+96), Oceania (+231) and Europe (+172). A decrease in Asia (-765) and Africa (-202).

The number of Catholics per priest in the world increased by 35 units, almost the same as the previous year (+42), average **3.245**. There are increases in America (+74), Europe (+25), Oceania (+60). The number of Catholics per priest in the world decreased in Asia (-34) and Africa (-2).

**Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations**

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions remains more or less unvaried, there is only an increase of 1 unit compared to the previous year, to **3.026.** New circumscriptions were created in Africa (+2), Asia (+1), Europe (+1), while the number in Oceania (81) remains unvaried, a decrease of 3 units in America.

Mission Stations with a resident priest number **3.217** (+301). Increases were registered in all continents, especially in Africa (+138), in Asia (+88) and in America (+56).

Mission Stations without a resident priest decreased by 5.836 units, reaching a total 131.407 with variations in all continents: decrease in Africa (-4.382), in Asia (-358), in Europe (-58), America (-1.113), the only increase in Oceania (+75).

**Bishops**

The total number of Bishops in the world decreased by 13 units, to **5.364.** Diocesan Bishops increased (+12) and Religious Bishops decreased (-25). Diocesan Bishops number **4.134**, while Religious Bishops number **1.230**.

Diocesan Bishops increase in Africa (+11), Asia (+5), Europa (+4) ed Oceania (+2), while the only decrease is registered in America (-10). Religious Bishops decrease in all continents: Africa (-6), America (-7), Asia (-5), Europe (-4) ed Oceania (-3).

**Priests**

The total number of priests in the world increased this year, to **414.336** (+271). The continent which registered a major decrease was again Europe (-2.608) as well as America (-690) and Oceania (-69). Increases were registered in Africa (+1.649) and in Asia (+1.989).

Diocesan priests in the world increased by 262 units, reaching a total of **282.136**, with a decrease again in Europe (-1.436) and in Oceania (-30). Increases were registered in Africa (+1.061), Asia (+569), America (+98).

The number of Religious priests increased by 9 units, to a total **132.200**. Increases were registered in Africa (+588), in Asia (+1.420) whereas numbers dropped in Oceania (-39), in Europe (-1.172) and in America (-788).

**Permanent Deacons**

Permanent deacons in the world continue to increase, this year reaching 734 units, to **48.238.** The highest increase was registered again in America (+562), followed by Europe (+177), Oceania (+5), Africa (+1), decrease only in Asia (-11).

Permanent diocesan deacons in the world are **47.603,** with an overall increase of 790 units. Even this year there was an overall increase: in Asia (+18), Europe (+207), America (+554), Oceania (+7), Africa (+4).

Religious permanent deacons number **635**, with a decrease by 56 units compared to the previous year. Decreases in Europe (-30), Africa (-3) and Oceania (-2), Asia (-29), the only increase in America (+8).

**Men and Women religious**

The number of non-religious priests decreased for the seventh consecutive year, by 646 units, to **50.295**. A decrease was registered in Europe (-236), America (-390), Oceania (-86) and Asia (-23). An increase only in Africa (+89).

Even this year there is an overall decrease in the number of women religious, by 11.562 units, to a total **630.099.** An increase, once again was registered in Africa (+835) and in Asia (+599), decrease in Europe (-7.400), America (-5.315) and Oceania (–281).

**Members of secular institutes, male and female**

Members of male institutes number **582,** and decrease (-32) everywhere: in Europe (-2), America (-13), Asia (-10), Africa (-7), while also this year the number remains unvaried in Oceania (only 1 member).

Members of female institutes also decreased this year, by 553 units, to a total of **20.913** members. Increase only in Africa (+30), while a decrease was registered in Europe (-365), America (-110), Asia (-104) and in Oceania (-4).

**Lay missionaries and Catechists**

The number of lay missionaries in the world is **410.440**, with an overall increase of 34.252 units, in Europe (+277), America (+33.930), Oceania (+29) and Africa (+566). Decrease in Asia (-550).

Catechists in the world decreased by 2.590 units, to a total **3.074.034**. Decreases were registered in America (-15.651), Europe (-5.658), Oceania (-485), increases were registered in Africa (+6.808) and in Asia (+12.396).

**Major seminarians**

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious decreased this year, they are globally 1822 units, reaching a total of **114.058**. Increases were registered only in Africa (+509), decreases in Asia (-898), Oceania (-53), Europe (-630) and America (-750).

Major diocesan seminarians number **68.609** (-1350 compared to the previous year) and Religious major seminarians **45.449** (-427). Major diocesan seminarians increased only in Africa (+224), while decreases were registered in Europe (-688), America (-784), Asia (-102) and unvaried in Oceania.

Religious major seminarians increase in Africa (+285), in Europe (+58), in America (+34), while a decrease was registered in Asia (-796) and Oceania (-53).

**Minor seminarians**

The total number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious this year decrease for the fourth consecutive year by 3.174 units to **96.990**. Overall decrease in all continents except Oceania (+22): in America (-914), Africa (-1.519), Europe (-743) and in Asia (-20).

Minor diocesan seminarians number **74.976** (-2.539) and religious seminarians number **22.014** (-635). The number of diocesan minor seminarians increased only in Oceania (+22). Decrease in Africa (-1.305), America (-790), Europe (-214) and Asia (-252).

Religious minor seminarians decreased in Europe (-529), Africa (-214) and America (-124), while an increase was registered in Asia (+232). The number remains unvaried in Oceania.

**Catholic schools and education**

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 72.667 kindergartens with 7.532.992 pupils; 98.925 primary schools with 35.188.771 pupils; 49.552 secondary schools with 19.370.763 pupils. The Church also cares 2.395.540 high school pupils and 3.833.012 university students.

**Catholic charity and healthcare centres**

Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church include: 5.245 hospitals, most of them in Africa (1.418) and in America (1.362); 14.963 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (5.307), America (4.043); 532 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (269) and Africa (201); 15.429 Homes for the elderly, or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8.031) and in America (3.642); 9.374 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3.233) and in Europe (2.247); 10.723 creches, mainly in Asia (2.973) and in America (2.957); 12.308 marriage counselling centres, mainly in Europe (5.504) and America (4.289); 3.198 social rehabilitation centres and 33.840 other kinds of institutes.

**Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples**

The ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples(Cep) are **1.117**. Most of the ecclesiastical circumscriptions entrusted to Propaganda Fide are in Africa (517) and in Asia (483), followed by America (71) and Oceania (46).

**STATISTICS**

***Source: “Church’s Yearly Book of Statistics latest edition” elaborated by Fides.***

***In brackets variations compared to the previous year: increase (+) decrease (-).***

### WORLD POPULATION– CATHOLICS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Population** | **Catholics** | **Percentage** |
| **Africa** | 1.290.579.000 (+33.360.000) | 251.550.000 (+8.302.000) | 19,49% (+0,14) |
| **America** | 1.014.407.000 (+6.973.000) | 647.205.000 (+5.373.000) | 63,80% (+0,09) |
| **Asia** | 4.510.857.000 (+40.434.000) | 149.136.000 (+1.909.000) | 3,31% (+0,02) |
| **Europe** | 720.399.000 (+157.000) | 285.573.000 (-292.000) | 39,64% (-0,05) |
| **Oceania** | 41.535.000 (+459.000) | 10.939.000 (+118.000) | 26,34% (=) |
| **Total** | **7.577.777.000 (+81.383.000)** | **1.344.403.000 (+15.410.000)** | **17,74% (+0.01)** |

**PERSONS/CATHOLICS PER PRIEST**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Persons per priest** | **Catholics per priest** |
| **Africa** | 26.093 (-202) | 5.086 (-2) |
| **America** | 8.328 (+96) | 5.318 (+74) |
| **Asia** | 43.958 (-765) | 2.123 (-34) |
| **Europe** | 4.280 (+172) | 1.697 (+25) |
| **Oceania** | 9.029 (+231) | 2.378 (+60) |
| **Total** | **14.853 (+215)** | **3.245 (+35)** |

**ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS – MISSION STATIONS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions** | **Mission Stations**  **with resident priest** | **Mission Stations**  **without resident priest** |
| **Africa** | 543 (+2) | 619 (+138) | 72.698 (-4.382) |
| **America** | 1.095 (-3) | 963 (+56) | 20.398 (-1.113) |
| **Asia** | 546 (+1) | 1.159 (+88) | 37.013 (-358) |
| **Europe** | 761 (+1) | 394 (+6) | 462 (-58) |
| **Oceania** | 81 (=) | 82 (+13) | 836 (+75) |
| **Total** | **3.026 (+1)** | **3.217 (+301)** | **131.407 (-5.836)** |

### BISHOPS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Bishops** | **Diocesan**  **Bishops** | **Religious**  **Bishops** |
| **Africa** | 720 (+5) | 516 (+11) | 204 (-6) |
| **America** | 2.006 (-17) | 1.453 (-10) | 553 (-7) |
| **Asia** | 815 (=) | 633 (+5) | 182 (-5) |
| **Europe** | 1.687 (=) | 1.444 (+4) | 243 (-4) |
| **Oceania** | 136 (-1) | 88 (+2) | 48 (-3) |
| **Total** | **5.364 (-13)** | **4.134 (+12)** | **1.230 (-25)** |

### PRIESTS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Priests** | **Diocesan Priests** | **Religious Priests** |
| **Africa** | 49.461 (+1.649) | 34.445 (+1.061) | 15.016 (+588) |
| **America** | 121.693 (-690) | 85.416 (+98) | 36.277 (-788) |
| **Asia** | 70.254 (+1.989) | 39.677 (+569) | 30.577 (+1.420) |
| **Europe** | 168.328 (-2.608) | 119.869 (-1.436) | 48.459 (-1.172) |
| **Oceania** | 4.600 (-69) | 2.729 (-30) | 1.871 (-39) |
| **Total** | **414.336 (+271)** | **282.136 (+262)** | **132.200 (+9)** |

### PERMANENT DEACONS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Permanent Deacons** | **Diocesan Permanent Deacons** | **Religious Permanent Deacons** |
| **Africa** | 479 (+1) | 437 (+4) | 42 (-3) |
| **America** | 31.668 (+562) | 31.471 (+554) | 197 (+8) |
| **Asia** | 343 (-11) | 235 (+18) | 108 (-29) |
| **Europe** | 15.267 (+177) | 14.982 (+207) | 285 (-30) |
| **Oceania** | 481 (+5) | 478 (+7) | 3 (-2) |
| **Total** | **48.238 (+734)** | **47.603 (+790)** | **635 (-56)** |

**MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Men Religious** | **Women Religious** |
| **Africa** | 9.085 (+89) | 77.054 (+835) |
| **America** | 13.735 (-390) | 154.717 (-5.315) |
| **Asia** | 12.257 (-23) | 174.764 (+599) |
| **Europe** | 14.038 (-236) | 216.846 (-7.400) |
| **Oceania** | 1.180 (-86) | 6.718 (-281) |
| **Total** | **50.295 (-646)** | **630.099 (-11.562)** |

**MEMBERS OF SECULAR INSTITUTES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Members of Secular Institutes**  **Male** | **Members of Secular Institutes**  **Female** |
| **Africa** | 72 (-7) | 1.202 (+30) |
| **America** | 170 (-13) | 5.125 (-110) |
| **Asia** | 43 (-10) | 1.843 (-104) |
| **Europe** | 296 (-2) | 12.713 (-365) |
| **Oceania** | 1 (=) | 30 (-4) |
| **Total** | **582 (-32)** | **20.913 (-553)** |

**LAY MISSIONARIES, CATECHISTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Lay Missionaries** | **Catechists** |
| **Africa** | 8.002 (+566) | 439.219 (+6.808) |
| **America** | 348.862 (+33.930) | 1.721.782 (-15.651) |
| **Asia** | 41.570 (-550) | 390.465 (+12.396) |
| **Europe** | 11.833 (+277) | 508.650 (-5.658) |
| **Oceania** | 173 (+29) | 13.918 (-485) |
| **Total** | **410.440 (+34.252)** | **3.074.034 (-2.590)** |

##### MAJOR SEMINARIANS– DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Major Seminarians** | **Diocesan**  **Major Seminarians** | **Religious**  **Major Seminarians** |
| **Africa** | 32.721 (+509) | 21.700 (+224) | 11.021 (+285) |
| **America** | 30.664 (-750) | 21.120 (-784) | 9.544 (+34) |
| **Asia** | 33.821 (-898) | 15.847 (-102) | 17.974 (-796) |
| **Europe** | 15.888 (-630) | 9.351 (-688) | 6.537 (+58) |
| **Oceania** | 964 (-53) | 591 (=) | 373 (-53) |
| **Total** | **114.058 (-1.822)** | **68.609 (-1.350)** | **45.449 (-472)** |

**MINOR SEMINARIANS– DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Minor Seminarians** | **Diocesan**  **Minor Seminarians** | **Religious**  **Minor Seminarians** |
| **Africa** | 52.036 (-1.519) | 45.884 (-1.305) | 6.152 (-214) |
| **America** | 11.192 (-914) | 8.092 (-790) | 3.100 (-124) |
| **Asia** | 25.386 (-20) | 15.638 (-252) | 9.748 (+232) |
| **Europe** | 8.177 (-743) | 5.180 (-214) | 2.997 (-529) |
| **Oceania** | 199 (+22) | 182 (+22) | 17 (=) |
| **Total** | **96.990 (-3.174)** | **74.976 (-2.539)** | **22.014 (-635)** |

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PUPILS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | INFANT  Schools | INFANT  Pupils | PRIMARY  schools | PRIMARY  pupils | SECONDARY  schools | SECONDARY  pupils | High school  pupils | UNIVERSIT.  students |
| **Africa** | 19.098 | 2.286.485 | 41.124 | 19.238.587 | 15.622 | 5.448.254 | 150.930 | 197.887 |
| **America** | 16.394 | 1.248.287 | 21.716 | 6.086.596 | 12.224 | 3.549.668 | 702.386 | 2.286.716 |
| **Asia** | 14.119 | 2.048.546 | 16.501 | 5.969.690 | 11.636 | 6.125.508 | 1.200.700 | 544.833 |
| **Europe** | 21.567 | 1.869.403 | 15.739 | 3.081.171 | 9.341 | 3.750.141 | 332.318 | 756.759 |
| **Oceania** | 1.489 | 80.271 | 3.845 | 812.727 | 729 | 497.192 | 9.206 | 46.817 |
| **Total** | **72.667** | **7.532.992** | **98.925** | **35.188.771** | **49.552** | **19.370.763** | **2.395.540** | **3.833.012** |

**HOSPITAL/CLINICS, CHARITY WORK, WELFARE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Hospital** | **Dispensar.** | **Leprosy**  **centres** | **Homes for the elderly, chronically ill, disabled** | **Orphanages** | **Nursery**  **schools** | **Marriage**  **Counsel.**  **centres** | **Catholic**  **schools** | **Other institutes** |
| **Africa** | 1.418 | 5.307 | 201 | 659 | 1.646 | 2.149 | 1.433 | 249 | 1.192 |
| **America** | 1.362 | 4.043 | 41 | 3.642 | 2.133 | 2.957 | 4.289 | 1.630 | 13.092 |
| **Asia** | 1.180 | 2.775 | 269 | 2.674 | 3.233 | 2.973 | 864 | 490 | 2.764 |
| **Europe** | 1.014 | 2.313 | 19 | 8.031 | 2.247 | 2.491 | 5.504 | 725 | 16.503 |
| **Oceania** | 271 | 525 | 2 | 423 | 115 | 153 | 218 | 104 | 289 |
| **Total** | **5.245** | **14.963** | **532** | **15.429** | **9.374** | **10.723** | **12.308** | **3.198** | **33.840** |

**ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS**

**DEPENDENT ON THE**

**CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES**

**Vatica City (Agenzia Fides) –** The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples is at the service of the Holy Father the Pope as the “central body for promoting, directing and co-ordinating” the activity of evangelisation of peoples and missionary cooperation throughout the world (cfr, Ad gentes, 29; Pastor bonus, 85),

The Church down through the centuries, in obedience to the command received from Christ, has always proclaimed the Gospel to all peoples. In order to fulfil her missionary duty, in the face of growing demand for evangelisation in the 16th century, the Church set up special structures. In 1622 Pope Gregory XV instituted the “Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide”, with the task of “preaching and proclaiming the Gospel and Catholic doctrine in all missions”, giving the Congregation decision making powers to guarantee rapidity and effectiveness. In 1627 Pope Urban VIII founded the Urban College of Propaganda Fide for the formation of secular clergy for the mission and the Tipografia Poliglotta (Printing Press) to print documents and books in many different languages.

With the apostolic Constitution Pastor bonus, Pope John Paul II confirmed the general principle of jurisdiction laid down by the Second Vatican Council (cfr. Ad gentes, 29), which states: “The Congregation has the task of directing and co-ordinating activity for the evangelisation of peoples and for missionary cooperation” (85).

The main duties of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples include: ensure fair distribution of missionaries; formation for local secular clergy and catechists; involve Religious Institutes, Mission Societies, and local Churches in the task of evangelising mission territories.

The Cep is responsible for a total of 1.117 Ecclesiastical

Circumscriptions

**(updated to the latest change)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **MA** | **AD** | **D** | **TA** | **AV** | **AP** | **MsJ** | **TP** | **AA** | **OM** | **TOTAL** |
| **Africa** | 94 | 3 | 394 | - | 19 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 517 |
| **America** | 5 |  | 22 | - | 40 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 71 |
| **Asia** | 78 | 1 | 343 | 1 | 17 | 34 | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | 483 |
| **Oceania** | 11 |  | 31 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 46 |
| **TOTAL** | 188 | 4 | 790 | 1 | 76 | 39 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 1.117 |

Key: Metropolitan Arcidiocese (MA), Arcidiocese (AD), Diocese (D), Territorial Abbacy (TA), Apostolic Vicariate (AV), Apostolic Prefecture (AP), Missioni sui juris (MsJ), Territorial Prelature (TP), Apostolic Administration (AA), Military Ordinariate (OM).

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*Special feature prepared by S.L. Agenzia Fides, 24/10/2021*