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CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS 2022

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Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – As every year, in view of World Mission Sunday, which this year celebrates its 96th anniversary on Sunday, October 23, 2022, Fides New 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 December 31, 2020) 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 (2019), according to the comparison made by Fides News Service.

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

World Population

To December 31, 2020 the world population was **7.667.136.000**, with an increase of 89.359.000 units compared to the previous year. Population growth was registered, even this year, on every continent. Increases were registered above all in Asia (+39.670.000) and in Africa (+37.844.000), followed by America (+8.560.000), Europe (+2.657.000) and Oceania (+628.000).

Catholics

On the same date, December 31, 2020, Catholics in the world numbered **1.359.612.000** units with an overall increase of 15.209.000 units compared to the previous year. The increase affects all continents, except Oceania (-9.000). As in the past, increases were registered above all in Africa (+5.290.000) and in America (+6.463.000), followed by Asia (+2.731.000) and Europe (+734.000).

The world percentage of Catholics decreased slightly (-0,01) compared to the previous year reaching **17,73%**. The continents register slight variations, except Oceania which remains unvaried.

Persons and Catholics per priest

This year the number of persons per priest in the world increased by 95 units, average **14.948**. There are increases in Oceania (+349), America (+177) and Europe (+130). A decrease in Africa (-1.784) and Asia (-78).

The number of Catholics per priest in the world increased by 69 units, average **3.314**. There are increases in all continents: America (+117), Oceania (+53), Europe (+49), Asia (+15) and Africa (+3).

Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions increased by only 1 unit compared to the previous year, to **3.027**. New circumscriptions were created only in America (+2), while the number in all other continents remains unvaried, except in Asia, where there was a decrease of 1 unit.

Mission Stations with a resident priest number **3.284** (+67). Increases were registered in America (+149) and in Oceania (+6), decrease in Asia (-66), in Africa (-19) and in Europe (-3).

Mission Stations without a resident priest decreased by 253 units, reaching a total **131.154** with variations in all continents: decrease in America (-122), in Asia (-383), in Europe (-1), increase in Africa (+249) and in Oceania (+4).

Bishops

The total number of bishops in the world decreased by 1 unit, to **5.363**. Diocesan Bishops increased (+22) and Religious Bishops decreased (-23). Diocesan Bishops number **4.156**, while Religious Bishops number **1.207**.

Diocesan Bishops increase in America (+25) and in Asia (+2), while a decrease was registered in Europe (-4) and in Oceania (-1), unvaried in Africa. Religious Bishops decrease in all continents: America (-9), Asia (-7), Europe (-5), Africa (-2). Unvaried in Oceania.

Priests

The total number of priests in the world decreased to **410.219** (-4.117). The continent which registered a major decrease was again Europe (-4.374) as well as America (-1.421) and Oceania (-104). Increases were registered in Africa (+1.004) and in Asia (+778).

Diocesan priests in the world decreased by 1.615 units, reaching a total of **280.521**, with a decrease in Europe (-2.880), in America (-364) and in Oceania (-40). Increases were registered in Africa (+1.116) and in Asia (+553).

The number of Religious priests decreased by 2.502 units, to a total **129.698**. Increases were registered only in Asia (+225), decreases in Europe (-1.494), America (-1.057) Africa (-112), and Oceania (-64).

Permanent Deacons

Permanent deacons in the world continue to increase, this year reaching 397 units, to **48.635**. The highest increase was registered in America (+558) and in Oceania (+38), a decrease in Europe (-97), Asia (-62) and Africa (-40).

Permanent diocesan deacons in the world are **48.259**, with an overall increase of 656 units. Increase in America (+604), Oceania (+36), Asia (+17), Europe (+10), decrease only in Africa (-11).

Religious permanent deacons number **376**, with a decrease of 259 units compared to the previous year. Decreases in Europe (-107), Asia (-79), America (-46), Africa (-29), the only increase in Oceania (+2).

Men and women religious

The number of non-religious priests increased by 274 units, to **50.569**. Decreases were registered in America (-537) and in Oceania (-67). Increases in Europe (+428), Asia (+347) and in Africa (+103).

Even this year there is an overall decrease in the number of women religious by 10.553 units, to a total **619.546**. Increases were registered, once again, in Africa (+2.503) and in Asia (+364), decrease in Europe (-8.852), America (-4.326) and Oceania (-242).

Members of secular institutes, male and female

Members of male institutes number **583** (+1). A decrease only in Africa (-14), increases in America (+11) and in Asia (+4), unvaried in Europe and in Oceania.

Members of female institutes also decreased this year, by 947 units, to a total of **19.966** members. Increase in Africa (+60), while a decrease was registered in Europe (-924), in America (-81) and in Asia (-2), unvaried in Oceania.

Lay missionaries and Catechists

The number of lay missionaries in the world is **413.561**, with an overall increase of 3.121 units. The numbers registered are: Africa (+559), America (+3.535), Asia (+4.114), Europe (-5.064), Oceania (-23).

Catechists in the world decreased by 190.985 units, to a total **2.883.049**. Decreases were registered in America (-162.010), in Europe (-24.954), in Asia (-18.282) and in Oceania (-505). The only increase was registered in Africa (+14.766).

Major seminarians

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious decreased this year, they are globally 2.203 units, reaching a total **111.855**. Increases were registered only in Africa (+907), decreases in America (-1.261), Asia (-1.168), Europe (-680) and Oceania (-1).

Major diocesan seminarians number **67.987** (-622), and Religious major seminarians number **43.868** (-1.581). Major diocesan seminarians increased in Africa (+505) and Oceania (+9), while decreases were registered in America (-524), Europe (-497) and Asia (-115).

Religious major seminarians increase only in Africa (+402), while decrease in Asia (-1.053), America (-737), Europe (-183) and Oceania (-10).

Minor seminarians

The total number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious this year decrease for the fifth consecutive year by 1.592 units to **95.398**. Decreases were registered in America (-1.049), Asia (-644), Europe (-275), while increases were registered in Africa (+375) and in Oceania (+1).

Minor diocesan seminarians number **73.243** (-1.733) and religious seminarians number **22.155** (+141). The number of diocesan minor seminarians decreased as follows: Africa (-353), America (-803), Asia (-448), Europe (-122) and Oceania (-7).

Religious minor seminarians decreased in America (-246), Asia (-196) and in Europe (-153), while increases were registered in Africa (+728) and in Oceania (+8).

Catholic schools and education

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 72.785 kindergartens with 7.510.632 pupils; 99.668 primary schools with 34.614.488 pupils; 49.437 secondary schools with 19.252.704 pupils. The Church also cares 2.403.787 high school pupils and 3.771.946 university students.

Catholic charity and healthcare centres

Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church include: 5.322 hospitals, 14.415 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (4.956) and in America (3.785); 534 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (265) and Africa (210); 15.204 Homes for the elderly or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (7.953); 9.230 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3.201); 10.441 creches, mainly in Asia (2.801) and in America (2.816); 10.362 marriage counselling centres, mainly in Europe (5.279) and America (2.604); 3.137 social rehabilitation centres and 34.291 other kinds of institutes.

Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization

The Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization are **1.118**. Most of the ecclesiastical circumscriptions entrusted to the Dicastery are in Africa (518) 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	1.328.423.000 (+37.844.000)	256.840.000 (+5.290.000)	19,33% (-0,16)
America	1.022.967.000 (+8.560.000)	653.668.000 (+6.463.000)	63,90% (+0,1)
Asia	4.550.527.000 (+39.670.000)	151.867.000 (+2.731.000)	3,34% (+0,03)
Europe	723.056.000 (+2.657.000)	286.307.000 (+734.000)	39,60% (-0,04)
Oceania	42.163.000 (+628.000)	10.930.000 (-9.000)	25,92% (-0,42)
Total	7.667.136.000 (+89.359.000)	1.359.612.000 (+15.209.000)	17,73% (-0,01)

PERSONS/CATHOLICS PER PRIEST

Continent	Persons per priest	Catholics per priest
Africa	24.309 (-1.784)	5.089 (+3)
America	8.505 (+177)	5.435 (+117)
Asia	43.880 (-78)	2.138 (+15)
Europe	4.410 (+130)	1.746 (+49)
Oceania	9.378 (+349)	2.431 (+53)
Total	14.948 (+95)	3.314 (+69)

ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS – MISSION STATIONS

Continent	Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions	Mission Stations with resident priest	Mission Stations without resident priest
Africa	543 (=)	600 (-19)	72.947 (+249)
America	1.097 (+2)	1.112 (+149)	20.276 (-122)
Asia	545 (-1)	1.093 (-66)	36.630 (-383)
Europe	761 (=)	391 (-3)	461 (-1)

Oceania	81 (=)	88 (+6)	840 (+4)
Total	3.027 (+1)	3.284 (+67)	131.154 (-253)

BISHOPS

Continent	Total Bishops	Diocesan Bishops	Religious Bishops
Africa	718 (-2)	516 (=)	202 (-2)
America	2.022 (+16)	1.478 (+25)	544 (-9)
Asia	810 (-5)	635 (+2)	175 (-7)
Europe	1.678 (-9)	1.440 (-4)	238 (-5)
Oceania	135 (-1)	87 (-1)	48 (=)
Total	5.363 (-1)	4.156 (+22)	1.207 (-23)

PRIESTS

Continent	Total Priests	Diocesan Priests	Religious Priests
Africa	50.465 (+1.004)	35.561 (+1.116)	14.904 (-112)
America	120.272 (-1.421)	85.052 (-364)	35.220 (-1.057)
Asia	71.032 (+778)	40.230 (+553)	30.802 (+225)
Europe	163.954 (-4.374)	116.989 (-2.880)	46.965 (-1.494)
Oceania	4.496 (-104)	2.689 (-40)	1.807 (-64)
Total	410.219 (-4.117)	280.521 (-1.615)	129.698 (-2.502)

PERMANENT DEACONS

Continent	Total Permanent Deacons	Diocesan Permanent Deacons	Religious Permanent Deacons
Africa	439 (-40)	426 (-11)	13 (-29)
America	32.226 (+558)	32.075 (+604)	151 (-46)
Asia	281 (-62)	252 (+17)	29 (-79)
Europe	15.170 (-97)	14.992 (+10)	178 (-107)

Oceania	519 (+38)	514 (+36)	5 (+2)
Total	48.635 (+397)	48.259 (+656)	376 (-259)

MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS

Continent	Men Religious	Women Religious
Africa	9.188 (+103)	79.557 (+2.503)
America	13.198 (-537)	150.391 (-4.326)
Asia	12.604 (+347)	175.128 (+364)
Europe	14.466 (+428)	207.994 (-8.852)
Oceania	1.113 (-67)	6.476 (-242)
Total	50.569 (+274)	619.546 (-10.553)

MEMBERS OF SECULAR INSTITUTES

Continent	Members of Secular Institutes Male	Members of Secular Institutes Female
Africa	58 (-14)	1.262 (+60)
America	181 (+11)	5.044 (-81)
Asia	47 (+4)	1.841 (-2)
Europe	296 (=)	11.789 (-924)
Oceania	1 (=)	30 (=)
Total	583 (+1)	19.966 (-947)

LAY MISSIONARIES, CATECHISTS

Continent	Lay Missionaries	Catechists
Africa	8.561 (+559)	453.985 (+14.766)
America	352.397 (+3.535)	1.559.772 (-162.010)
Asia	45.684 (+4.114)	372.183 (-18.282)

Europe	6.769 (-5.064)	483.696 (-24.954)
Oceania	150 (-23)	13.413 (-505)
Total	413.561 (+3.121)	2.883.049 (-190.985)

MAJOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

Continent	Total Major Seminarrians	Diocesan Major Seminarrians	Religious Major Seminarrians
Africa	33.628 (+907)	22.205 (+505)	11.423 (+402)
America	29.403 (-1.261)	20.596 (-524)	8.807 (-737)
Asia	32.653 (-1.168)	15.732 (-115)	16.921 (-1.053)
Europe	15.208 (-680)	8.854 (-497)	6.354 (-183)
Oceania	963 (-1)	600 (+9)	363 (-10)
Total	111.855 (-2.203)	67.987 (-622)	43.868 (-1.581)

MINOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

Continent	Total Minor Seminarrians	Diocesan Minor Seminarrians	Religious Minor Seminarrians
Africa	52.411 (+375)	45.531 (-353)	6.880 (+728)
America	10.143 (-1.049)	7.289 (-803)	2.854 (-246)
Asia	24.742 (-644)	15.190 (-448)	9.552 (-196)
Europe	7.902 (-275)	5.058 (-122)	2.844 (-153)
Oceania	200 (+1)	175 (-7)	25 (+8)
Total	95.398 (-1.592)	73.243 (-1.733)	22.155(+141)

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PUPILS

	INFANT Schools	INFANT Pupils	PRIMARY Schools	PRIMARY Pupils	SECONDARY Schools	SECONDARY Pupils	HIGH SCHOOL Pupils	UNIVERSIT. Students
Africa	19.872	2.437.885	42.435	18.810.233	15.407	5.409.351	174.567	211.581
America	16.353	1.141.880	21.258	5.577.998	12.141	3.444.028	685.777	2.262.386
Asia	13.718	1.998.386	16.121	6.345.975	11.714	6.017.621	1.253.370	460.761
Europe	21.373	1.858.098	15.566	3.054.769	9.413	3.868.937	280.730	795.650
Oceania	1.469	74.383	4.288	825.513	762	512.767	9.343	41.568
Total	72.785	7.510.632	99.668	34.614.488	49.437	19.252.704	2.403.787	3.771.946

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	1.491	4.956	210	661	1.639	2.153	1.396	371	1.184
America	1.373	3.785	39	3.467	2.099	2.816	2.604	1.372	13.346
Asia	1.183	2.692	265	2.716	3.201	2.801	845	501	2.937
Europe	1.004	2.438	19	7.953	2.195	2.503	5.279	815	16.535
Oceania	271	544	1	407	96	168	238	78	289
Total	5.322	14.415	534	15.204	9.230	10.441	10.362	3.137	34.291

ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS DEPENDENT ON THE DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION

The Dicastery is responsible for a total of 1.118 Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions

Continent	MA	AD	D	TA	AV	AP	MsJ	TP	AA	MO	TOTAL
Africa	94	3	395	0	19	3	1	0	0	3	518
America	5		22	0	40	1	2	1	0	0	71
Asia	78	1	343	1	17	34	3	0	4	2	483
Oceania	11		31	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	46
TOTAL	188	4	791	1	76	39	8	1	4	6	1118

Key: **MA** Metropolitan Arcidiocese, **AD** Arcidiocese, **D** Diocese, **TA** Territorial Abbacy, **AV** Apostolic Vicariate, **AP** Apostolic Prefecture, **MsI** Missio sui Juris, **TP** Territorial Prelature, **AA** Apostolic Administration, **MO** Military Ordinariate.

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