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CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS 2020

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – As every year, in view of World Mission Day, which this year celebrates its 94th anniversary on Sunday, October 18, 2020, 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 2018) 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 (2017), 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 31 December 2018 the world population was **7.496.394.000**, with an increase of **88.020.000** units compared to the previous year. Population growth, almost half compared to the previous year, was registered on every continent, including Europe. Increases were registered above all in Asia (+41.641.000) and in Africa (+36.549.000), followed by America (+7.949.000), Europe (+1.165.000) and Oceania (+716.000).

Catholics

On the same date, December 2018, Catholics in the world numbered **1.328.993.000** units with an overall increase of 15.716.000 compared to the previous year. The increase affects all continents, including Europe (+94.000), which confirms its third year of growth. As in the past, increases were registered above all in Africa (+9.208.000) and in America (+4.458.000), followed by Asia (+1.779.000) and Oceania (+177.000).

The world percentage of Catholics remains unvaried compared to the previous year, settling at **17,73%**. With regards to the continents, a slight increase was registered in Africa (+0,18) and Asia (+0,01), decrease in America (-0,06), Europe (-0,05) and Oceania (-0,03).

Persons and catholics per priest

This year the number of persons per priest in the world increased by 170 units, average **14.638**. There are increases in America (+72) and Oceania (+64). A decrease in Asia (-38), Europe (-34) and Africa (-1).

The number of Catholics per priest in the world increased by 42 units, almost the same as the previous year (+38), average **3.210**. There are increases in Africa (+46), America (+40), Europe (+26), Oceania (+15). The number of persons per priest in Asia remains unvaried.

Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions increased by 8 units compared to the previous year, to **3.025**. New circumscriptions were created in America (+5), Asia (+2), Europe (+1), while the number in Africa (541) and Oceania (81) remains unvaried.

Mission Stations with a resident priest number **2.916** (+257). Increases were registered in Africa (+179), in Asia (+139) and in Oceania (+10). Decrease was registered in America (-71), unvaried in Europe.

Mission Stations without a resident priest decreased by 548 units, reaching a total 137.243 with variations in all continents: decrease in Africa (-503), in Asia (-467), in Europe (-7); increase in America (+409) and in Oceania (+20).

Bishops

The total number of Bishops in the world decreased by 12 units, to **5.377**. Diocesan Bishops increased (+6) and Religious Bishops decrease (-18). Diocesan Bishops number **4.122**, while Religious Bishops number **1.255**.

Diocesan Bishops increase in Asia (+17) and in Oceania (+1), decrease in America (-9), Africa (-2) and Europe (-1). Religious Bishops increase only in Oceania (+1), while decrease in Africa (-5), in America (-10), Asia (-2) and Europe (-2).

Priests

The total number of priests in the world also decreased this year, to **414.065** (-517). The continent which registered a major decrease was again Europae (-2.675) as well as America (-104). Increased were registered in Africa (+1.391), Asia (+823) and Oceania (+48).

Diocesan priests in the world increased by 64 units, reaching a total of **281.874**, with a decrease again in Europa (-1.595), to which is added Oceania (-16). Increases were registered in Africa (+904), Asia (+686), America (+85).

The number of Religious priests decreased by 581 units, to a total **132.191**. Increases were registered as in recent years in Africa (+487), in Asia (+137) and in Oceania (+64), whereas numbers dropped in Europe (-1.080) and in America (-189).

Permanent Deacons

Permanent deacons in the world continue to increase, this year reaching 610 units, to **47.504**. The highest increase was registered again in America (+293), followed by Europe (+271), Oceania (+25), Africa (+13) and Asia (+8).

Permanent diocesan deacons in the world are **46.813**, with an overall increase of 621 units. They increase on every continent except in Asia (-4): Europa (+299), America (+297), Oceania (+26), Africa (+3).

Religious permanent deacons number **691**, with a decrease by 11 units compared to the previous year. Decreases in Europe (-28), America (-4) and Oceania (-1), increases in Asia (+12) and Africa (+10).

Men and Women religious

The number of non-religious priests decreased for the sixth consecutive year, by 594 units, to **50.941**. A decrease was registered in Europe (-591), America (-290) and Oceania (-17). Increases in Africa (+217) and Asia (+87).

Even this year there is an overall decrease in the number of women religious, by 7.249 units, like the previous year, to a total **641.661**. An increase, once again was registered, in Africa (+2.220) and in Asia (+1.218), decrease in Europe (-7.167), America (-3.253) and Oceania (-267).

Members of secular institutes, male and female

Members of male institutes number **614**, and increase (+29), in contrast with previous years. A particular increase was registered in Europe (+16), America (+15); Asia (+5), decrease in Africa (-7), unvaried in Oceania.

Members of female institutes decreased this year, by 591 units, to a total of **21.466** members. Increase in Asia (+32), Africa (+10), while a decrease was registered in Europe (-501), in America (-130) and in Oceania (-2).

Lay missionaries and Catechists

The number of lay missionaries in the world is **376.188**, with an overall increase of 20.388 units, in Europe (+128), America (+8.129), Asia (+12.433), decrease in Oceania (-12) and in Africa (-290).

Catechists in the world decreased by 43.697 units, to a total **3.076.624**. Decreases were registered in America (-40.846), Europe (-9.418), Oceania (-321), increases were registered in Africa (+5.133) and in Asia (+1.755).

Major seminarians

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious, increased this year, they are globally 552 units, reaching a total of **115.880**. Increases were registered in Africa (+964), in Asia (+354) and in Oceania (+52). Decrease in Europe (-696) and in America (-122).

Major diocesan seminarians number **69.959** (-747 compared to the previous year) and Religious major seminarians **45.921** (+1.299). Diocesan seminarians increases were registered only in Africa (+450), while decreases were registered in Europe (-653), America (-296), in Asia (-227) and in Oceania (-21).

Religious seminarians increase in Africa (+514), in Asia (+581), in America (+174) and in Oceania (+73), while a decrease was only registered in Europe (-43).

Minor seminarians

The total number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious this year decrease for the third consecutive year by 617 units to **100.164**. Overall decrease on all continents except Asia (+340): in America (-529), Africa (-226), Europe (-169) and in Oceania (-33).

Minor diocesan seminarians number **77.515** (-821) and religious seminarians number **22.649** (+204). The number of diocesan minor seminarians increased only in Asia (+178). Decrease in Africa (-406), America (-528), Europe (-50) in Oceania (-15).

Religious minor seminarians decreased in Europe (-119), Oceania (-18) and America (-1), while an increase was registered in Africa (+180) and in Asia (+162).

Catholic schools and education

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 73.164 kindergartens with 7.376.858 pupils; 103.146 primary schools with 35.011.999 pupils; 49.541 secondary schools with 19.307.298 pupils. The Church also cares 2.251.600 high school pupils, and 3.707.559 university students.

Catholic charity and healthcare centres

Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church include: 5.192 hospitals, most of them in Africa (1.404) and in America (1.365); 15.481 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (5.427), America (4.269); 577 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (316) and Africa (209); 15.423 Homes for the elderly, or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8.123) and in America (3.692); 9.295 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3.197) and in Europe (2.278); 10.747 creches, mainly in Asia (3.013) and in America (2.992); 12.515 marriage counselling centres, mainly in Europe (5.624) and America (4.332); 3.225 social rehabilitation centres and 31.091 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 **1.119**. Most of the ecclesiastical circumscriptions entrusted to Propaganda Fide are in Africa (516) and in Asia (484), followed by America (73) and Oceania (46). (Agenzia Fides, 18/10/2020)

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	1.257.219.000 (+36.549.000)	243.248.000 (+9.208.000)	19,35% (+0,18)
America	1.007.434.000 (+7.949.000)	641.832.000 (+4.458.000)	63,71% (-0,06)
Asia	4.470.423.000 (+41.641.000)	147.227.000 (+1.779.000)	3,29% (+0,01)
Europe	720.242.000 (+1.165.000)	285.865.000 (+94.000)	39,69% (-0,05)
Oceania	41.076.000 (+716.000)	10.821.000 (+177.000)	26,34% (-0,03)
Total	7.496.394.000 (+88.020.000)	1.328.993.000 (+15.716.000)	17,73% (=)

PERSONS/CATHOLICS PER PRIEST

Continent	Persons per priest	Catholics per priest
Africa	26.295 (-1)	5.088 (+46)
America	8.232 (+72)	5.244 (+40)
Asia	44.723 (-38)	2.157 (=)
Europe	4.108 (-34)	1.672 (+26)
Oceania	8.798 (+64)	2.318 (+15)
Total	14.638 (+170)	3.210 (+42)

ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS-MISSION STATIONS

Continent	Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions	Mission Stations with resident priest	Mission Stations without resident priest
Africa	541 (=)	481 (+179)	77.080 (-503)
America	1.098 (+5)	907 (-71)	21.511 (+409)
Asia	545 (+2)	1071 (+139)	37.371 (-467)
Europe	760 (+1)	388 (=)	520 (-7)
Oceania	81 (=)	69 (+10)	761 (+20)
Total	3.025 (+8)	2.916 (+257)	137.243 (-548)

BISHOPS

Continent	Total Bishops	Diocesan Bishops	Religious Bishops
Africa	715 (-7)	505 (-2)	210 (-5)
America	2.023 (-19)	1.463 (-9)	560 (-10)
Asia	815 (+15)	628 (+17)	187 (-2)
Europe	1.687 (-3)	1.440 (-1)	247 (-2)
Oceania	137 (+2)	86 (+1)	51 (+1)
Total	5.377 (-12)	4.122 (+6)	1.255 (-18)

PRIESTS

Continent	Total Priests	Diocesan priests	Religious priests
Africa	47.812 (+1391)	33.384 (+904)	14.428 (+487)
America	122.383 (-104)	85.318 (+85)	37.065 (-189)
Asia	68.265 (+823)	39.108 (+686)	29.157 (+137)
Europe	170.936 (-2.675)	121.305 (-1.595)	49.631 (-1.080)
Oceania	4.669 (+48)	2.759 (-16)	1.910 (+64)
Total	414.065 (-517)	281.874 (+64)	132.191 (-581)

PERMANENT DEACONS

Continent	Total Permanent deacons	Diocesan Permanent deacons	Religious Permanent deacons
Africa	478 (+13)	433 (+3)	45 (+10)
America	31.106 (+293)	30.917 (+297)	189 (-4)
Asia	354 (+8)	217 (-4)	137 (+12)
Europe	15.090 (+271)	14.775 (+299)	315 (-28)
Oceania	476 (+25)	471 (+26)	5 (-1)
Total	47.504 (+610)	46.813 (+621)	691 (-11)

MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS

Continent	Men Religious	Women Religious
Africa	8.996 (+217)	76.219 (+2.220)
America	14.125 (-290)	160.032 (-3.253)
Asia	12.280 (+87)	174.165 (+1.218)
Europe	14.274 (-591)	224.246 (-7.167)
Oceania	1.266 (-17)	6.999 (-267)
Total	50.941 (-594)	641.661 (-7.249)

MEMBERS OF SECULAR INSTITUTES

Continent	Members of secular institutes Male	Members of secular institutes Female
Africa	79 (-7)	1.172 (+10)
America	183 (+15)	5.235 (-130)
Asia	53 (+5)	1.947 (+32)
Europe	298 (+16)	13.078 (-501)
Oceania	1 (=)	34 (-2)
Total	614 (+29)	21.466 (-591)

LAY MISSIONARIES, CATECHISTS

Continent	Lay missionaries	Catechists
Africa	7.436 (-290)	432.411 (+5.133)
America	314.932 (+8.129)	1.737.433 (-40.846)
Asia	42.120 (+12.433)	378.069 (+1.755)
Europe	11.556 (+128)	514.308 (-9.418)
Oceania	144 (-12)	14.403 (-321)
Total	376.188 (+20.388)	3.076.624 (-43.697)

MAJOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

Continenti	Total Major Seminarians	Diocesan Major seminarians	Religious Major seminarians
Africa	32.212 (+964)	21.476 (+450)	10.736 (+514)
America	31.414 (-122)	21.904 (-296)	9.510 (+174)
Asia	34.719 (+354)	15.949 (-227)	18.770 (+581)
Europe	16.518 (-696)	10.039 (-653)	6.479 (-43)
Oceania	1.017 (+52)	591 (-21)	426 (+73)
Total	115.880 (+552)	69.959 (-747)	45.921 (+1.299)

MINOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

Continent	Total Minor Seminarians	Diocesan Minor seminarians	Religious Minor seminarians
Africa	53.555 (-226)	47.189 (-406)	6.366 (+180)
America	12.106 (-529)	8.882 (-528)	3.224 (-1)
Asia	25.406 (+340)	15.890 (+178)	9.516 (+162)
Europe	8.920 (-169)	5.394 (-50)	3.526 (-119)
Oceania	177 (-33)	160 (-15)	17 (-18)
Total	100.164 (-617)	77.515 (-821)	22.649 (+204)

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PUPILS

	INFANT schools	INFANT pupils	PRIMARY schools	PRIMARY pupils	SECONDARY schools	SECONDARY pupils	High school pupils	UNIVERSIT. students
Africa	18.871	2.326.995	44.745	19.365.093	15.841	5.462.756	137.160	177.503
America	16.811	1.235.328	22.370	6.143.696	12.147	3.683.960	591.883	2.187.004
Asia	13.895	1.846.238	16.187	5.608.750	11.429	5.993.351	1.205.554	518.167
Europe	22.066	1.890.043	15.677	3.126.746	9.400	3.657.666	308.453	787.953
Oceania	1.521	78.254	4.167	767.714	724	509.565	8.550	36.932
Total	73.164	7.376.858	103.146	35.011.999	49.541	19.307.298	2.251.600	3.707.559

HOSPITALS/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	1.404	5.427	209	666	1.616	2.163	1.434	274	1.195
America	1.365	4.269	33	3.692	2.097	2.992	4.332	1.618	11.818
Asia	1.160	2.916	316	2.622	3.197	3.013	896	554	2.432
Europe	992	2.311	18	8.123	2.278	2.440	5.624	691	15.374
Oceania	271	558	1	320	107	139	229	88	272
Total	5.192	15.481	577	15.423	9.295	10.747	12.515	3.225	31.091

ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS DEPENDENT ON THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES

Vatican 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).

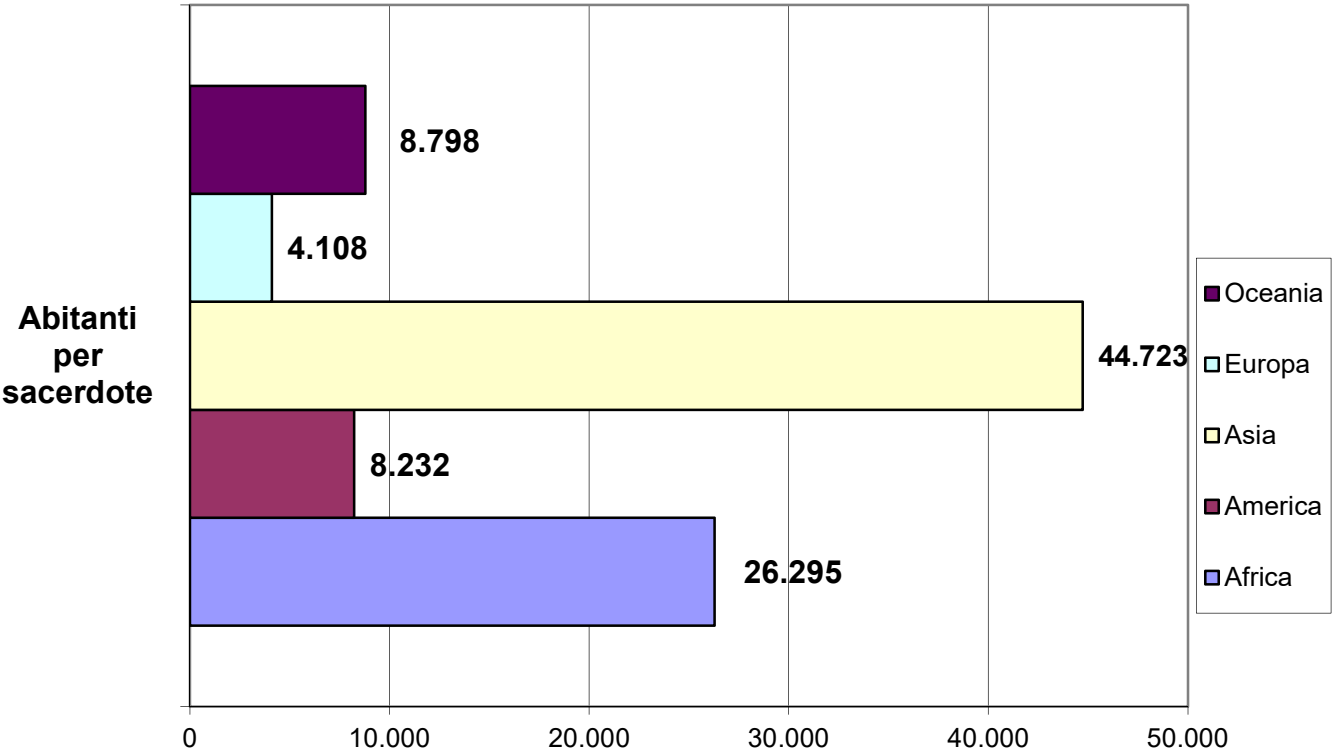
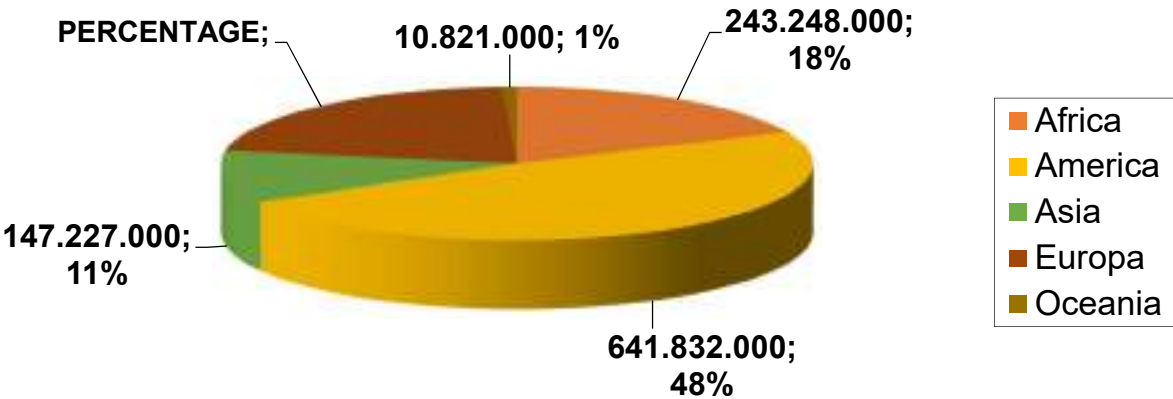
The main duties of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples include: ensure fair distribution of missionaries; formation for local secular clergy and catechists; involve Religious Institutes, Mission Societies, and local Churches in the task of evangelising mission territories.

The CEP is responsible for a total number of 1.119 Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions (to 16 june 2020)

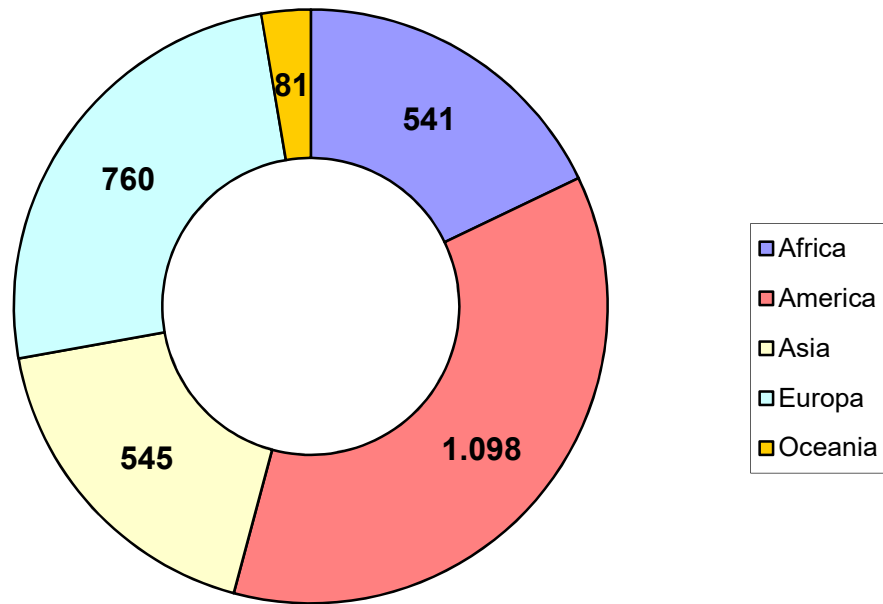
Continent	AD	D	AT	VA	PA	M	PT	AA	OM	TOTALE
Africa	96	395	-	19	2	1	-	-	3	516
America	7	22	-	40	1	2	1	-	-	73
Asia	78	344	1	17	34	3	-	5	2	484
Oceania	11	31	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	46
TOTAL	192	792	1	76	38	8	1	5	6	1.119

Key: Archdiocese (AD), Diocese (D), Territorial Abbacy (TA), Apostolic Vicariate (AV), Apostolic Prefecture (AP), Mission sui juris (M), Territorial Prelature (TP), Apostolic administration (AA), Military Ordinariate (MO).

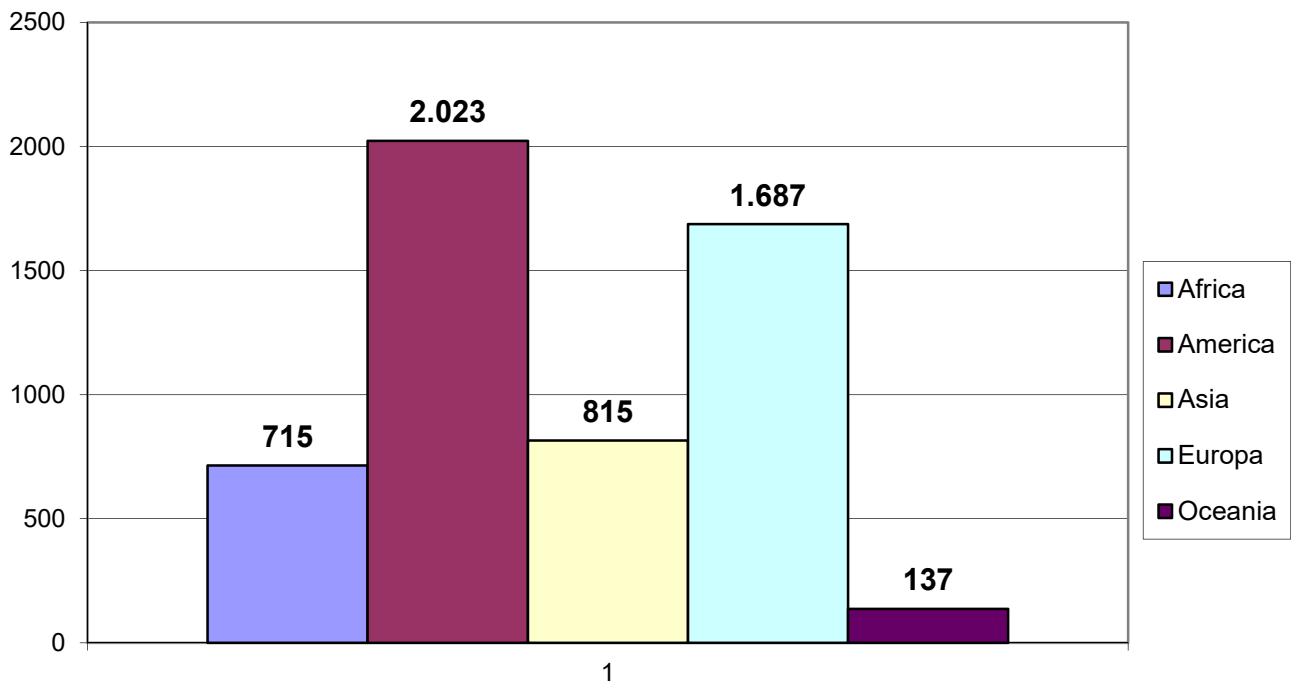
World population - Catholics: total 1.328.993.000



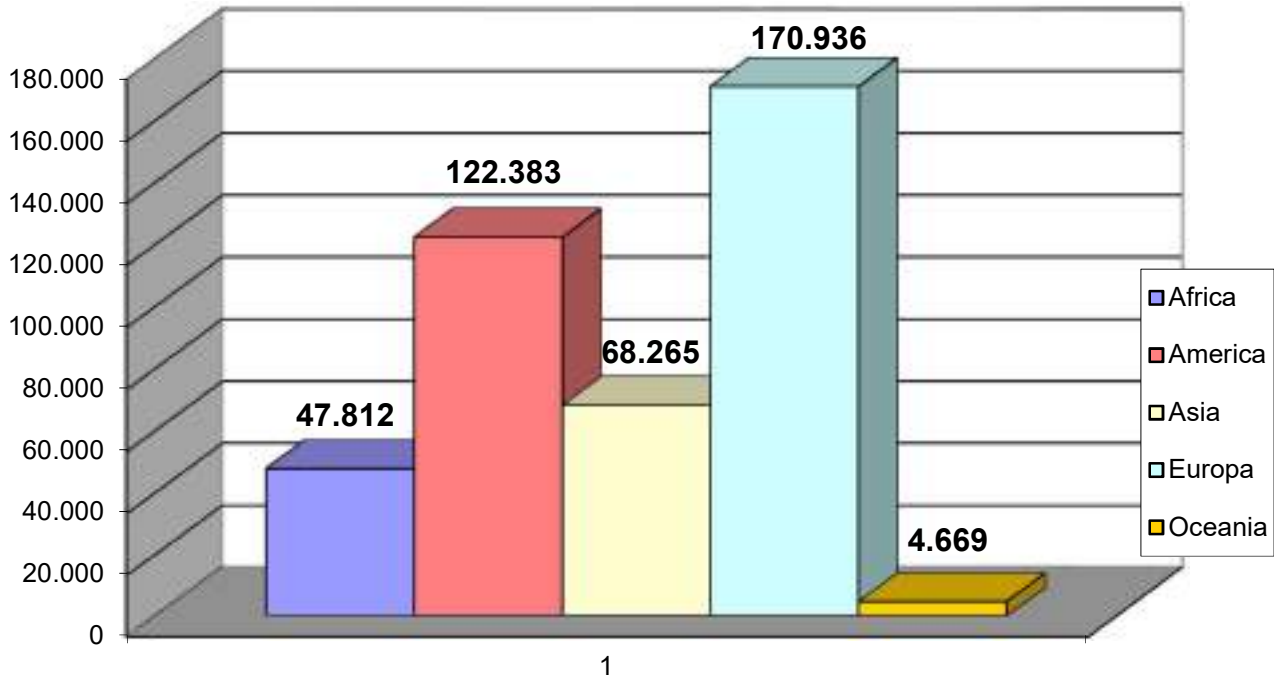
Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions : total 3.025



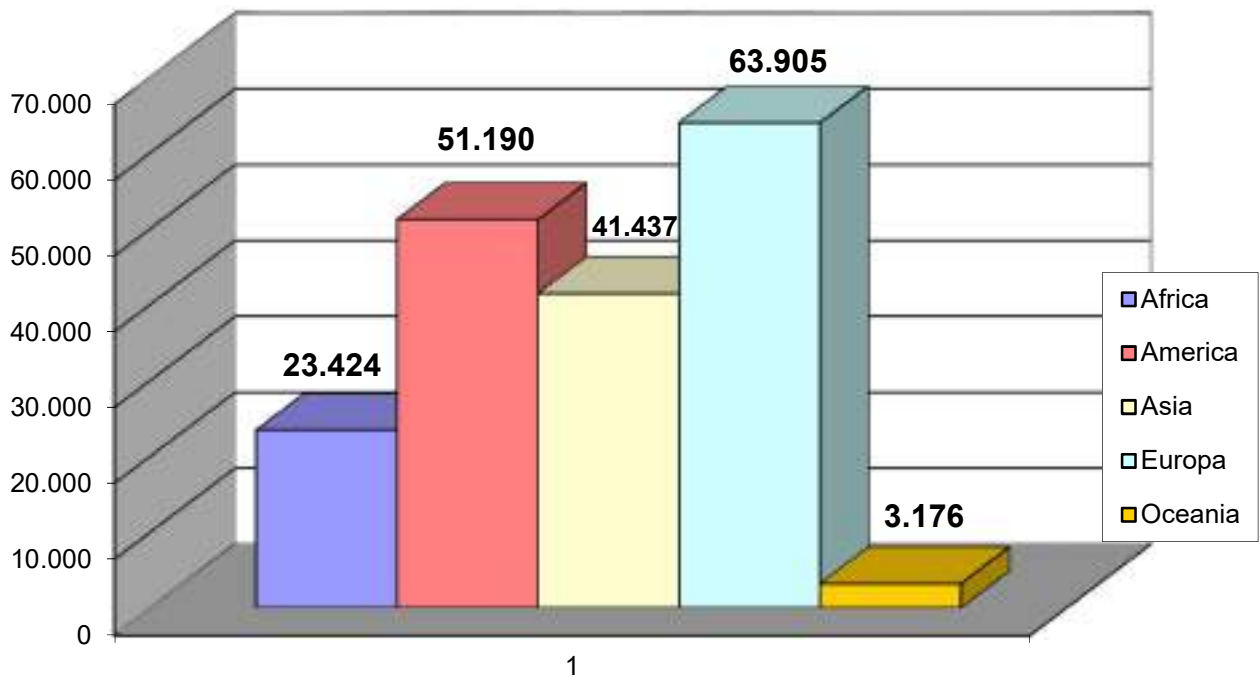
Bishops in the world: total 5.377



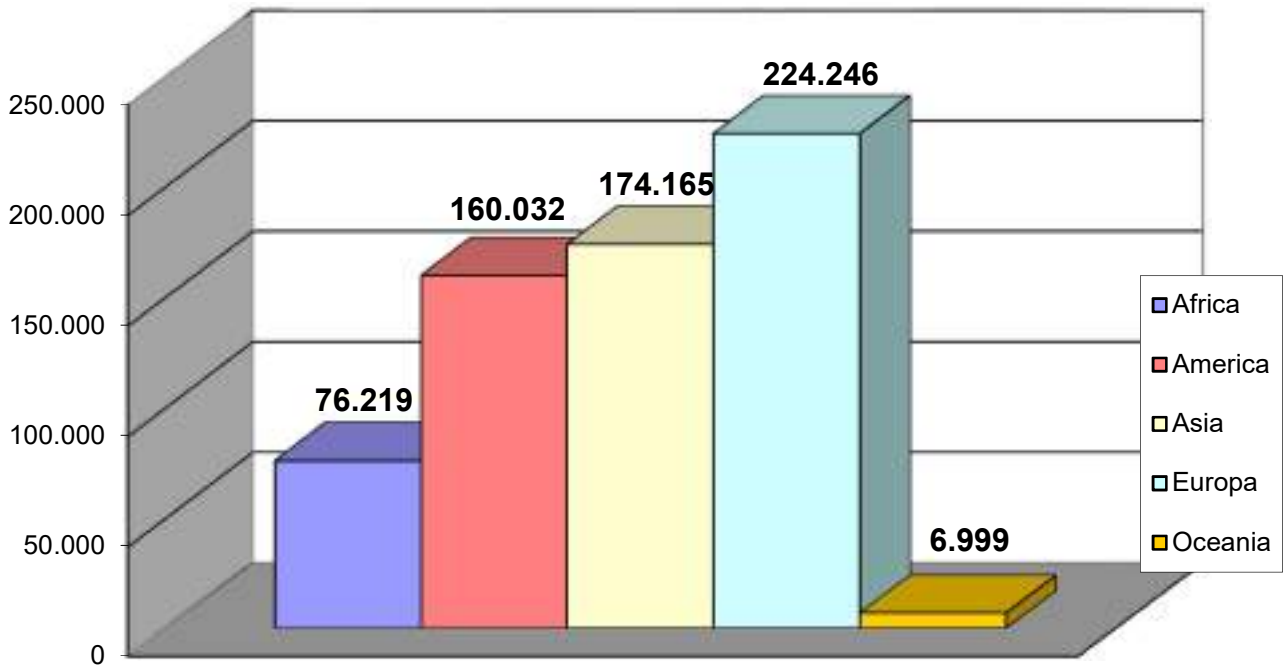
Catholic priests in the world: total 414.065



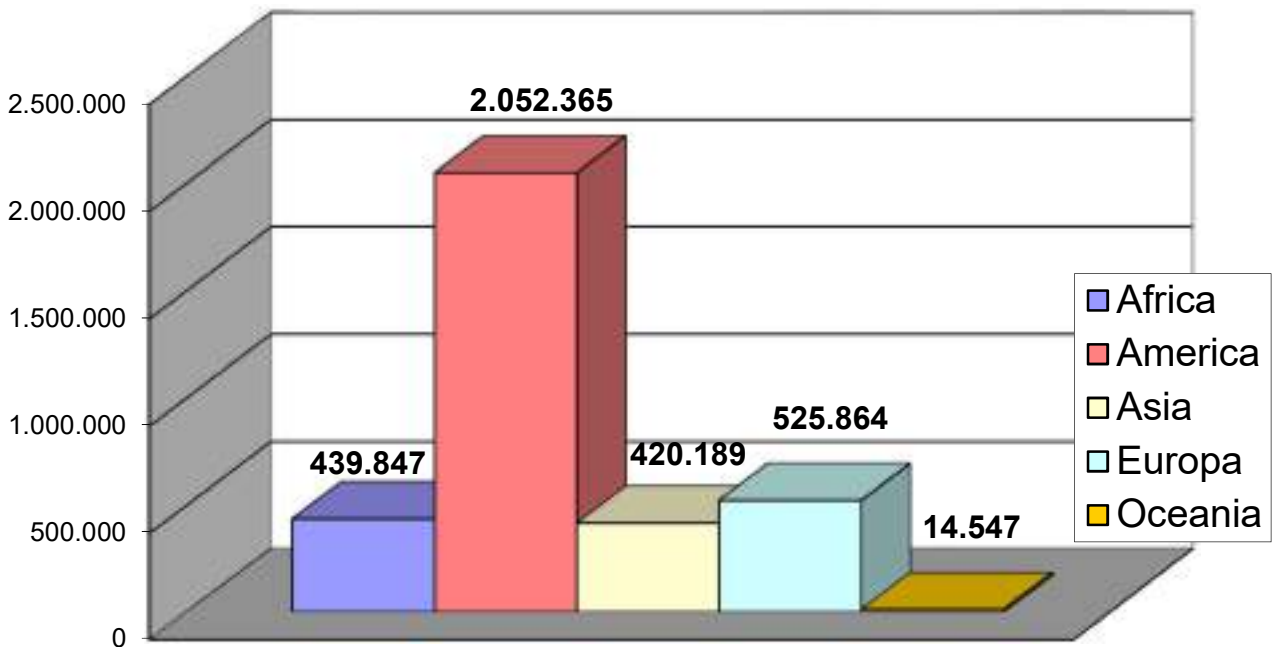
Religious in the world: total 183.132



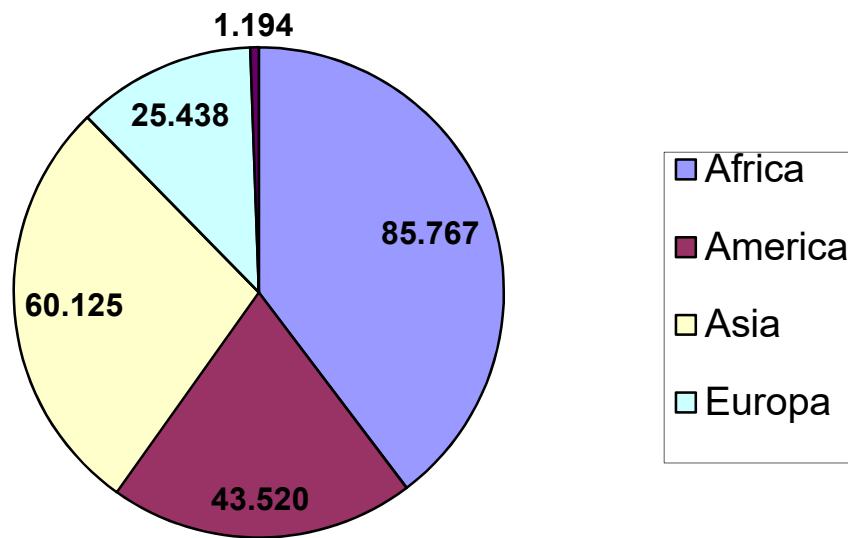
Women Religious in the world: total 641.661



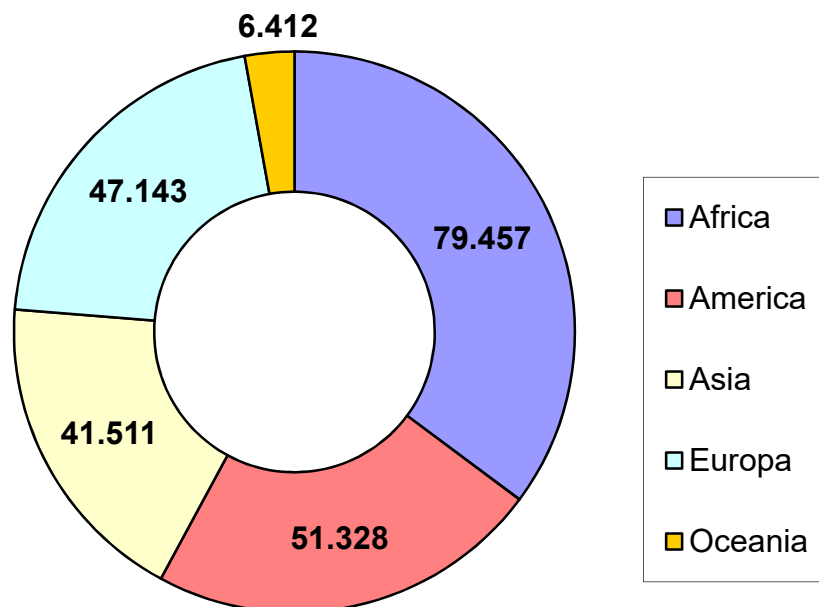
Lay missionaries and Catechists in the world: total 3.452.812



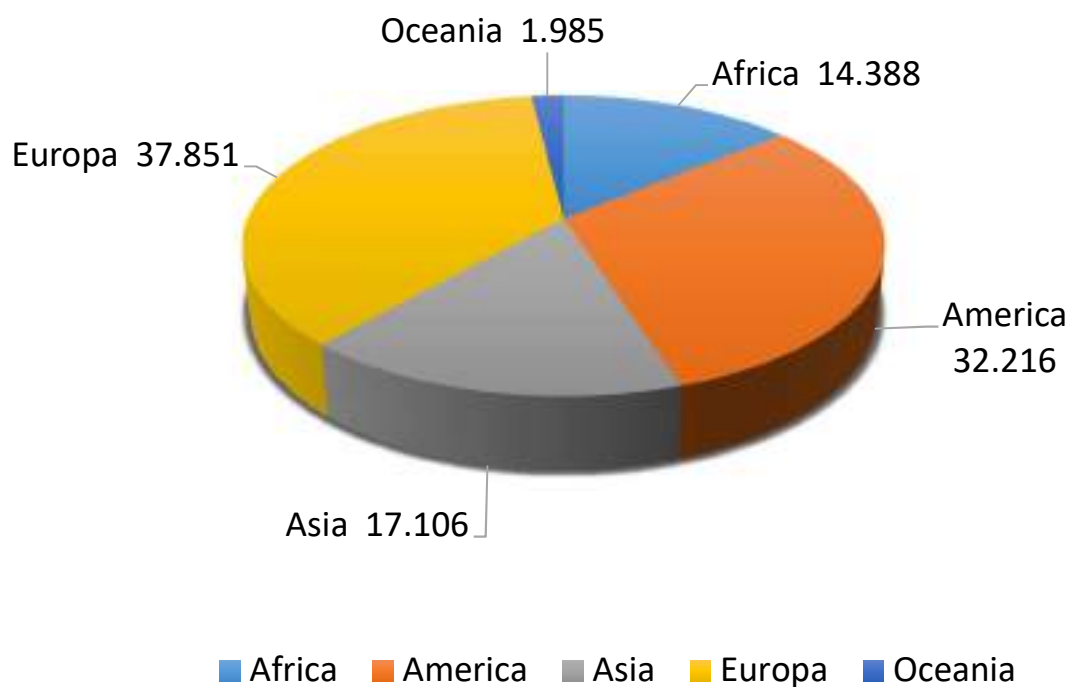
Seminarians in the world: total 216.044



Catholic schools and pupils (total kindergarten, primary, secondary schools: 225.851)



Catholic institutes for healthcare, social assistance, charity work: total 103.546



Graphics elaborated by Agenzia Fides

(Agenzia Fides, 18/10/2020)