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Special Issue - VATICAN - World Mission Day: Catholic Church Statistics

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - As every year, on the occasion of World Mission Sunday, October 23 this year, 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 lastest edition of the "Church's Book of Statistics" published (updated to December 31, 2009) regarding members of the Church, church structures in the field of pastoral care, healthcare, welfare and education. Please note that variations, increase or decrease, emerging from our own comparison with last year's figures, are marked increase (+) or decrease (-).

World Population

To December 31, 2009 the world population was equal to 6.777.599.000 people, with an increase of 79.246 million units compared with the previous year. Population growth was registered on every continent: Africa (+19,983,000); America (+8,744,000); Asia (+47,702, 000); Oceania (+967,000); Europe (+1,850,000) .

Catholics.

On the same date Catholics in the world numbered 1,180,665,000 units with an overall increase of 14,951,000 units more than the previous year. The increase affects all continents: Africa (+6,530,000); America (+5,863,000); Asia (+1,814,000); Europe (+597,000), Oceania (+147,000). The World percentage of Catholics increased by 0.02%, settling at 17.42%. By continent: increases were registered in Africa (+0.3); America (+0.04) and Asia (+ 0.01), a drop in numbers was registered, like last year, in Europe (- 0.02) and Oceania (- 0.3).

Persons and Catholics per priest:

This year again the number of persons per priest in the world increased by 139 units, average 13,154. The distribution by continent: increase in America (+70), Europe (+42) and Oceania (+181), and a drop in numbers in Africa (-313) and Asia (-628). The number of Catholics per priest in the world increased by 27 units, average 2,876. We have increases on every continent except Asia: Africa (+25); America (+32); Asia (-30); Europe (+16); Oceania (+25).

Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations:

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions increased by 11 more than the previous year to 2,956, with new circumscriptions created in: Africa (+3), America (+2), Asia (+6). Mission stations with a resident priest 1850 (185 more than in the previous year) and increases registered in Africa (+280) and America (+94). Decreases in Asia (-69), Europe (-110) and Oceania (-10). Mission Stations without a resident priest increased in number by 5,459 units, to 130,948. Increases registered in Africa (+2,143), America (+2,131), Asia (+937) and Oceania (+278), decreases in Europe (-30).

Bishops

The total number of Bishops in the world increased by 63 units, to 5,065. Overall the increase in numbers regard both diocesan and religious Bishops. Diocesan Bishops number 3,828 (42 more than in the previous year); Religious Bishops number 1,237 (21 more). The increase in diocesan Bishops is registered on every continent: Africa (+2), America (+19), Asia (+1), Europe (+17), Oceania (+3). The only decrease in religious Bishops was registered in Oceania (-1), the increase was registered in Africa (+10), America (+4), Asia (+5) and Europe (+3).

Priests

The total number of priests in the world increased by 1,427 units more than in the previous year, to 410,593. The only continent which registered a decrease was once again Europe (-1,674), wheras figures grew in Africa (+1155), America (+413), Asia (+1519) and Oceania (+14). Diocesan priests increased by 1,535 units, reaching a total of +275,542, with increases in Africa (+888), America (+946), Asia (+780) and Oceania (+26) but numbers dropped in Europe (-1105). The number of Religious priests decreased by 108 units to a total of 135,051. Increases, following the trend of recent years are Africa (+267) and Asia (+739), but decreases affect America (-533), Europe (-569) and Oceania (-12) .

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Permanent Deacons

Permanent deacons in the world increased by 952 units, reaching 38,155. The greatest increase is once again in America (+552) and Europe (+326), followed by Oceania (+57) and Asia (+23). The only decrease was registered in Africa (-6). Diocesan permanent deacons are 37,592 in the world, with an overall increase of 1,053 units. They increased on every continent except Africa (-2), precisely: America (+623), Asia (+15), Europe (+359) and Oceania (+58). Religious permanent deacons are 563, decreased by 101 units compared to the previous year, with the only increase in Asia (+8) and decreases in Africa (-4), America (-71), Europe (-33), Oceania (-1).

Men and women religious

The non-religious priests decreased globally by 412 units to 54,229. Increases were registered only in Africa (+294), but decreases in America (-195), Asia (-60), Europe (-445) and Oceania (-6). This confirms the overall decrease in the number of women religious (-9697) that are a total of 729,371, divided as follows: This year we also confirm the increase in Africa (+1249) and Asia (+1399), decrease in America (-4681), Europe (-7468) and Oceania (-196).

Members of Secular Institutes, male and female

Members of male secular institutes number 737 with an overall decrease of 6 units. At the continental level there is an increase in Africa (+5) and America (+3), Oceania unvaried, while there is a decrease in Asia (-1) and Europe (-13). The female members of secular institutes have also decreased this year, a total of 386 units, for a number of 26,260 members. An increase in Africa (+37), Asia (+180) and Oceania (+1), decrease in America (-30) and Europe (-574).

Lay missionaries and catechists

The number of lay missionaries in the world is 320,226 units, with an overall increase of 3,390 units and increase in Africa (+736), Asia (+3774) and Europe (+428). Decreases were recorded in America (-1531) and Oceania (-17). Catechists in the world increased to a total of 68,515 units to 3,151,077. Numbers increase in Africa (+19,538), America (+36,319), Asia (+13,365) and Oceania (+287). The only decrease is in Europe (-994),

Major seminarians

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious, also increased this year: they are globally 954 more candidates for priesthood, who have thus reached a total of 117,978. Increases, as occurred in previous years, in Africa (+565), Asia (+781) and Oceania (+15), while this year decreases in America (-60) and Europe (-347). The major diocesan seminarians are 71,219 (43 more than in the previous year) and 46,759 religious ones (+911). Diocesan seminarians increases are registered in Africa (+425) and Asia (+121), decreases are registered in America (-353) and Oceania (-14) and Europe (-136). The religious seminarians increase in Africa (+140), America (+293), Asia (+660) and Oceania (+29) and decrease in Europe (-211).

Minor seminarians

The total number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious, increased by 1,631 units, to 103,991. Overall increase in Africa (+1765), Asia (+211) and Oceania (+53) and decreased in America (-337) and Europe (-61). The minor diocesan seminarians are 79,142 (+1155) and 24,849 religious ones (+476). Diocesan seminarians in America have registered a decrease in America (-264), Asia (-97) and Europe (-18), but increase in Africa (+1483) and Oceania (+51). The religious seminarians are decreasing in America (-73) and Europe (-43), and are increasing in Africa (+282), Asia (+308) and Oceania (+2).

Catholic schools and education

In the field of education the Catholic Church runs 68,119 kindergartens with 6,522,320 pupils; 92,971 primary schools with 30,973 114 pupils; 42,495 secondary schools with 17,114,737 pupils. The Church also cares for 2,288,258 secondary school pupils and 3,275,440 university students. Both the number of institutes and students, at all levels, have increased compared to the previous year.

Health, charity and assistance institutes

Charity and assistance institutes run in the world by the Church include: 5,558 hospitals most of them in America (1721) and Africa (1290); 17,763 dispensaries, mainly in America (5495), Africa (5280) and Asia (3634), 561 care Homes for people with Leprosy mainly in Asia (288) and Africa (174); 16,073 Homes for the elderly, or chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8238) and America (4144); 9,956 orphanages, about one third in Asia (3406); 12,387creches, 13,736 marriage counseling centers mainly in Europe (5948) and

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America (4696); 36,933 education or social rehabilitation centers and 12,050 other kinds of institutions, mainly in America (4484), Europe (3939) and Asia (1857).
Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
To 1 October 2011, the ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) were 1103. Mainly in Africa (499) and Asia (473). Followed by America (85) and Oceania (46).
(SL) (Agenzia Fides 21/10/2011)

> LINKS

The full text of the Special Feature by Fides in Italian: http://www.fides.org/ita/documents/STATISTICHE_CH._Ott_2011.doc:

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