

October 22, 2023

***97th World Mission Sunday – October 22, 2023***

**CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS**

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**CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS DEPENDENT ON THE DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION**

**OVERALL WORLD PICTURE**

**CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS 2023**

**Vatican City (Fides News Agency) –** As every year, in view of World Mission Sunday, which this year celebrates its 97th anniversary on Sunday, October 22, 2023, Fides News Agency 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, 2021) 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 (31 December 2020), according to the comparison made by Fides News Agency.

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

**World Population**

To December 31, 2021 the world population was **7.785.769.000**, with an increase of 118.633.000 units compared to the previous year. Population growth was registered, even this year, on every continent except for Europe. Increases were registered above all in Asia (+71.186.000) and in Africa (+40.089.000), followed by America (+7.398.000) and Oceania (+184.000) while a decrease has been registered in Europe (+224,000).

**Catholics**

On the same date, December 31, 2021, Catholics in the world numbered **1.375.852.000** units with an overall increase of16.240.000 units compared to the previous year. The increase affects all continents, except Europe (-244.000). As in the past, increases were registered above all in Africa (+8.312.000) and in America (+6.629.000), followed by Asia (+1.488.000) and Oceania (+55.000).

The world percentage of Catholics decreased slightly (-0,06) compared to the previous year reaching **17,67%.** The continents register slight variations.

**Persons and Catholics per priest**

This year the number of persons per priest in the world increased by units, average **15.556.** There are increases in Africa (+2.017), America (+131), Asia (+496), Europe (+78) and Oceania (+17).

The number of Catholics per priest in the world increased by 59 units, average **3.373**. There are increases in all continents except Asia (-1): Africa (+12), America (+99), Oceania (+6), Europe (+38).

**Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations**

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions increased by only 3 units compared to the previous year, to **3.030.** Newcircumscriptions were created only inAmerica (+1) and in Africa (+2) while the number in all other continents remains unvaried.

Mission Stations with a resident priest number **3.241** (- 43). Increases were registered in America (+56) and in Europe (+4).The number in Oceania remains unvaried while there is a decrease in Asia (-101) and Africa (-2). Mission stations without a resident priest decreased by a total of 297 to **130.857** with changes distributed as follows: decreases in America (-251) and Asia (-591), increases in Africa (+540), Europe (+3), and Oceania (+2).

**Bishops**

The total number of Bishops in the world decreased by 23 units, to **5.340.** The number of diocesan Bishops decreased (-1) and Religious Bishops (-22). Diocesan Bishops number **4.155**, while that of Religious Bishops is **1.185**.

Diocesan Bishops increase in America (+9) and in Europe (+1), while a decrease was registered in America (-6) and in Asia (-2) and in Oceania (-3). Religious Bishops decrease in all continents: Africa (-2), America (-16), Asia (-2), Europe (-3), except in Oceania where there is an increase of one unit.

**Priests**

The total number of priests in the world decreased to **407.872** (-2.347). The continent which registered a major decrease was again Europe (-3.632) as well as America (-963). Increases were registered in Africa (+1.518), in Asia (+719) and in Oceania (+11).

Diocesan priests in the world decreased by 911 units, reaching a total of **279.610**, with a decrease in Europe (-2.237), in America (-230). Increases were registered in all the other continents: in Oceania (+21), in Asia (+561) and in Africa (+974).

The number of religious priests decreased by 1.436 units, to a total **128.262**. Increases were registered only in Asia (+158) and in Africa (+544), decreases in America (-733), in Europe (-1.395) and Oceania (-10).

**Permanent Deacons**

Permanent deacons in the world continue to increase, this year reaching 541 units, to **49.176**. The highest increase was registered in all the continents: Africa (+59), America (+147), Asia (+58), Europe (+268) and in Oceania (+9).

Permanent diocesan deacons in the world are **48.575,** with an overall increase of 316 units. There is an increase in all continents except for Asia (-13): Africa (+31), America (+139), Europe (+150), Oceania (+9).

Religious permanent deacons number **601**, with a increase of 225 units compared to the previous year. There are increases in Europe (+118), Africa (+28), Asia (+71), America (+8), the number remains unvaried in Oceania.

**Men and women religious**

The number of non-religious priests decreased by 795 units, to **49.774**. Decreases were registered in America (-311), in Europe (-599) and in Oceania (-115). Increases in Africa (+205), and in Asia (+25).

Even this year there is an overall decrease in the number of women religious by 10.588 units, to a total **608.958.** Increases were registered, once again, in Africa (+2.275) and in Asia (+366), decrease in Europe (-7.804), America (-5.185) and Oceania (–240).

**Secular Institutes**

Members of male institutes number **593** (+10). A decrease only in America (-3), in Asia (-2), and in Europe (-6), the only increase in Africa (+21) while unvaried in Oceania.

Members of female institutes also decreased this year, by 278 units, to a total of **19.688** members. Increase in Africa (+59), and in Oceania (+25) while decreases were registered in America (-53) in Asia (-3) and in Europe (-306).

**Lay missionaries and Catechists**

The number of lay missionaries in the world is **410.449**, with an overall decrease of 3.112 units, broken down as follows: Europe (+113), America (-3.905), Asia (+668), Oceania (-19), and Africa (+31).

Catechists in the world decreased by 5.397 units, to a total **2.877.652**. Decreases were registered in America (-9.469), in Europe (-2.394) and in Oceania (-793). Increases are registered in Africa (+4.574) and in Asia (+2685).

**Major seminarians**

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious decreased this year, they are globally 1.960 units, reaching a total **109.895**. Increases were registered only in Africa (+187), decreases in America (-744), Asia (-514), Europe (-888) and Oceania (-1).

Major diocesan seminarians number **66.553** (-1.434), and Religious major seminarians number **43.342** (-526). Major diocesan seminarians increased in Africa (+36) and Oceania (+3), while decreases were registered in Europe (-689), in America (-588), and Asia (-196).

Religious major seminarians decreased by 526 units to a total of **43,342**: increasing only in Africa (+151), while decreasing in Europe (-199), America (-156), Asia (-318) and Oceania (-4).

**Minor seminarians**

The total number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious this year increase by 316 units to **95.714**. Decreases were registered in America (-372), Asia (-1.216), Europe (-144) and in Oceania (-5) while a major increase was registered in Africa (+2.053).

Minor diocesan seminarians number **72.801** (-442) and religious seminarians number **22.913** (+141). The number of diocesan minor seminarians decreased in all continents except for Africa (+1.585), America (-512), Asia (-1.417), Europe (-87) and Oceania (-11).

Religious minor seminarians decreased only in Europe (-57) while increases were registered in Africa (+468), America (+140), Asia (+201) and Oceania (+6).

**Catholic schools and education**

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 74.368 kindergartens with 7.565.095 pupils; 100.939 primary schools with 34.699.835 pupils; 49.868 secondary schools with 19.485.023 pupils. The Church also cares 2.483.406 high school pupils and 3.925.325 university students.

**Catholic charity and healthcare centres**

Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church include: 5.405 hospitals, 14.205 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (5.061) and in America (3.523); 567 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (290) and Africa (215); 15.276 Homes for the elderly or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8.149); 9.703 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3.230); 10.567 creches, 10.604 marriage counselling centres, mainly in Europe (5.390) and America (2.609); 3.287 social rehabilitation centres; 3.287 social rehabilitation centres mainly in America (1.421) and 35,529 other kinds of institutes, mainly in America (13.697) and Europe (16.841).

**Ecclesiastical circumscriptions dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches.**

The Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization are **1.121**. Most of the ecclesiastical circumscriptions entrusted to the Dicastery are in Africa (523) and in Asia (481), followed by America (71) and Oceania (46).

**STATISTICS**

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

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

### WORLD POPULATION – CATHOLICS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Population** | **Catholics** | **Percentage** |
| **Africa** | 1.368.512.000 (+40.089.000) | 265.152.000 (+8.312.000) | 19,38% (+0,05) |
| **America** | 1.030.365.000 (+7.398.000) | 660.297.000 (+6.629.000) | 64,08% (+0,18) |
| **Asia** | 4.621.713.000 (+71.186.000) | 153.355.000 (+1.488.000) | 3,32% (-0,02) |
| **Europe** | 722.832.000 (-224.000) | 286.063.000 (-244.000) | 39,58% (-0,02) |
| **Oceania** | 42.347.000 (+184.000) | 10.985.000 (+55.000) | 25,94% (+0,02) |
| **Total** | **7.785.769.000 (+118.633.000)** | **1.375.852.000 (+16.240.000)** | **17,67% (-0,06)** |

**PERSONS/CATHOLICS PER PRIEST**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Persons per priest** | **Catholics per priest** |
| **Africa** | 26.326 (+2.017) | 5.101 (+12) |
| **America** | 8.636 (+131) | 5.534 (+99) |
| **Asia** | 44.376 (+496) | 2.137 (-1) |
| **Europe** | 4.488 (+78) | 1.784 (+38) |
| **Oceania** | 9.395 (+17) | 2.437 (+6) |
| **Total** | **15.556 (+608)** | **3.373 (+59)** |

**ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS – MISSION STATIONS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions** | **Mission Stations**  **with resident priest** | **Mission Stations**  **without resident priest** |
| **Africa** | 545 (+2) | 598 (-2) | 73.487 (+540) |
| **America** | 1.098 (+1) | 1.168 (+56) | 20.025 (-251) |
| **Asia** | 545 (=) | 992 (-101) | 36.039 (-591) |
| **Europe** | 761 (=) | 395 (+4) | 464 (+3) |
| **Oceania** | 81 (=) | 88 (=) | 842 (+2) |
| **Total** | **3.030 (+3)** | **3.241 (-43)** | **130.857 (-297)** |

### BISHOPS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Bishops** | **Diocesan**  **Bishops** | **Religious**  **Bishops** |
| **Africa** | 725 (+7) | 525 (+9) | 200 (-2) |
| **America** | 2.000 (-22) | 1.472 (-6) | 528 (-16) |
| **Asia** | 806 (-4) | 633 (-2) | 173 (-2) |
| **Europe** | 1.676 (-2) | 1.441 (+1) | 235 (-3) |
| **Oceania** | 133 (-2) | 84 (-3) | 49 (+1) |
| **Total** | **5.340 (-23)** | **4.155 (-1)** | **1.185 (-22)** |

### PRIESTS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Priests** | **Diocesan Priests** | **Religious Priests** |
| **Africa** | 51.983 (+1.518) | 36.535 (+974) | 15.448 (+544) |
| **America** | 119.309 (-963) | 84.822 (-230) | 34.487 (-733) |
| **Asia** | 71.751 (+719) | 40.791 (+561) | 30.960 (+158) |
| **Europe** | 160.322 (-3.632) | 114.752 (-2.237) | 45.570 (-1.395) |
| **Oceania** | 4.507 (+11) | 2.710 (+21) | 1.797 (-10) |
| **Total** | **407.872 (-2.347)** | **279.610 (-911)** | **128.262 (-1.436)** |

### PERMANENT DEACONS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Permanent Deacons** | **Diocesan Permanent Deacons** | **Religious Permanent Deacons** |
| **Africa** | 498 (+59) | 457 (+31) | 41 (+28) |
| **America** | 32.373 (+147) | 32.214 (+139) | 159 (+8) |
| **Asia** | 339 (+58) | 239 (-13) | 100 (+71) |
| **Europe** | 15.438 (+268) | 15.142 (+150) | 296 (+118) |
| **Oceania** | 528 (+9) | 523 (+9) | 5 (=) |
| **Total** | **49.176 (+541)** | **48.575 (+316)** | **601 (+225)** |

**MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Men Religious** | **Women Religious** |
| **Africa** | 9.393 (+205) | 81.832 (+2.275) |
| **America** | 12.887 (-311) | 145.206 (-5.185) |
| **Asia** | 12.629 (+25) | 175.494 (+366) |
| **Europe** | 13.867 (-599) | 200.190 (-7.804) |
| **Oceania** | 998 (-115) | 6.236 (-240) |
| **Total** | **49.774 (-795)** | **608.958 (-10.588)** |

**MEMBERS OF SECULAR INSTITUTES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Members of Secular Institutes**  **Male** | **Members of Secular Institutes**  **Female** |
| **Africa** | 79 (+21) | 1.321 (+59) |
| **America** | 178 (-3) | 4.991 (-53) |
| **Asia** | 45 (-2) | 1.838 (-3) |
| **Europe** | 290 (-6) | 11.483 (-306) |
| **Oceania** | 1 (=) | 55 (+25) |
| **Total** | **593 (+10)** | **19.688 (-278)** |

**LAY MISSIONARIES, CATECHISTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Lay Missionaries** | **Catechists** |
| **Africa** | 8.592 (+31) | 458.559 (+4.574) |
| **America** | 348.492 (-3.905) | 1.550.303 (-9.469) |
| **Asia** | 46.352 (+668) | 374.868 (+2.685) |
| **Europe** | 6.882 (+113) | 481.302 (-2.394) |
| **Oceania** | 131 (-19) | 12.620 (-793) |
| **Total** | **410.449 (-3.112)** | **2.877.652 (-5.397)** |

##### MAJOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Major Seminarians** | **Diocesan**  **Major Seminarians** | **Religious**  **Major Seminarians** |
| **Africa** | 33.815 (+187) | 22.241 (+36) | 11.574 (+151) |
| **America** | 28.659 (-744) | 20.008 (-588) | 8.651 (-156) |
| **Asia** | 32.139 (-514) | 15.536 (-196) | 16.603 (-318) |
| **Europe** | 14.320 (-888) | 8.165 (-689) | 6.155 (-199) |
| **Oceania** | 962 (-1) | 603 (+3) | 359 (-4) |
| **Total** | **109.895 (-1.960)** | **66.553 (-1.434)** | **43.342 (-526)** |

**MINOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continent** | **Total**  **Minor Seminarians** | **Diocesan**  **Minor Seminarians** | **Religious**  **Minor Seminarians** |
| **Africa** | 54.464 (+2.053) | 47.116 (+1.585) | 7.348 (+468) |
| **America** | 9.771 (-372) | 6.777 (-512) | 2.994 (+140) |
| **Asia** | 23.526 (-1.216) | 13.773 (-1.417) | 9.753 (+201) |
| **Europe** | 7.758 (-144) | 4.971 (-87) | 2.787 (-57) |
| **Oceania** | 195 (-5) | 164 (-11) | 31 (+6) |
| **Total** | **95.714 (+316)** | **72.801 (-442)** | **22.913 (+758)** |

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PUPILS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | INFANT  Schools | INFANT  Pupils | PRIMARY  Schools | PRIMARY  Pupils | SECONDARY  Schools | SECONDARY Pupils | HIGH SCHOOL Pupils | UNIVERSIT.  Students |
| **Africa** | 20.223 | 2.421.485 | 43.455 | 19.488.169 | 16.182 | 5.790.754 | 205.033 | 252.943 |
| **America** | 16.279 | 1.172.748 | 21.014 | 5.517.798 | 12.070 | 3.495.694 | 683.275 | 2.389.826 |
| **Asia** | 13.817 | 1.924.238 | 16.261 | 5.773.212 | 11.607 | 5.829.858 | 1.302.184 | 422.437 |
| **Europe** | 22.580 | 1.967.080 | 15.934 | 3.109.327 | 9.262 | 3.858.806 | 284.244 | 818.933 |
| **Oceania** | 1.469 | 79.544 | 4.275 | 811.329 | 747 | 509.911 | 8.670 | 41.186 |
| **Total** | **74.368** | **7.565.095** | **100.939** | **34.699.835** | **49.868** | **19.485.023** | **2.483.406** | **3.925.325** |

**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** | 1.497 | 5.061 | 215 | 702 | 1.686 | 2.174 | 1.375 | 396 | 1.401 |
| **America** | 1.405 | 3.523 | 41 | 3.411 | 2.317 | 2.775 | 2.609 | 1.421 | 13.697 |
| **Asia** | 1.193 | 2.570 | 290 | 2.665 | 3.230 | 2.747 | 970 | 535 | 3.228 |
| **Europe** | 1.054 | 2.506 | 20 | 8.149 | 2.373 | 2.696 | 5.390 | 840 | 16.841 |
| **Oceania** | 256 | 545 | 1 | 349 | 97 | 175 | 260 | 95 | 362 |
| **Total** | **5.405** | **14.205** | **567** | **15.276** | **9.703** | **10.567** | **10.604** | **3.287** | **35.529** |

**ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS**

**DEPENDENT ON THE DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION, SECTION FOR FIRST EVANGELIZATION**

**AND THE NEW PARTICULAR CHURCHES**

**Total dependent circumscriptions: 1,121**

**(updated to the latest change)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Continent | **MA** | **AD** | **D** | **TA** | **AV** | **AP** | **MsJ** | **TP** | **AA** | **MO** | **TOTAL** |
| Africa | 94 | 3 | 401 | - | 18 | 3 | 1 | - | - | 3 | 523 |
| America | 5 |  | 22 | - | 40 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 71 |
| Asia | 78 | 1 | 342 | 1 | 17 | 33 | 3 | - | 4 | 2 | 481 |
| Oceania | 11 |  | 31 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 46 |
| TOTAL | **188** | **4** | **796** | **1** | **75** | **38** | **8** | **1** | **4** | **6** | **1.121** |

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

(Fides News Agency, 22/10/2023)