

## CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

25 Apr-1 May 2022

25-4-22

### **Pope fills 5 key Vatican posts**

(25-4-22) Pope Francis has named Cardinal Michael Czerny the Prefect, and Sister Alessandra Smerilli the Secretary, of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; they were holding these posts on a temporary basis.

### **Pope's Easter greeting to Russian prelate: focus on peace**



(25-4-22) “May the Holy Spirit transform our hearts and make us true peacemakers, especially for war-torn Ukraine,” Pope Francis wrote in an Easter message to Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill.

The papal message was sent to the leaders of the Orthodox churches who celebrated Easter on April 24.

The Russian Orthodox Patriarchate posted the Pope's message, with its prayer that the people of Ukraine could see “a new dawn that will end the darkness of war.”

### **I am ready to do everything to stop the war: papal interview with Argentine newspaper**

(25-4-22) In a Spanish-language interview with the Argentine newspaper La Nación, Pope Francis said that “the Vatican never rests” in its efforts to end the war in Ukraine. “I cannot tell you the details because they would cease to be diplomatic efforts. But the attempts will never stop.”

### **Ukrainian Catholic leader, in Easter pastoral letter, lauds nation's 'unbroken spirit'**

(25-4-22) Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, has issued an Easter pastoral letter in which he deplores historic and current Russian outrages against Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church celebrated Easter on April 24, a week after Latin-rite Catholics. “From a spiritual perspective it has become clear how our aggressive neighbour is unable to cast aside his false idols and how in them he continues to pursue his greatness at our cost,” the Major Archbishop wrote. “With his cruise missiles, bombs, and artillery shells, he seeks to instill fear, to drive us into the depths of the earth and non-existence, to bind us with eternal chains. And precisely in those underground shelters a miracle takes place—one of common prayer, selfless help of neighbour, unbroken spirit, and of demonstrating the power of the presence of God.”

### **French bishops' leader welcomes Macron's re-election**

(25-4-22) The president of the French bishops' conference has remarked that the country's people made a “choice of reason” in re-electing President Emmanuel Macron.

Although the episcopal conference remained neutral during the presidential campaign, Archbishop Eric de Moulins Beaufort told a Vatican Radio audience that the country had rejected the policy proposals of defeated candidate Marine Le Pen. He added that he was troubled by “growing divisions” in French politics.

### **Offer a more generous welcome to Ukrainians, US bishops urge Biden administration**

(25-4-22) The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has welcomed Uniting for Ukraine, a Biden administration initiative that will allow up to 100,000 Ukrainians to enter the United States, but called

on the administration and Congress to do more.

“The program relies heavily on humanitarian parole, a mechanism in US immigration law that grants individuals authorization to enter the United States for a temporary period of time,” the USCCB explained. “While parole provides eligibility for work authorization, it does not authorize recipients to receive the same services and benefits provided to refugees resettled through the US Refugee Admissions Program, nor does parole provide a pathway to permanent legal status in the United States.”

### **Priest stabbed in church in Nice, France**

(25-4-22) A priest, Father Christophe, was stabbed 20 times in the Saint-Pierre d’Arene church in Nice, France, by a man police described as “mentally unstable.” A nun who tried to stop the attack was also stabbed in the arm.

In 2020, three people were killed in an Islamic terrorist attack at a different church in the French city.

### **African bishops tell IMF to help continent with debt stress**

(25-4-22) “African countries did not have means to mobilize sufficient resources for responding to the pandemic, and had to make impossible choices between saving lives and jobs, or paying creditors,” the bishop Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar said in a statement issued at a World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting.

### **Vietnam, Vatican agree to a pontifical representative in Hanoi in the ‘near future’**

(25-4-22) The Vietnam–Holy See Joint Working Group met in Hanoi on April 21-22.

Currently, the apostolic nuncio in Singapore also serves as pontifical representative to Vietnam.

Following the meeting, the Vatican press office said that the parties had “agreed upon issues relevant to raising, in the near future, the level of relations between Vietnam and the Holy See from a non-resident to a resident Pontifical Representative and agreed on future steps to be undertaken to establish an office of the resident Pontifical Representative in Hanoi.”

### **Egypt - 9 Coptic Christians who ended up in prison for protests over delays in the reconstruction of their church were released for Easter**

(25-4-22) On Saturday, April 23, the 9 Coptic Christians who had been imprisoned since January 30 for having participated in the previous days in the protests carried out by some Christian residents of the village of Ezbet Faragalá were released - in the Egyptian province of Minya - to denounce the delays in the reconstruction of his church, destroyed by fire in 2016 (a year marked by waves of sectarian attacks on Christian places of worship throughout Egypt). The nine detainees were able to reunite with their loved ones again and share with them the participation in the rites of Easter, celebrated by the Coptic Churches on Sunday, April 24. All of them were accused of attempting against public safety by participating in illegal meetings.

### **Venezuela - A training course for the integration of missionaries in the Venezuelan socio-cultural context underway**

(25-4-22) "Introduction to the Venezuelan reality": this is the name of the course conceived by the Missionary Training Centre of the Pontifical Mission Societies of Venezuela. This is an unprecedented formative space, aimed at pastoral agents, missionaries, priests, religious and lay people who have arrived in the country in the last six months and/or are in the process of missionary insertion – history, culture of the people, life of the Church up to current configuration.



### **Ukraine - Camillian missionaries: "Make Christ present by bringing a sign of hope to the sick"**

(25-4-22) "Among the Ukrainian refugees, many sick, due to their precarious health conditions, cannot move because they are confined to a hospital bed or in a wheelchair. There are lonely and

abandoned people who have lost everything, even the support of their families because they have been enrolled in the army. Some just want to confess and pray". This is what Father Alfréd György, General Delegate of the Ministers of the Sick (also known as Camillians) in Austria says in an interview with Agenzia Fides, who, together with the lay Camillian Family of Austria and Hungary and Caritas Hungary, are helping thousands of Ukrainian refugees in the Munkacs area, a city in the west of the country.

Fr. Alfréd has been to Ukraine twice in the last month to give comfort and hope to the sick and those who fled. However, it is not just a question of delivering supplies for material aid. Spiritual nourishment is also necessary: "It is important to listen to and support the sick with prayer, bringing them a sign of hope", observes Fr. Alfréd.

### **Late Irish Jesuit missionary in China honored with award**

(25-4-22) A Jesuit think tank has constituted an award to honour prominent Irish Jesuit missionary Father Alfred Joseph Deignan that recognizes good business practices of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Macau and Hong Kong.

The Deignan Award for Responsible Entrepreneurship is a collaboration between the Macau-based Ricci Institute and Woofoo Foundation of Hong Kong. The award will be given to SMEs from next year for good environmental, social, management and governance practices.

Eligibility for the award is based on the ability to demonstrate that ethics and law are elevated to the status of key factors in business practices and are implemented at all levels in the company, Jesuit Father Stephan Rothlin, director of the Ricci Institute said.

Father Deignan served as a missionary in China for about 65 years until his death in Hong Kong in 2018 at the age of 91. He was hailed for educating successive generations of students with a particular focus on values such as integrity, honesty, forgiveness and human dignity.



### **Indian faith leaders pledge unity during Ramadan**

(25-4-22) Leaders of different faiths at the first-ever *iftar* organized by the Archdiocese of Delhi pledged to remain united amid sectarian violence and growing unrest in India.

The *iftar* or evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset was a symbolic gesture to show solidarity with members of the national capital's Islamic community who are fasting during the holy month.

"Through this program we wanted to spread love and peace among all people," Archbishop Anil Joseph Thomas Couto of Delhi said at the interreligious event held by the archdiocese's Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Dialogue on April 22 and bringing about 50 leaders of Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Bahai, Brahmakumari Sisters religions.

The archbishop said there was nothing to gain from what was happening in the country, where one community was pitted against the other in the name of religion, caste and creed. Delhi has recently experienced communal violence.

### **Indian bishop, priest fined for illegal stone mining**

(25-4-22) A Catholic bishop and priest in the southern Indian state of Kerala have been ordered to pay more than 2 million rupees in fines for the illegal mining of granite stone in their diocese.

Bishop Remigio Inchananiyil of Thamarassery and parish priest Father Mathew Thakadiel are to pay 2,353,013 rupees (US\$31,000) on or before April 30, according to an order from the state's mining and geology department.

The government department in its notice accused the two of illegally mining close to 60,000 cubic meters of granite on a plot of land under the Little Flower parish in Pushpagiri village from 2002 to 2010.

In answer to the Catholic Laymen's Association (CLA) that the mining was done without prior government permission, P.U. Mathew, president of the parishioners' association, said in a statement that they would appeal the "baseless government order" while pointing out that the stone was mined for the construction of a church, school and convent with valid approvals from government departments and that neither the bishop nor the parish priest were responsible for it.

26-4-22

### **Pope again cancels appointments, citing doctors' advice**

(26-4-22) For the second time in a week, Pope Francis cancelled his scheduled appointments on Tuesday, April 26.

"Due to pain in his knee, and on medical advice, Pope Francis has interrupted his activities planned for today," the Vatican press office announced. The Pontiff has been increasingly troubled by knee pain, which has been attributed to strained ligaments.

Pope Francis has been scheduled to meet the Council of Cardinals. The Pontiff did not attend that meeting—although he presumably would have been able to sit throughout the session.

### **Pope Francis: 'Mary teaches us not to be ashamed of tears'**

(26-4-22) On April 23, Pope Francis received pilgrims from the Santuario di Madonna delle Lacrime (Shrine of the Madonna of the Tears), which is located in Treviglio, a small northern Italian city.

"The community is celebrating 500th anniversary of the miracle of the Virgin, who saved the city from the French troops with her tears," Vatican News reported.

"Mary teaches us not to be ashamed of tears," Pope Francis said. Mary's tears, he added, are "a sign of God's cry for the victims of the war that is destroying not only Ukraine."

### **Papal encouragement to Trinitarians: continue your work against slavery**

(26-4-22) On April 25, Pope Francis received participants in a meeting of Trinitarian International Solidarity, an apostolate of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity.

St. John of Matha (1160-1213) founded the Order; its founding charism was the redemption of slaves.

"This charism is flagrantly relevant today, unfortunately!", Pope Francis told the Trinitarians. "It is so because even in our time, which boasts of having abolished slavery, in reality there are many, too many men and women, even children reduced to living in inhuman conditions, enslaved. And also because, as your conference rightly points out, religious freedom is violated, sometimes trampled upon in many places and in various ways, some crude and obvious, others subtle and hidden."

### **Ukrainian Catholic leader warns of concentration camps**

(26-4-22) In an April 25 message, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, deplored continued Russian attacks and said that "Mariupol cries out to the world: Stop this war! Do everything possible to save people's lives!"

"The occupiers are dismantling our factories and enterprises en masse in the territories they have occupied," he added. "They are then exported to Russia and they turn those plants into concentration camps where so-called filtering operations are carried out, some people are shot, others are deported to Russia, and others are forcibly mobilized into the Russian army."

"O God, bless Ukraine," he prayed. "O God, bless the Ukrainian army! O God, let



each of us meet You, the Risen One, to know You, to believe in You, and to live in You and with You!” (28-4-22) In his daily address, he said on April 28 that over a million Ukrainians, 200,000 of them children, have been expelled or deported by Russian forces.

### **Cameroon’s bishops consecrate nation to Immaculate Heart, hold pilgrimage for peace**

(26-4-22) The consecration of the nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the bishops’ national pilgrimage and prayer for peace, took place against the backdrop of the Anglophone crisis, which has displaced 700,000 people.

“Today the bishops of Cameroon are making a national pilgrimage, with their faithful, to the Marian shrine of Marianberg, to reconsecrate the country to the Mother of God and to place it under her protection,” Pope Francis said on April 24. “I pray in particular for the return of peace to their country, which has been ravaged by violence in various regions for more than five years. Let us too raise our prayer, along with our brothers and sisters of Cameroon, that God may soon, by the intercession of the Virgin Mary, grant true and lasting peace to this beloved country.”

### **Brazilian cardinal’s appearance alongside Bolsonaro causes controversy**

(26-4-22) Cardinal Orani João Tempesta of Rio de Janeiro recently appeared at a ceremony alongside Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro. The year 2022 is an election year in Brazil, with presidential and congressional elections scheduled for October.

### **Cardinal Czerny: Earth Day demands urgent action**

(26-4-22) “We celebrate Earth Day this year in the shadow of multiple serious, grave and menacing failures on the part of the human family to take this reality seriously,” said Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ, Prefect of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Pope Francis also referred to Earth Day in a tweet.



### **DR Congo - Vocation and priestly mission, gift and mystery to be preserved**

(26-4-22) The priestly vocation is a gift and a mystery: this is what the Archbishop of Kinshasa, Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu said in his address to the more than six hundred priests who gathered to celebrate the Chrism Mass in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame du Congo. The celebration of Holy Thursday was also an occasion for the Cardinal to encourage reflection on the identity of the priest and to remind

Congolese priests to be aware of the relationship between anointing and mission, thus inviting them to always be committed to the mission to be available, no matter how demanding.

Priests, meanwhile, are also at risk of violence and kidnapping in Congo. The situation is particularly serious in North Kivu (on the border with Uganda), whose capital is Goma.

### **Indonesia - Minister for Religious Affairs wants to invite Pope Francis**

(26-4-22) Indonesia invites Pope Francis to visit the country: Minister of Religious Affairs Menag RI Yaqut Cholil Qoumas informed the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Pietro Pioppo and the Indonesian Catholic Bishops on the occasion of the episcopal ordination of the new bishop of the Diocese of Amboina, Senno Ngutra, last April 23.

At a meeting with the nuncio, Indonesian bishops and priests at the Catholic Community Centre in Ambon city centre before the solemn celebration of the episcopal consecration, Menag RI informed the church officials present about his upcoming trip to the Vatican, where he delivered an official message and an invitation to the Pope to visit Indonesia.

### **Jordan - King Abdallah II reaffirms royal responsibility for protecting Christian and Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem**

(26-4-22) The Hashemite dynasty of Jordan will continue to exercise its historical responsibility for the protection of the Christian and Islamic Holy Places of Jerusalem with even more vigour and determination, so that Christians and Muslims can continue to freely practise their rites and liturgies in these places, without being intimidated and hindered by unilateral and "fait accompli" measures that violate the rules and undermine the coexistence of faith communities in the Holy City.

King Abdallah II himself reaffirmed the historic responsibility on Monday evening, April 25, during the official fast-breaking at the Al-Husseiniya Royal Palace in Amman, attended by senior officials from Jerusalem's Christian and Islamic communities on one of the final days of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

In recent weeks, tensions and clashes around the Christian and Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem's Old City have escalated again.

### **Vietnam - Dialogue, cooperation and positive developments in relations between the Holy See and Vietnam**

(26-4-22) Relations between Vietnam and the Holy See are on the right track. On April 22, at the Central Government Office, Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh received Undersecretary for Relations with the States of the Holy See, Msgr. Miroslaw Wachowski, who traveled to Vietnam to attend the meeting of the Vietnam-Vatican Joint Working Group. Pham Binh Minh expressed his joy at the positive development of Vietnam-



Vatican relations, stressing that the frequent visits and contacts, as well as the meeting of the Vietnam-Vatican joint working group, will help "to strengthen the common interests of both sides and to satisfy and create good conditions for the Catholic community in Vietnam".

The Minister appreciated that the Holy See continues to guide the Catholics in Vietnam, who in turn make a special contribution to the life of the nation, promoting social and religious harmony, while respecting Vietnamese law.

### **Ethiopia - A community farm to bring hope to families and children**

(26-4-22) Drought and rising prices are causing health problems in Ethiopia due to malnutrition among the Ethiopian population and affecting 70% of families in the city of Emdibir: aware of these difficulties, the "Catholic Mission", the National Direction of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Australia, launches appeals to support the creation of a community farm in central Ethiopia - a goat breeding centre to help families in urgent need of food. This will be an extension of Deberety Farm in Embidir, which grows products such as enset, a robust fruit similar to a banana, avocados and coffee.

### **Indian priest arrested on 'fake' molestation charges**

(26-4-22) A Catholic priest accused of molesting a minor girl has been arrested and remanded to judicial custody in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

Father Albert S., 67, was reportedly arrested on April 23 after being summoned to a police station under the pretext of discussing "some important matter."

The priest was charged under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and informed that the mother of an 11-year-old girl had lodged a complaint of molestation against him. The priest was later produced before a court and remanded to judicial custody to facilitate further investigations.

"Father Albert is trapped in a totally false case. We are sure his innocence will be proved in court and he will come out clean. We are going to move a bail application for his release," said Father Roy Chowalloor, public relations officer of Meerut Diocese.

Father Albert serves as principal of the diocese-run St. Joseph High School with more than 1,100 students. The school is on the campus of St. Joseph's Church of Lalyana in Baghpat district.

Father Chowalloor told UCA News that the complainant woman had sought admission to the school for her three children — two sons and a daughter — on April 21. She also appealed for concessions in their fees, textbooks and uniform purchases, among other things. The priest told her to first admit the children before other things could be decided. “We are still not sure what made her lodge a fake complaint and get the priest jailed,” Father Chowalloor wondered.

### **Church opens Indian state's first palliative care centre**

(26-4-22) The Catholic Church has set up the first-ever palliative care centre in Nagaland, a Christian-majority state in northeast India.

The St. Joseph Pain and Palliative Care Centre at Chumukedima, near the state’s commercial hub of Dimapur, was inaugurated by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, a Baptist Christian, on April 24.

The centre is an initiative of the Diocese of Kohima and will be run by the Medical Sisters of St Joseph, Nirmala Province from Kerala, known for their dedicated service to the sick, the poor and the least of the brethren irrespective of caste and creed.

“This first fully fledged palliative care center in Nagaland intends to provide service free of cost. The state government will extend all possible help to carry out this gratuitous service to the people,” announced the Chief Minister Rio who appreciated the initiative of Kohima bishop James Thoppil.

### **Pope tells Sri Lankans: People need truth about Easter bombings**

Pope Francis meets a delegation of victims and calls on authorities to reveal who was responsible for the 2019 attack

Sri Lankan Easter attack victims have met Pope Francis in Rome and attended a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica commemorating the 2019 Easter-day terrorist atrocity.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo went to the Vatican with a 60-member delegation including families of the bombing victims at the invitation of the pope.

"Please, for the love of justice, for the love of your people, clarify once and for all who was responsible for these events. It will bring peace to your conscience and the country," Pope Francis, at the April 25 Mass attended by 3,500 Sri Lankans, urged authorities. The visitors held colour photographs of their loved one killed in the blast. There were also survivors, many in wheelchairs or blind from shrapnel. A statue of Jesus, spattered with the blood of parishioners at one of the attacks, was placed near the altar.



### **Indian tribal people push for separate religious code**

(26-4-22) Tribal people from nine Indian states have reiterated their decade-old demand to be identified as Sarna, a distinct religious category from options like Hindu, Christian or others, in the national census.

Around 500 protesters including tribal Christians in their traditional attire assembled at the Jantar Mantar venue in the national capital Delhi on April 25 to press for the provision to mark their Sarna religion during enumeration in the upcoming census.

The protesters, who came from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam and Mizoram, presented a memorandum to Home Minister Amit Shah, Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda, and the census commissioner.

### **Persecution of Myanmar Christians 'akin to Rohingya'**

(26-4-22) The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has drawn parallels between the situation of minority Christians in Myanmar with the persecution faced by Rohingya Muslims since 2017.

In its annual report released on April 25, the US federal government commission said: “Faith communities, including ethnoreligious Christian minorities, now face persecution that some have likened to what the Rohingya have faced since 2017.”

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### **Pope Francis ends automatic dismissal of religious-order priests for abuse**

(27-4-22) Less than a year after he strengthened the Code of Canon Law’s section on crimes, Pope Francis has issued an apostolic constitution *motu proprio* (on his own initiative) that alters the wording of one of the canons.

As a result of the change, members of religious institutes who sexually abuse minors and other vulnerable persons, or who commit canonical crimes related to child pornography, will no longer be automatically dismissed from their religious institutes.

In addition, members of religious institutes who “force someone to perform or submit to sexual acts” will no longer be automatically dismissed from their religious institutes.

Canon 695 §1 previously stated (link 1, link 2):

A member must be dismissed for the delicts mentioned in cann. 1397, 1398, and 1395, unless in the delicts mentioned in can. 1395, §2, the superior decides that dismissal is not completely necessary and that correction of the member, restitution of justice, and reparation of scandal can be resolved sufficiently in another way.

As a result of the Pope’s apostolic letter *Recognitum Librum VI*, dated and made public April 26, Canon 695 §1 now states (substantive changes in bold):

Can. 695 §1. A member must be dismissed for the delicts mentioned in cann. 1395, 1397, and 1398, unless in the delicts mentioned in can. 1395, §2-3 and 1398, §1, the major superior decides that dismissal is not completely necessary and that correction of the member, restitution of justice, and reparation of scandal can be resolved sufficiently in another way.

The canonical crimes that no longer entail automatic dismissal from religious institutes are the crimes cited in Canon 1395 §3 and Canon 1398 §1. Canon 1395 §3 refers to “a cleric who by force, threats or abuse of his authority commits an offence against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts.” Canon 1398 §1, in its first subsection, refers to a cleric who “commits an offence against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with a minor or with a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason or with one to whom the law recognizes equal protection.” In its second and third subsections, Canon 1398 §1 refers to a cleric who grooms or induces a minor or a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason or one to whom the law recognizes equal protection to expose himself or herself pornographically or to take part in pornographic exhibitions, whether real or simulated;

immorally acquires, retains, exhibits or distributes, in whatever manner and by whatever technology, pornographic images of minors or of persons who habitually have an imperfect use of reason.

In ending the automatic dismissal from religious institutes of members who have been judged guilty (under the process described in Canon 695 §2) of committing rape, sexually abusing minors and other vulnerable persons, or engaging in child pornography, Pope Francis left unchanged the provisions of the Code that address the separate question of whether religious-order clerics who have been found guilty of these crimes should be dismissed from the *clerical* state.



Under the Code, diocesan clerics who have been found guilty of committing these canonical crimes, as well as religious-order clerics who have been found guilty of these crimes, are “to be punished with just penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants.”

### **See Naomi and Ruth as models for generations, Pope suggests**

(27-4-22) At his weekly public audience on April 27 held in St Peter’s Square, Pope Francis pointed to the biblical figures of Naomi and Ruth as a model for “the alliance between generations that opens up the future.” The following is the summary of his talk.



In our continuing catechesis on the meaning and value of old age, in the light of God’s word, we now reflect on the figure of the widow Naomi as presented in the biblical Book of Ruth. This short yet beautiful story speaks of the relationship of love and mutual support between the elderly Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth. Naomi, dwelling in a foreign land, is left alone when her two sons die. Despite her grief, she encourages her two daughters-in-law to remain among their own people as she returns to Bethlehem, her native town. Ruth chooses not to abandon her beloved mother-in-law, and accompanies her to Judah, telling her: “Your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (1:16). Ruth’s love supports Naomi, and Naomi in turn helps Ruth to find a new husband, Boaz. God blesses this marriage with a son, Obed, who was the father of Jesse, the father of David. The story of these two faithful women shows us that, in God’s providential plan, the covenant of love and fidelity uniting the generations can prove immensely enriching for our families and for the growth of a society that respects the dignity and gifts of each of its members, however young or old.

### **Pope to Missionaries of Mercy: Show the face of God’s boundless mercy to all**

(27-4-22) On April 25, Pope Francis received a group of Missionaries of Mercy—priests who, since the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (2015-16), have been granted the faculties to absolve sins reserved to the Apostolic See (Canons 1367, 1370, 1378, 1382, 1388).

“Here then is the exhortation I leave you: always have the blanket of mercy at hand, to envelop with its warmth all those who approach you to be forgiven; offer consolation to those who are sad and lonely; be generous like Ruth, because only in this way will the Lord recognize you as his faithful ministers,” the Pope said.

### **Pope: ‘War in Ukraine recalls urgent need for society of love’**

(27-4-22) Pope Francis received members of the FIAT Association, an organization founded by Cardinal Leo Suenens and Veronica O’Brien that arose from the Catholic charismatic movement. “More than ever, we are called to be protagonists of an outgoing Church, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit,” Pope Francis said in his April 23 address. “In the eyes of our brothers and sisters who have become victims to the horrors of war, we see the profound and pressing need for a life marked by dignity, peace, and love.”

“May you draw from the source of goodness and truth through prayer and mission, and find strength in communion with the Risen Christ to see the world with a positive outlook and a gaze of love, hope, compassion, and tenderness, with special attention to people who are vulnerable and marginalized,” Pope Francis added.

### **One bishop to head two dioceses in Ireland and in Wales**

(27-4-22) Pope Francis has joined two Irish dioceses under the leadership of a single bishop. Bishop Michael Duignan, who has headed the Clonfert diocese since 2019, will take over the reins of the Diocese of Galway and Kilmacduagh, as Bishop Brendan Kelly steps down from the latter diocese, having reached the age of 75. The two Irish bishops announced that the dioceses would remain autonomous, while under common leadership.

In a related development, Pope Francis has also given a single bishop the leadership of two sees in

Wales, appointing Bishop Mark O'Toole to head both the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Diocese of Menevia in Wales.



### **Ethiopia - Tigray's health system has completely collapsed: local doctors try to "improvise"**

(27-4-22) More than a month after the humanitarian ceasefire declared by the Ethiopian government under Prime Minister Abiy on March 24, which had raised great hopes among the affected population, only five convoys have been able to enter the Tigray region with about 150 trucks.

However, according to an estimate by the United Nations, at least 100 trucks with food and other relief supplies are needed every day to cover the needs of six million people in the conflict region.

"We tried to improvise," said a worker at the hospital's maternity ward in Ayder. "We tell women to bring their clothes to the hospital to use as gauze and compresses during surgeries and births. The long journeys that pregnant women have to make in dramatic conditions due to a lack of transportation are just the tip of the iceberg," he emphasizes.

### **Egypt - A total of 4,000 Coptic Christians make the Easter pilgrimage to Jerusalem**

(27-4-22) This Easter, more than 4,000 Egyptian Coptic Christians made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land to celebrate in places linked to the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. The data, provided by the network of 27 tour operators offering pilgrimages to the Holy Land, is significant considering that for the past two years the pandemic has prevented pilgrimages and trips from taking place, and if consideration is also given to the bans that in the past prevented Egyptian Coptic Christians from travelling to the Holy City for decades, a side effect of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Egyptian tour operators have started organizing Christian pilgrimages according to precise regulations and age-restrictions issued by the Egyptian authorities with the intention of maintaining a high level of vigilance against measures to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Philippines - Celebration of the 500th anniversary: a new impetus for evangelization**

(27-4-22) From the conclusion of the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines on April 24th in Cebu, the Philippine Church receives new impetus for the mission of evangelization: "As we celebrate the conclusion of the Second National Missionary Congress and the celebration of the 500 years of the Gospel, let us remember that we have been given only one gift to pass on, we have been blessed only to be a blessing in turn to society and the world, like the Eucharistic Bread we have been taking, blessed and broken to feed a hungry world", said Bishop Pablo Virgilio David of Kalookan and President of the Philippine Bishops' Conference, according to whom "mission is not a task for individual believers, but for the whole church."

### **Paraguay - Journalists: "their task is to seek and communicate the truth, communicate hope and life to our people"**

(27-4-22) "The journalist's task is to seek and communicate the truth, both through facts and investigative reports, through the interpretation of events or through his comments. The search for the truth and its communication guides the daily work", said Archbishop Adalberto Martinez Flores of Asuncion in his message on the occasion of Journalists' Day, celebrated in Paraguay on April 26.

The Archbishop recalls that "the noble profession of the journalist for the Church, has a sense of mission and apostolate according to the Master's teaching: 'The truth will make you free' (Jn 8:32)". In his job of informing, the journalist "has imperative task of remembering that the focus of the news is not the speed of transmission and the effect on public opinion, but the people". "To inform is to form,



to be involved in people's lives", affirms Archbishop Martinez Flores and continues: "the verification of sources and the safeguarding of communication are real processes of development of good, which create trust and open paths of communion and peace".

### **Argentina - Bishop of Moron warns against misleading information about drug use**

(27-4-22) "As Bishop of Moron, I would like to address our entire community and publicly express my deep concern at statements that send a misleading message to young people about the serious consequences and irreparable harm of consumption, well proven by science of drugs for physical and mental health", said Bishop Jorge Vázquez of Moron and President of the Episcopal Commission for Life, the Laity and Family (CEVILAF).

The youth department of the community of Moron on the western outskirts of Buenos Aires distributed leaflets to youth during a music festival last weekend advising them to use drugs "slowly and calmly" "to see how the body reacts". "I do not believe that a drug prevention campaign - without assessing it - can be carried out without emphasizing with absolute clarity the devastating effects that the use of these substances is having on young people and their families," said the Bishop.

### **Nigerian priest leads global counterterrorism talks in Switzerland**

(27-4-22) Amid growing concern over terrorists deploying drone technology as a principle of war, a Nigerian priest led global talks to beat terrorists at their own game.

A high-powered audience at a conference in Geneva, Switzerland, played host to the executive director of The Kukah Centre, Father Atta Barkindo, on April 25.

"In the last two decades, there has been a rapid increase in the use of drone technologies among armed forces, providing them with more situational awareness through 'eyes-in-the-sky' and deploying them in response to emerging threats," Father Barkindo said in his talk on "Non-state actors and military drones in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region."

"These developments are also reflected in broader political and legal discussions around the use of lethal force in and outside armed conflicts as well as around the need to adapt arms export control measures to this new reality.

"One particular novelty is the growing use of drones by non-state actors, which has posed additional regional security challenges. Over the last decade, these trends have also been increasingly observed on the African continent and are reshaping the discourse of peace and security in the region." The Kukah Centre is a Nigeria-based policy research institute.

### **Indian Jesuit's martyrdom recalled on his birth anniversary**

(27-4-22) The 85th birth anniversary of Father Stan Swamy, the first since his release of a book and a training and social action center in the Indian state of Jharkhand. Elsewhere in the country, members of the Indian Church remembered the martyred Jesuit's contributions to most marginalized sections



anniversary of Father Stan Swamy's death, was observed with the unveiling of his bust at Bagaicha, center he founded in the eastern

members of the Indian Church remembered the martyred Jesuit's contributions to most marginalized sections of society.

The main event was held at Bagaicha in Namkum, Ranchi, on April 26 where the two-foot-high bust of Father Stan stands tall overlooking the institution he founded in 2006.

Keeping his memory alive, Bagaicha continues to empower individuals and organizations working against the displacement of marginalized people, human rights violations, illegal land acquisition and confinement of tribal people by branding them as Maoists.

### **Little faith in Myanmar junta's peace talks offer**

(27-4-22) The recent offer by Myanmar's junta chief for face-to-face peace talks has been met with skepticism from democracy activists and ethnic armed groups as the military regime continues its assault on civilians across the country.

General Min Aung Hlaing has called for peace talks with established ethnic armed groups in May.

### **Caritas, Polish hotels serve Easter breakfast to 20,000 Ukrainians**

(27-4-22) On April 24, Caritas Poland joined with hotels to sponsor an Easter breakfast for more than 20,000 Ukrainians. Agata Kornhauser-Duda, Poland's first lady, joined some of the refugees in Warsaw. "Ukraine will not be left alone. We are together, we are brothers and sisters," she said. Orthodox and Eastern Catholics celebrated Easter on April 24, following the Julian calendar. In the Latin-rite church, Catholics celebrated Divine Mercy Sunday, and it was also the patronal feast of Caritas.

So, Caritas Poland proposed celebrating the Day of Goodness, which included Easter breakfasts, an initiative of Polish Hotel Holding, Poland's second-largest hotel group and the first backed exclusively by Polish capital. The 45 diocesan branches of Caritas took charge of inviting the Ukrainians.



### **Priest jailed for seven years for shooting bishop**

(27-4-22) The High Court in Juba sentenced on April 25 Fr John Mathiang Machol, Samuel Makir, Moris Sebit Ater and Lat Makur Agok, who were found guilty of participating directly or indirectly in the attempted murder of Rumbek Bishop Christian Carlassare on April 26, 2021.

Fr John Mathiang was handed a seven-year jail term while Samuel Makir was sentenced to five years. Moris Sebit Ater and Lat Makur Agok were both sentenced to four

years in prison.

Bishop Carlassare, an Italian Combonian missionary, responded to the sentencing on Monday, saying that he prayed for "conversion and healing". He was consecrated on March 25, more than a year after his appointment was first announced. "As a Church, we look forward with hope during this Easter time and remember Jesus' call for forgiveness and unity," he said.

28-4-22

### **Council of Cardinals discusses environment, poverty, women**

(28-4-22) The Council of Cardinals—which was formed to advise Pope Francis on reform of the Roman Curia—met this week for the first time since the apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* was released, to discuss other issues.

A statement released by the Vatican press office on April 28 indicated that the group had spoken about "peace, health, poverty, fragile political situations, and pastoral problems of the local churches." The cardinals also discussed climate change and the role of women in the Church, the release said. Finally, the group spoke about the implementation of *Praedicate Evangelium*.

Pope Francis, who has usually attended all meetings of the Council of Cardinals, was not present at the April 27 session, having cancelled all appointments on doctors' orders. The Vatican has said that the Pope was resting because of pain in his knee, which made movement difficult.

### **Vatican trial places Pope Francis at centre of London deal**

(28-4-22) Tommaso Di Ruzza, who led the Vatican's Financial Information Authority from 2015 to 2020, is among the defendants in the Vatican trial related to a London property deal. Di Ruzza is accused of failing to alert Vatican prosecutors to the suspicious deal and failing to block a payment to the broker in the deal.

Di Ruzza testified that he did not have authority to block the payment and that "Pope Francis asked

him to help the Vatican Secretariat of State get full control” of the London property, the Associated Press reported.

### **Ukrainian Orthodox Primate: Russian Patriarch should be ‘condemned by the fullness of Orthodoxy’**

(28-4-22) Metropolitan Epiphanius I, the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, said in his Easter message that Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, “should be condemned by the fullness of Orthodoxy.” Metropolitan Epiphanius said that Patriarch Kirill “supported the war against Ukraine and consequently led those who trusted him as their shepherd to their death.” “No one with blood on his hands may hold the chalice,” Metropolitan Epiphanius added.

### **US commission names 15 ‘egregious’ violators of religious freedom**

(28-4-22) The governments of 15 nations—Afghanistan, Burma, China, Eritrea, India, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam—engage in, or tolerate, “systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations” of religious freedom, according to the 2022 annual report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

### **Gabon’s president meets Pontiff**

(28-4-22) Pope Francis met on April 28 with President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon. A Vatican statement issued after the meeting indicated that the discussion had centered on Church-state relations, and particularly the role of the Catholic Church in education.

### **Cardinal Carlos Amigo Vallejo, advocate for interreligious dialogue, dies at 87**

(28-4-22) Ordained to the priesthood in 1960, Cardinal Carlos Amigo Vallejo, OFM, was Archbishop of Tanger, Morocco (1974-82) and Archbishop of Seville, Spain (1982-2009). He was created a cardinal in 2003.

With the prelate’s passing, there are now 209 members of the College of Cardinals, 117 of whom are eligible to vote in a papal election.



### **Niger - The Easter cross carried by a people suffering from famine, lack of medicine, violence and insecurity**

(28-4-22) "We, the Christians of Dosso, form a small, very small, minority community in a predominantly Islamized society. We are happy but also fragile in the face of the diversity and multiplicity of colours in our fellow human beings", says Father Rafael Marco Casamayor, religious of the Society of African Missions (SMA) at the end of the Easter celebrations in their mission in Dosso. "We celebrated the Stations of the Cross on Lent Friday at sunset, when people finished their work. We gathered in the great space of the mission and we followed the path of Jesus' passion. It is the cross carried by my people who suffer from famine, lack of medicines, violence and insecurity," said Father Rafael. "I also think of the blind children of Gaya whom we carry in our arms and in Dosso, whom we hold by the hand, and the street children in Niamey. It is they who light our way, because with them we take up the cross that becomes love".

At the end of the Way of the Cross, the faithful collected donations for the needy and the proceeds of the collection were used to buy food and hygiene items to be distributed to the patients of the "La Madre y el Niño" hospital in Dosso.

### **Pakistan - Sentences, violence and murders for blasphemy**

(28-4-22) A so-called Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore has ruled in the murder of Sri Lankan citizen Priyantha Kumara, who was killed by a mob in Sialkot in December 2021 on charges of blasphemy. The court sentenced a total of six people to death and nine others to life imprisonment, while 72 defendants were sentenced to two years in prison. In addition, a total compensation of 600,000 Pakistani rupees (approximately 3,000 euros) is due to the victim's family.

Hundreds of protesters killed Priyantha Kumara, a Sri Lankan national and employee of Rajco Industries in Sialkot, and then burned his body. The man was brutally tortured to death on December 3, 2021 for alleged blasphemy: he had removed a sticker with an Islamic prayer from the company's production machine. Priyantha Kumara, who did not understand the Islamic text on the sticker, was monitoring the cleaning process ahead of an international delegation visiting the sporting goods manufacturer's production facility.

Only some weeks ago, three young Muslim women, aged 17, 21 and 24, who work at an Islamic Seminary, were arrested last week for killing a 21-year-old Muslim woman Safoora Bibi, their former colleague, after accusing her of blasphemy seen by a 13-year-old only in a dream!. Such blasphemy-related violence and killings continue.

### **Brazil - The Missionary Jubilee Year: "A time of awareness of the missio ad gentes"**

(28-4-22) "Our goal is to keep alive the memory of the missionary journey, but above all to see missionary action as a paradigm for all the work of the Church. The Jubilee brings us into this wonderful dynamic of all the forces of the Church of Brazil, which gives a certain unity to this richness and variety of projects developed," said Bishop Odelir José Magri of Chapecó, in his capacity as President of the Episcopal Commission for Missionary Action and Inter-ecclesial Cooperation of the Bishops' Conference of Brazil (CNBB).

During a press conference held on the sidelines of the CNBB Plenary Assembly, the Bishop recalled that since November 2021 the Church in Brazil has been celebrating the Missionary Jubilee, which, referring to the Aparecida document, has the central theme "The Church on Permanent Mission" and the motto "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8)



### **Indian archbishop dares govt to probe Christian schools**

(28-4-22) Archbishop Peter Machado of Bangalore, the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka has challenged the provincial government to inquire into how many students studying in close to 1000 Christian schools were converted to in the past 100 years.

He was reacting to the Karnataka government ordering a probe into the century-old Clarence High School in Bangalore, now Bengaluru, for allegedly insisting on carrying or studying the Bible as part of the curriculum.

"The education department has ordered an inquiry about whether the Bible is used or religion is taught in our [Christian] schools. I feel very hurt. We can bravely say that no student of other religion has become Christian in our school," the archbishop told media on April 28. He further said non-Christian students were not required to read the Bible and no Bible instructions were issued for them. "The education minister said the Bhagavad Gita [Hindu scripture] will be introduced next year as its moral education text, while the Bible and Quran are supposed to be religious texts so they will not be allowed," he added.

"The Clarence High School is more than 100 years old and no complaint of conversion was made any time against this school. The school has justified that moral education, based on the examples of the Bible, cannot be considered as forced religious education. The institutions run by other religious sects also give religious instruction based on their sacred books. It is extremely unfair to target only Christian institutions, and whatever good is being done is labeled as forced conversion," Archbishop Machado had said in a statement on April 26. He also clarified that "such a practice was there in the past and since last year no child is required to bring a Bible to the school or asked to read it by force." "Being a Christian minority school, it is within the rights of the management to conduct Bible or religion classes for Christians outside of the school hours," he explained.

### **Catholic missionaries face visa delay in Bangladesh**

(28-4-22) Bangladeshi authorities have withheld the visa extensions of four foreign missionaries including a nun reportedly due to negative intelligence reports, say church sources.

"I am leaving Bangladesh after nine years, not because I want to but because the government has not granted me a renewal of my permission to be here," said Colombian Father Belisaario De Jesus Ciro Montoya of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME). "I wanted to work for the people of this country." Father Montoya, fellow PIME missionary Father Pietro Parolari, Father Marcello Storgato of the Society of St. Francis Xavier for Foreign Missions, and Sister Lorna Caballero Bonghanoy of the Daughters of Jesus had applied to the Ministry of Religion to extend their visas in 2020.

The Ministry of Religion clarified that it approves visas only if there is a positive report from various intelligence agencies of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In the case of the foreign missionaries — Father Storgato and Father Parolari are Italian while Sister Lorna is from the Philippines — clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs was still awaited. However, a church official dealing with visa-related issues faced by missionaries said the intelligence agencies had issued a negative report leading to the withholding of the extensions.

### **Christians join strike demanding Sri Lankan govt resign**

(28-4-22) Christians have joined a mass strike staged by trade unions nationwide calling for the Sri Lankan government to resign as the country faces its worst economic crisis in decades. Around 1,000 public and private sector unions organized a massive strike on April 28 demanding the resignation of the president and the current government. Christian schools and institutions have also closed to show solidarity with the striking workers. Priests and nuns who work in schools and institutions said they would continue to support the non-violent struggle until the government resigns.



### **Philippine labour group touts pro-worker poll candidates**

(28-4-22) Church People-Workers Solidarity group, a Philippine Church labour group, and a bishop have urged people to vote for politicians with a clear platform on how to protect workers from abuses. They have said every Catholic voter must ask themselves whether politicians protect the labour sector.

"Voters must consider candidates that prioritize and advance the labour agenda ... We must look at the track record of each candidate and ask ourselves who among them has shown compassion to labourers," the group's chairman, Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of San Carlos in Negros Occidental in the Visayas region, told Radyo Veritas. Bishop Alminaza said politicians should be held accountable for their promises, especially if they had not fulfilled them: "Pro-labour politicians must immediately scrap anti-labor laws that perpetuate oppression and exploitation and craft others that promote and protect the rights and dignity of workers."

29-4-22

### **Abuse commission will retain independence, Pope promises**

(29-4-22) Although the special papal commission on sexual abuse has been incorporated into the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Pope Francis has assured the group on April 29 that it will retain its autonomy.

### **Pope encourages Polish pilgrims to cultivate ecumenism and mercy**

(29-4-22) On April 28, Pope Francis received 2,000 pilgrims from the Archdiocese of Lodz in Poland. The pilgrimage was ecumenical in nature, and included Orthodox and Calvinist leaders. During his address, Pope Francis paid tribute to the archdiocese's first bishop, Bishop Wincenty

Tymieniecki, who died in 1934.

“Through his episcopal ministry the Holy Spirit has inscribed these two essential aspects of Christianity —mercy and ecumenism —in the ‘DNA’ of your Church in Łódź, as a legacy and task for generations to come,” Pope Francis said. “Today mercy requires great ‘imagination.’”

### **Swiss priests say diocesan policy would ‘muzzle the doctrine of faith and morality’**

(29-4-22) Some priests in the Swiss Diocese of Chur are resisting a new code of conduct, charging that it is a bid to “implant LGBT ideology in the Church under the guise of assault prevention.” The Chur Circle of Priests has objected to the code—which was approved by Bishop Joseph Bonnemain—for discouraging a clear statement of the Church’s teachings on human sexuality. The group pointed out that priests are being asked to affirm that they will “refrain from sweeping negative assessments of allegedly unbiblical behaviour based on sexual orientation.”

### **Family is asset to society, Pope tells Pontifical Academy**

(29-4-22) At an April 29 meeting with members of the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences, Pope Francis stressed the importance of the family as a “relational asset.” The family, the Pope explained, should be recognized as an asset to society, not merely because the family supports its individual members, but more importantly because “it is a relational bond of perfection.” The family, the Pope said, is a model for the acceptance of “frail or disabled members.” He called for support of “family-friendly social, economic, and cultural policies.”

### **Vatican intervenes in dispute between Carmelites, Argentine archbishop**

(29-4-22) The Vatican’s Congregation for Religious has stepped into a dispute between Archbishop Mario Antonio Cargnello of Salta, Argentina, and a local community of Discalced Carmelites. The Congregation announced that an “apostolic assistant” would be appointed to oversee the Carmelite monastery, following the conclusion of a Vatican investigation, which found that the nuns had improperly given support to an alleged lay visionary, acting “against the will of the bishop and the priests of the diocese.” The Vatican faulted the Carmelites for allowing a lay woman, who claims to have received apparitions of the Virgin Mary for years, to live at the monastery and release her messages without ecclesiastical approval.

### **Mexican Church leaders blame State for violence against women**

(29-4-22) “The State has a high degree of responsibility, since it has failed in education – which is the basis for a country to have a healthy social structure – in guaranteeing security to its citizens and in guaranteeing justice to the victims,” the Mexico City archdiocese said following the murder of a young woman, in a nation where “an average of more than 18 women go missing every day.”



### **Africa - Appeals continue to support the populations of the Horn of Africa who risk dying of hunger and thirst**

(29-4-22) Millions of people across East Africa are facing extreme levels of hunger and malnutrition. The region's food insecurity continues to be exacerbated by ongoing conflicts, severe drought, locust plagues and shortages of humanitarian funds. Caritas Australia supports African partners, including Caritas Ethiopia, in providing life-saving essentials to displaced families and communities that have been affected by this severe food

insecurity.

The most vulnerable families are fleeing their homes in search of clean water, food and arable land, leading to a significant increase in internally displaced persons.

### **Ethiopia - Population on the brink: the humanitarian action of the Church, which asks for peace**



(29-4-22) "At the end of 2021, when we understood that the conflict would continue, we agreed that more attention would be needed and to start an aid program. At that point, the Church, the Bishops, the clergy took action to seek different sources and bring aid not only in Tigray. We launched an appeal and a fundraiser was launched which involved Caritas Internationalis, and other organizations such as Cafod, the Italian Caritas itself and others, and we reached the figure of around 2 million euros". This is said by Shiferaw Mamo, the Program Manager of Caritas Ethiopia. The fund collected will be directed only to the populations of Tigray but also of other regions such as Amhara, Afar and Oromia.

### **Costa Rica - More than 13,000 vaccines against Covid carried out in parishes last weekend**

(29-4-22) Last weekend April 23/24, 170 parishes in Costa Rica joined the "Complete your scheme" ("Completá tu esquema") campaign so that children and adults can complete their vaccination programme against Covid 19. The Bishops' Conference informs that the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) has registered the administration of a total of 13,340 doses of the vaccine, of which 11,262 were for people over 12 years of age and 2,078 for children between 5 and 11.

### **Vietnam's Protestants told not to leave church**

(29-4-22) The head of a government-sanctioned Protestant church in northern Vietnam has called on local people to stay away from heresies and be loyal to the church. Pastor Bui Van San, the new head of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam's northern branch, noted that many Protestant sects including heresies are inducing his followers to join their groups.

### **Kazakhstan president greets bishops at first plenary meeting**

(29-4-22) President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan has conveyed good wishes to the participants of the first plenary meeting of the newly created Catholic Bishops' Conference of Central Asia (CBCCA) held in national capital Nur-Sultan on April 27-29. Bishop José Luis Mumbiela Sierra of the Diocese of the Holy Trinity in Almaty is elected president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Central Asia for the next four years.

30-4-22

### **Egypt - The Grand Mufti Shawki Allam: no Islamic prohibition on sharing "fast-breaking" dinners with Christians during Ramadan**

(30-4-22) There are no provisions in the Koran and in the Sunnah that prohibit Muslims from sharing the evening meal of "breaking the fast" (Al-Fitr) with Christian friends, relatives or acquaintances during the Muslim month of fasting Ramadan. This is what is reported by Sheikh Shawki Ibrahim Abdel-Karim Allam, current Grand Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and finds space in the Egyptian media just as all the Islamic communities in the world are preparing to celebrate Eid al Fitr, the feast that concludes the holy month dedicated to fasting, prayer and almsgiving.



### **Pakistan - Civil society to the government: do more to protect religious freedom**

(30-4-22) "The condition of religious freedom in Pakistan raises concern: we are witnessing dozens of episodes of mob violence, the improper use of blasphemy laws, forced conversions and desecration of places of worship. Violence in the name of religion is on the rise due to the government's lack of capacity to stop radicalization and religious extremism despite the fact that it should have been the priority agenda, a commitment to the 2014 National Action Plan to Combat Terrorism". This was stated by Joseph Jansen, president of "Voice for Justice" (VFJ), a Pakistani organization committed to human rights and religious freedom.

Alongside "Voice for Justice", several civil society associations have spoken out after the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent body, in the latest 2022 Report, notes that Pakistan "(it) has not taken effective measures to address violations of religious freedom, including mob violence and extrajudicial killings in the name of religion". Sharing these concerns, civil society urges the government to introduce measures to prevent acts of discrimination and violence against religious communities and to adopt political reforms to promote tolerance and diversity.

**Brazil - Bishops call for urgent change of course: "The situation is very serious"**

(30-4-22) The serious health crisis caused by the Covid 19 pandemic "has also plunged our country into a complex and systemic ethical, economic, social and political crisis, which had already challenged us well before the pandemic, causing structural inequalities to explode that are ingrained in Brazilian society", write the Bishops of Brazil in their message sent at the end of the first phase, held in virtual form from April 25 to 29, of their 59th General Assembly.

1-5-22

**Pope at Regina Coeli: May we rediscover the impulse to do good**

(1-5-22) Speaking to pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square for the recitation of the Sunday noon Regina Coeli, Pope Francis offered his customary reflections on the day's Gospel reading, which recounts the third appearance of the Risen Lord to the Apostles, when He met them on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. When the Apostle Peter told the other disciples he was going fishing the others accepted and went along with him. When in spite of their long and hard work, they failed to catch fish, Jesus tenderly addresses them as "children," inviting them to cast their nets again, which this time are filled, overflowing with fish. The Pope suggested that when "our nets are empty in life," we should not stop and feel sorry for ourselves and try to forget things, but courageously set out to begin anew and seek Jesus to help us.

The Pope said Peter needed that stunning surprise when the Lord appeared to them, and the Apostle John's exclamation, "It is the Lord!" Peter immediately dove into the water to meet the Lord, "a gesture of love," the Pope explained, coming from wonder and the love that "inspires creative, freely-given zeal." Peter dives in to meet the Lord on the shore, reflecting his "new-found enthusiasm." Jesus then asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" The Pope explained that the Lord addresses the same question to us today, as faith is a question of love, overcoming our fears to start anew with the courage to "dive in", and to let go of our past, which can keep us from serving God and our brothers and sisters.

**Pope "grieves" for suffering people of Ukraine, underscores the dignity of work for all, honours then newly beatified and recalls Press Freedom Day**



(1-5-22) After leading the recitation of the Regina Coeli prayer on Sunday, Pope Francis recalled the suffering people of Ukraine, inviting all the faithful, in this month dedicated to the Mother of God, to pray every day a Rosary for peace, overcoming "a macabre regression of humanity."

That day being the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, Pope Francis recalled the dignity of work for all. He also paid tribute to two newly beatified in Milan Fr. Mario Ciceri, a country parish priest, devoted to prayer and hearing confessions, a gentle educator and guide for young people, and Armida Barelli, founder and animator of the Women's Youth of Catholic Action

He reminded the faithful that May 3rd marks World Press Freedom Day. He thanked journalists "who courageously and even risking their lives inform us about the scourges of humanity."

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