

CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

22-28 Aug 2022

22-8-22

Cardinal Becciu claims Pope has reinstated him

(22-8-22) Cardinal Angelo Becciu, the key figure in the Vatican's landmark financial trial, has said that Pope Francis reinstated his privileges as a member of the College of Cardinals.

Cardinal Becciu told a congregation in Sardinia that the Pope had invited him to participate in a consistory of cardinals to be held later this month. He said that the Pope assured him he would be "reinstated in my cardinalatial functions."

Cardinal Becciu was forced to relinquish his privileges as a cardinal—although he was allowed to retain the title—in 2020, when Vatican prosecutors presented criminal accusations against him.

New leader for Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association

(22-8-22) Archbishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing has been elected president of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, and Bishop Shen Bin has been chosen to lead the Council of Chinese Bishops. Both groups are backed by the Chinese government.

The elections took place during the Wuhan 10th National Assembly of Chinese Catholic Representatives, under the auspices of the Communist Party. Pope Benedict XVI wrote that the role of the Patriotic Association could not be reconciled with the Catholic faith.



Four nuns kidnapped in Nigeria

(22-8-22) Four women religious, members of the Sisters of Jesus the Savior, were kidnapped in southeast Nigeria on August 21. Sisters Johannes Nwodo, Christabel Echemazu, Liberata Mbamalu, and Benita Agu were taken prisoner when their car was stopped by gunmen. The kidnapping of clerics and religious has become increasingly common in Nigeria, prompting Church leaders to challenge the government to provide security.

Nicaraguan bishop wants stronger stand from Pope

(22-8-22) Bishop Silvio Baez, a strong critic of Nicaragua's government, voiced his disappointment after Pope Francis called for "dialogue" with the Ortega regime, following the arrest of Bishop Rolando Alvarez.

"It is necessary to ask for freedom," Bishop Baez said on August 21, as he celebrated Mass in Miami, where he is living in exile. "We must not negotiate." Bishop Baez was serving as an auxiliary in Managua until 2019, when he left Nicaragua, on the advice of Pope Francis, because of a series of death threats.

Europe faces 'genuine environmental catastrophe,' bishops warn

(22-8-22) The Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe has published "Listen to the voice of Creation," a statement for the Season of Creation.

The season, begun as an ecumenical initiative, was later embraced by the Vatican. It begins on September 1—the World Day of Prayer for Creation in the Orthodox churches (since 1989) and the Catholic Church (since 2015)—and concludes on October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

Shadow of war looms over Pope's Kazakhstan visit

Pope Francis begins a three-day apostolic journey to Kazakhstan on September 13. The Pope is

scheduled to take part in the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and is expected to meet Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, who has supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

3 days of war in Gaza: 'The situation seems unreal'

(22-8-22) Father Gabriel Romanelli, parish priest of the Catholic parish in Gaza, offers his perspective on Operation Breaking Dawn, a three-day Israeli military operation against the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine.

Sant'Egidio founder meets Pope

(22-8-22) On August 20, Pope Francis received Andrea Riccardi, the founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, which is known for its work on behalf of peacemaking and service to the needy. The two discussed the war in Ukraine, as well as "the importance of the role that religions can play in favor of peace and the need to double the efforts to welcome refugees with humanitarian corridors," according to the Community.

Riccardi founded the Community of Sant'Egidio in 1968; the Vatican recognized it as an international lay association in 1986.

Philippines - From the Silsilah Movement a call for dialogue and peace

(22-8-22) "Since 1984 we have been promoting the culture of dialogue as a path to peace in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines and throughout the world. Today we resume our journey with an even more intense message", said Benson M. Rance, one of the leaders of the "Silsilah" Movement for Islamic-Christian dialogue, active in the southern Philippines, founded by the Catholic missionary Father Sebastiano D'Ambrà, of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions. After a two-year break due to the pandemic, the "Silsilah" Movement has resumed its "face-to-face" training courses and seminars, which are held at the Harmony Village, near the city of Zamboanga, on the island of Mindanao, in the southern Philippines.



The movement starts from a concrete experience of coexistence between Christians and Muslims in the same place (the Harmony Village) and expands its cultural and spiritual work to spread a lifestyle based on dialogue as a path to peace, in four dimensions: dialogue with God, dialogue with oneself, dialogue with one's neighbor, dialogue with creation.

Turkey - For the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, an Armenian becomes Governor of a district

(22-8-22) 27-year-old Berk Acar is the first Armenian Christian to become governor of a district in the history of the Republic of Turkey. The news, echoed by the Turkish media, is yet another confirmation of the features that characterize the condition of the Armenian community in Erdogan's Turkey and the tenor of its participation in the country's political and institutional dynamics.

The young Armenian jurist participated with excellent results in the governor selection tests, held in Ankara in 2021. A few days ago, his appointment as the new governor of the Babadağ district, in the southeastern province of Denizli, was made official.

The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Sahak II Masalyan, had at the beginning of 2020 declared to the Turkish media: "All the minorities present in Turkey share this same opinion: under the power of the Akp Party, we are experiencing the most peaceful and happy period since the foundation of the Turkish Republic."

Asian Church 'stands at crossroads of history'

(22-8-22) Cardinal Charles Bo of Myanmar, president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), has said that the Catholic Church in Asia stands at the crossroads of history

amid poverty, climate change, political conflicts, disagreements, and economic collapse. He said this in his address at the opening of the federation's golden jubilee celebrations on Aug. 22. The jubilee programmes will conclude on Oct. 30, with a two-week FABC gathering in Bangkok.

"We gather amidst suffocating clouds of conflict and displacements, the collapse of the economy, frightening climate change, pandemic, and starvation of millions. Secularism is on the ascendency in the traditionally Christian world," said Cardinal Bo. Authoritarian leadership is also becoming the norm in too many countries, he added. "Democracy faces stiff challenges. Fundamentalism and religious violence threaten global peace. We are called upon to examine ourselves as to what could be the role of Asian churches in these challenging moments," the cardinal said.

He said much had been achieved in the past 50 years and thanked the theologians and others who provided the intellectual identity to the FABC. He said Asian Christianity is in the process of shedding its alien baggage and becoming truly indigenous to the region, he added.

Cardinal Ranjith calls for system change in Sri Lanka

(22-8-22) Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith has said that the Sri Lankan leaders if they are honest and not involved in the 2019 Easter attacks, should not be afraid of investigations.

He said this while addressing the solemn healing service and blessing of the sick at Tewatta Basilica in Ragama, some 20 kilometers north of Colombo on Aug. 21 attended by thousands of pilgrims including bishops, priests, nuns and lay people.

Cardinal Ranjith said it is clear from the recent unfortunate events in the country that selfishness and sin have reigned for 75 years.

"We want to bring a system change and everyone must change their lives," he said.

Cardinal Ranjith said that rulers who came promising to make Sri Lanka the miracle of Asia left only a big tower in the end. More than a quarter of the people of the country are struggling to get one meal per day, the cardinal added.

More Myanmar Christians flee to India

(22-8-22) Hundreds of people from Myanmar's Christian-stronghold Chin state have been forced to flee to neighboring Mizoram state in India following more attacks on civilians by the military.

At least 200 crossed into Mizoram in the past few days after the military torched a village in Chin state and abducted five people, including two teenagers, on Aug. 14, according to Indian newspapers.

Local media reports said at least 15 houses were set ablaze in Haimual village, Tedim township in northern Chin state and two siblings, aged 17 and 15, were killed during the raid. Their bodies were found near Haimual later in the day.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates there are at least 41,000 refugees currently in India's northeast.



Indian bishop quits to become a hermit

(22-8-22) A Catholic bishop has become a hermit, quitting his position to fulfill his long-cherished desire, the first such case in the Catholic Church in India.

Auxiliary Bishop Jacob Muricken (57) of Palai diocese of the eastern rite Syro-Malabar Church based in the southern state of Kerala left the bishop's house on Aug. 15 to be a monk and moved to a hermitage he built in Nallathanni in Kanjirappally diocese.

"Bishop Muricken took this decision following approval from the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church," Father Joseph Maleparampil told UCA News on Aug 22, a week after the bishop left the bishop's house. "The bishop will spend his remaining life in prayer in isolation and continue to hold the title of bishop. This is the first case in India's Catholic Church where a bishop has become a hermit," Father Maleparampil said.

Vietnam promotes evangelization in small communities

(22-8-22) Archbishop Joseph Vu Van Thien of Hanoi has urged Catholics from small sub-parishes to bear witness to the Good News in their daily lives as a way to bring Christian values to others. "Evangelization does not mean to do major things but to live a good and simple life. Please try to build happy families, pay much attention to offer faith education to children, be honest in your livelihood, stay clear of drug abuse, treat drug abusers with love and respect," the 61-year-old prelate said during his August 20-21 pastoral visit.

Indian state to drop charges against tribal activists

(22-8-22) Catholic activists in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand say a proposal to withdraw criminal cases against a tribal rights movement is too little and too late.

The Pathalgadi movement was started in 2017 by tribal people in Khunti district to assert their rights, including the right to sovereign territory. Several clashes between its members and the authorities saw a number of its members charged with sedition and other offenses. But the state government proposal of August 20 regards only some on the list from Gumla district whereas more than 10,000 people are named in the FIR register in police stations across the state. The preceding Bharatiya Janata Party government regarded the Pathalgadi movement as anti-government and many were charged with sedition.



23-8-22

Pope orders all Vatican offices to deposit funds in Vatican bank

(23-9-22) Pope Francis has issued a canonical order for all agencies of the Holy See to deposit their liquid assets in the Institute for Religious Works (IOR), the Vatican bank.

In a rescript published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on August 23, the Pope said that the apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* should be understood to mean that the IOR has the sole authority to manage "the movable assets of the Holy See and of the institutions linked to the Holy See."

The papal order makes it clear that Vatican offices are not to maintain separate bank accounts in non-Vatican institutions. The policy clearly applies to the Secretariat of State, which moved funds through other institutions to carry out the ill-fated London real-estate deal that is the basis for the current landmark criminal trial.

The new policy takes effect September 1, with all Vatican institutions required to transfer funds from other banks to the IOR "as soon as possible."

Vatican statement raises questions about Cardinal Becciu's 'reinstatement'

A statement from the Vatican is throwing new light on Cardinal Angelo Becciu's claim that he has been restored to his privileges as a member of the College of Cardinals.

A story in Vatican News, citing unnamed sources at the Holy See, confirmed that Cardinal Becciu has been invited to participate in the consistory of cardinals this weekend. But it "noted that the rights of the cardinalate do not refer to participation in the life of the Church." The Vatican News story went on to say that cardinals might receive "an invitation—at times personal—to attend certain meetings reserved to them."

The story on the Vatican's official site suggested that Cardinal Becciu's invitation to attend the consistory did not necessarily mean that he would be restored to other privileges, such as the ability to vote in a papal conclave.

In note to nuns, Pope says he is doing everything he can for Ukraine

(23-8-22) "I am doing all I can for Ukraine," Pope Francis wrote in a letter to Sister Teresina Longo, whose Italian religious community is hosting Ukrainian orphans. "We are witnessing cruelty."

Leading Chinese bishops pledge to promote Xi Jinping's socialist thought

(23-8-22) “It is necessary to unite and lead the priests, elders and faithful to follow Xi Jinping’s thought on socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a ‘New Era,’ continue to hold high patriotism and love for religion, adhere to the principles of independent and self-run churches,” said Archbishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing and Bishop Joseph Shen Bin of Haimen, the new leaders of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and Bishops’ Conference of the Catholic Church in China.

As Pope calls for dialogue, Nicaraguan police continue harassing Catholics

(23-8-22) On August 21, police and paramilitary forces surrounded a parish in Masaya, a western Nicaraguan city of 190,000.

Pakistan’s government seeks action against human-rights lobby

(23-8-22) Pakistan’s interior ministry is reportedly asking the Punjab state government to take action against the Centre for Social Justice, a Christian human—rights organization that has fought against abuse of the country’s blasphemy laws.

The federal government reportedly classified statements from the Centre, protesting legislation against “forced conversion,” as “fake news,” and suggested government action to curb the Centre’s activities.

Economic squeeze adds to Christian exodus from Middle East, says Chaldean Patriarch

(23-8-22) Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako has warned that a slowdown in the global economy, combined with the fallout from the war in Ukraine, has increased the pressure on Christians to emigrate from the Middle East.

The Iraqi patriarch said that the resources of the Church in the region have been strained. “The charities that helped us are now focusing their efforts on Ukraine,” he said. “Donations and collections are very small, the offerings do not arrive, the rents of

the buildings—already very low—are not paid regularly...”

The net result, the Chaldean Patriarch said, is that young Christian families are leaving the region where the Church began.

Argentine bishops oppose legalization of euthanasia

(23-8-22) “We are facing a new manifestation of the culture of death and the throwaway culture,” warned the Committee for Life, the Laity, and the Family of the Argentine Bishops’ Conference. “Even in cases of diseases that have no cure, all patients must be cared for and accompanied so that their lives are respected until natural death.”

Ukrainian clergy say Russian occupiers target them with threats, violence

(23-8-22) “Dozens of priests from the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the country’s largest denomination, have been kidnapped or killed since the invasion began,” according to the report. Archbishop Evstratiy of Chernihiv said that “the hunt for Ukrainian Orthodox priests began in the first days of the war.”

Vatican official to lead Schoenstatt fathers

(23-8-22) The secretary of the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life has been elected superior general of the Schoenstatt Fathers, who are part of the Schoenstatt Apostolic Movement. Father Alexandre Awi Mello, 51, ISch, was ordained a Schoenstatt priest in 2001; Pope Francis named him secretary of the dicastery in 2017.

The beatification cause of Father Joseph Kentenich (1885-1968), the movement’s founder, was recently put on hold as abuse allegations are investigated.



Angola - President of CEAST: "May tomorrow's vote take place in a spirit of peace, reconciliation, unity and fraternity"

(23-8-22) "May the Angolan people show on August 24 the maturity that they have always shown at other times and may political leaders abandon all resentment, all hatred, and not seek power for power's sake, but pursue peace to favour the progress of the Angolan people". This is the call made to politicians and the Angolan people by Archbishop José Manuel Imbamba of Saurimo and President of the Episcopal Conference of Angola and São Tomé (CEAST) in a statement to journalists, at the end of a ceremony organized by MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) with different religious confessions.

On August 24, votes are to be held in Angola to elect the new President and renew Parliament. It was feared that social tensions could lead to violent clashes on election day. For this reason, the Angolan bishops promoted a national novena of prayer on August 15 to ask God, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, that the elections take place in peace.

Iraq - The alarm of Chaldean Patriarch Sako: world crisis and war in Ukraine aggravate the "alarming" exodus of Christians from the Middle East

(23-8-22) The world economic crisis and the global situation marked by the Russian military invasion in Ukraine are also having serious effects on the network of charitable and social works promoted by the Churches in the Middle East. This circumstance is driving the exodus of Christians from the region of the world where Jesus was born, died and rose again. Iraqi Cardinal Louis Raphael Sako, patriarch of the Chaldean Church, raised the alarm about this during his speech with which he inaugurated the work of the annual Synod of Chaldean Bishops being held in Baghdad from August 21 to 27.

In one of the seven points in which he articulated his speech, Patriarch Sako provided details to illustrate the direct effects of the world crisis and the ongoing war in Europe also on the economic stability of the ecclesial solidarity networks active in the Middle East.

The Cardinal explained that "this situation has a negative impact on the economic state of the Church in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon", where the entire population is affected by unemployment, poverty or limitations in water and electricity services.

Thousands flee as Typhoon Ma-on lashes Philippines

(23-8-22) A strong tropical storm has made landfall in the northern Philippines, forcing thousands to flee their homes for safety and prompting the authorities to suspend classes in education institutes.

Typhoon Ma-on, locally known as 'Florita' hit Isabela province in the Luzon region on Aug. 23, triggering strong winds, tidal surges, and flooding, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

The authorities have evacuated thousands of families as flooding coupled with strong winds inundated vast areas as the storm moved northwest. At least 560 families in Tuguegarao province in Cagayan and Isabela provinces were evacuated to government schools and basketball courts without food and water, according to Philippine National Police. Constante Foronda, provincial disaster risk-reduction management officer has also appealed to the Catholic Church's social arm, Caritas, for providing potable water and rice to the typhoon victims.



Concerns over Sri Lanka's use of anti-terror law

(23-8-22) Western nations and global rights groups have urged Sri Lanka not to detain activists under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and called for its abolition.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe last week approved the detention of Venerable Galwewa Siridamma Thera, a Buddhist monk, Wasantha Mudalige, convener of the Inter-University Students Federation, and activist Hashantha Jeewantha Gunathilake, for a period of 90-days under the PTA.

US Ambassador Julie Chung took to Twitter. "Using laws that don't conform with international human rights standards - like the PTA - erodes democracy in Sri Lanka. We encourage the government to uphold the rights of the people to express their views," she said.

The EU delegation in Sri Lanka too tweeted to remind the government of its commitment to the moratorium on the use of the PTA. "Concerned about reports on the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in recent arrests," it said in a tweet.

Pakistani Christian youth take first step to overcome bias



(23-8-22) When a batch of 25 young Pakistani Christians was enrolled at the Punjab Vocational Training Institute last month, it was hailed as a step forward in the struggle against religion-based discrimination.

The institute, supported by the Zakat and Ushr departments of the Punjab government, offers monthly scholarships to Muslim students only as the funds come from the obligatory taxes required of Muslims.

"Christians are not entitled to it by Shariah law," says Father Morris Jalal, parish priest of St. Columban's Church, which is barely a kilometer from the institute. The 25 students

admitted this year are members of the Good Samaritan Youth Group formed by Father Jalal to help youngsters from a semi-rural parish, which is home to 2500 Christian families. The parents of most students are employed as sanitary workers or housemaids earning low income. But with Father Jalal having arranged for funding their education, the students' parents only have to bear Rs 1,000.

24-8-22

Pope reverses policy on Vatican finances

(24-8-22) The rescript issued by Pope Francis this week, ordering all Vatican offices to deposit their funds in the Vatican bank, represents a reversal of the policy that the Pope himself set earlier this year in *Praedicate Evangelium*, argues Ed Condon of The Pillar.

That apostolic constitution gave APSA (the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See) primary control over Vatican investments. But now, with what he termed a "clarification" of that order, the Pope has directed that all liquid assets will be entrusted to the Institute for Religious Works (IOR), the Vatican bank—leaving APSA with only the Vatican's real-estate portfolio.

APSA and the IOR have vied for control of Vatican investments, with the Secretariat of State also seeking to preserve its free hand in handling funds. The August 23 order appears to give the IOR exclusive authority over cash investments, with APSA handling real estate and the Secretariat of State losing financial autonomy.

As Condon notes, the IOR, once the primary focus of complaints about financial corruption at the Vatican, has undergone serious reform in the past several years, and now earns high grades from European banking overseers for transparency. The same cannot be said for APSA and other Vatican offices. (*Pillar*)

Pope concludes series of talks on old age

(24-8-22) At his weekly public audience on August 24, Pope Francis wrapped up his series of catechetical talks on old age, with a reflection on the Assumption of the Virgin. Here is what he said:

Our series of catecheses on old age in the light of God's word now concludes with a reflection on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated in these days of August. Our Lady's assumption,

body and soul, into heaven is intimately bound to the resurrection of Jesus her Son and to its promise of our own bodily resurrection at the end of time. Following his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and showed them the signs of his passion and death. He revealed that, in the life to come, the “flesh” of our individual identity, our memories, experiences and personal history, will endure and be transfigured in the presence of the living God. Our Lord describes the life of the resurrection with images of joy and fulfilment, as we, and our world, will be “reborn”, and the seeds we have sown on earth will bear eternal fruit. The season of life which we call “old age” is thus a privileged time to grow in the wisdom born of faith, to view our lives in their proper perspective, through God’s eyes, and to look forward with joy to the fulfilment of our hope in the glory of heaven, in communion with Our Lady and all the saints.

Pope prays for Ukraine, raps ‘madness’ of warfare

(24-8-22) Pope Francis offered a prayer for the people of Ukraine at the conclusion of his public audience on August 24.

The Pope took note of the fact that the war in Ukraine has now raged for six months. He spoke about the “madness” of warfare, and asked the faithful not to forget the innocent victims of conflict—not only in Ukraine, but also in Syria, Myanmar, and Yemen.

Ukrainian Catholic archbishop fears Putin’s ‘genocidal intent’

(24-8-22) The leading Ukrainian Catholic bishop in the US reports that the people of Ukraine believe Vladimir Putin has “genocidal intent,” and sees little prospect of a negotiated peace in the nation. “How do you negotiate with someone who’s genocidal?” asked Archbishop Borys Gudziak of Philadelphia in a conversation with Crux. He also blamed the Russian Orthodox Church.

Theologian at Pontifical Academy for Life claims one may dissent from Church teaching on contraception

(24-8-22) “Contraception is considered an intrinsically evil act,” said Father Maurizio Chiodi, a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life since 2017. “I believe that we should not deny the existence of intrinsically evil acts, but that we need to think together about what an act is at its source, overcoming an objectified interpretation of it, that is, one that is independent of any circumstance, effect and intention in the actions of those involved.”

Pope says he seeks dialogue with the world’s bishops

(24-8-22) Pope Francis spoke of his desire for open dialogue among the world’s bishops, in a statement released August 24 to mark the 50th anniversary of the *motu proprio Ministeria Quaedam* by Pope Paul VI.

With that document, Pope Paul VI reformed the minor orders (lectors, acolytes). Pope Francis said that he hopes “to share the richness of the ministerial experiences” in different parts of the world since that time.

The purpose of this dialogue, the Pope continue, would be “to listen to the voice of the Spirit without stopping the process, being careful not to want to force it by imposing choices that are the fruit of ideological viewpoints.”



Sudanese authorities urged to investigate murder of permanent deacon’s children

(24-8-22) Extremists in Sudan's Darfur region set fire to Deacon Azrag Barnab's home. Sudan is a northeastern African nation of 46.8 million that is 92% Muslim and 4% Christian, with 3% adhering to ethnic religions. Sudan is distinct from largely Christian and animist South Sudan.

Nigeria - "Unconditional release" of the 4 Nigerian nuns kidnapped on Sunday

(24-8-22) The four nuns, members of Sisters of Jesus The Saviour, kidnapped on August 21 have been released unconditionally the next day. The freed Sisters, Johannes Nwodo, Christabel Echemazu, Liberata Mbamalu and Benita Agu, were kidnapped on their way to a thanksgiving mass of one of their colleagues.

Ethiopia - Resumption of fighting in Tigray: government and rebels accuse each other of having interrupted the truce

(24-8-22) War resumes in Tigray, the region in northern Ethiopia, devastated by the conflict that broke out in November 2020.

"The Ethiopian forces, together with the special forces and the Amhara militias, began a large-scale attack around 5 (on August 24) in the direction of Alamata, in southern Tigray", says a statement from the Tigrinyan forces. Accusations rejected by the Ethiopian government, which confirm the resumption of the war, however, affirm that it was the Tigrayans who attacked, breaking the truce.



Lebanon - The Armenian Catholic Bishops: May Saint Nerses "the gracious" be recognized as the Patron saint of unity among the Churches

(24-8-22) Given the current historical processes that are pitting peoples against each other and also endangering unity among Christians, the proposal of the Catholic Armenian Bishops deserves special attention: to use on the anniversary of the death of the Armenian Saint Nerses Schnorhali (the Gracious) to retrace the prophetic paths paved by the humility of this 12th-century saint

towards the full restoration of sacramental and doctrinal unity between the Church of Rome, the Church of Armenia and the Church of Constantinople.

The Armenian Catholic Bishops defined and relaunched their proposal on the occasion of their annual synod, held from 17 to 22 August in Lebanon, at the Patriarchal Monastery of Our Lady of Bzommar under the presidency of Patriarch Raphaël Bedros XXI Minassian. During the Synod, the Armenian Catholic Bishops made the commitment to promote in collaboration with the hierarchies of the Armenian Apostolic Church conferences, seminars, editorial works on Saint Nerses, and they also sent Pope Francis the request to celebrate a solemn pontifical liturgy in St. Peter's Basilica, in view of a possible and shared proclamation of the Armenian saint as the Patron saint of unity among the Churches.

Nerses (1102-1173) belonged to the Pahlavuni dynasty and was "Catholicos of the Armenians" based in Hromkla and the most outstanding Armenian theologian and poet of his time. He received his monastic name (after St. Nerses I Parthev) and his education at the Red Monastery (Karmir Vank) at Kessoun (today Çakırhüyük, Besni, Adıyaman Province). Nerses Schnorhali was ordained a priest in 1120 and a bishop in 1125.

His insights remain valuable sources of inspiration for those who today see the ecumenical process in jeopardy, which was enthusiastically and promisingly launched after Vatican II.

No justice for Rohingya 5 years after Myanmar crackdown

(24-8-22) More than 730,000 Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar's western Rakhine state fled to neighboring Bangladesh where they live in squalid camps following the military's bloody crackdown in August 2017.

More than 600,000 remain in religiously-divided Rakhine state where they have been restricted from freedom of movement and access to healthcare, education and employment.

“Governments should mark the five-year anniversary of the devastating campaign against the Rohingya with a coordinated international strategy for accountability and justice that draws on Rohingya input,” Elaine Pearson, acting Asia director at HRW, said.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, who visited camps in Bangladesh on Aug. 17, said the current situation across the border means that conditions are not right for their return.

Blasphemy-accused Christian granted bail in Pakistan

(24-8-22) Pakistan’s Supreme Court granted bail to a Christian sanitary worker on Aug. 23, more than 18 months after he was arrested for allegedly preaching the gospel to young Muslims and insulting Islam.

Salamat Mansha Masih, a cleaning worker employed by Lahore Waste Management Company, was detained in January 2021 and charged with blasphemy. He and his companion Haroon Masih were accused of preaching Christianity to four students in a park in Lahore, the capital of Punjab province. Haroon Masih obtained bail in February last year.

The two-judge bench of Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah granted bail to Salamat Masih for a bail bond of 500,00 rupees (about US\$231). In a rare comment, the court said that the accused should be protected until the allegation was proved and the state has a special responsibility to ensure the protection of the blasphemy accused. People accused of blasphemy often face violence and even death at the hands of fanatic groups in the Muslim-majority nation.

Strong quake hits off coast of Indonesia's South Sumatra

(24-8-22) A 6.0-magnitude earthquake hit off the coast of Indonesia late Tuesday, according to the US Geological Survey, sending people fleeing their homes but with no casualties or damage immediately reported.

The shallow quake occurred in the waters off the southwestern coast of Sumatra island, at around 9:30 pm (1430 GMT) -- nearest to Bengkulu, South Sumatra and Lampung provinces.

It sent people in South Sumatra and Bengkulu rushing from their homes, according to local media and witnesses contacted by AFP.

Vietnam food program unites women to serve patients

(24-8-22) ‘Bac Ai Hien Si’, an Oblates Charity group of volunteers provide food to ethnic communities in the impoverished northwest. The group consists of 21 women, including five from Muong and Thai communities, Catholics and non-Catholics, and offers *Chao*, a traditional breakfast fish of rice cooked with meat, fish and vegetables.

They wear a blue T-shirt with the words ‘Bac Ai Hien Si’ or Oblates Charity, knock on doors inviting patients and their relatives to receive *chao*. Some 250 people are

provided *chao* on a weekly basis at the government-run General Hospital and a nearby private hospital in Nghia Lo town, Yen Bai province. There are 12 ethnic communities in the area

Group head, Mary Tran Thi Kim, said the group was established in 2021 by local missionary Oblates. The group members belonging to three parishes of Hung Hoa diocese, are widows and single mothers, They are divided into four groups and take turns serving *chao* to patients. They and local benefactors cover the costs of meals at 4 million dong (US\$175) per month. A local volunteer carries *chao* to the hospital in his pickup truck. They visit parishes and religious sites, perform traditional dances, sing hymns and introduce their food programme to other people as a way to raise funds.



25-8-22

Pope bids lawmakers strive for justice, fraternity, and peace

(25-8-22) Pope Francis said that Catholic lawmakers must strive to “safeguard and enhance within the public sphere those right relationships that allow each person to be treated with the respect, and indeed the love, that is due to him or her,” at an August 25 audience with members of the International Catholic Legislators Network.

The Pope told the group that they should work to build up justice, fraternity, and peace: to care for “the poor, migrants and refugees, the sick and elderly, victims of human trafficking;” and to “address, in a spirit of solidarity, the many situations of inequality and injustice.”

Russian Orthodox Patriarch withdraws from meeting Pope

(25-8-22) Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill will not attend a September meeting in Kazakhstan: a conference that might have furnished the occasion for a “summit meeting” with Pope Francis. The Russian patriarch had been scheduled to attend the 7th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. Because Pope Francis will be in attendance, speculation had arisen that the Pope and the Patriarch would arrange a one-on-one session.

However, Metropolitan Anthony, the chief foreign-relations official of the Moscow patriarchate, has now announced that Patriarch Kirill will not travel to Kazakhstan for the conference. Russian Orthodox officials had previously indicated that a meeting with Pope Francis would require careful preparatory negotiations, and probably could not be arranged “on the sidelines” during another event.

Plans for a second meeting between Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill—who met in Cuba in 2016—had been under active discussion earlier this year. But the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which the Orthodox leader has supported, dealt a serious setback to the discussions.

Russian Catholic lawmaker faces trial for posting Pope’s peace message

(25-8-22) A Russian public official faces trial for “discrediting the armed forces,” because he posted on his Facebook page the text of a prayer for peace by Pope Francis.

Konstantin Jankauskas, a deputy in Zjuzino, is a Catholic, and in March posted the Pope’s call for an end to warfare in Ukraine.

Former papal spokesman says Benedict XVI is preparing for judgment

(25-8-22) Father Federico Lombardi, the former director of the Vatican press office, told the Italian daily *Avvenire* that Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI is prepared for “the definitive encounter.”

Father Lombardi said that the retired Pontiff “still retains a formidable mental clarity” at the age of 95, although his physical condition is deteriorating. However, the Jesuit priest also said that he had not seen Benedict XVI since late in May, so his impressions are not current.

The former papal spokesman said that he was most impressed by the humility of Benedict XVI. He recalled that the former Pope had always spoken to him in Italian (although Father Lombardi understood German), as a matter of courtesy.

Ortega regime shuts down another Catholic radio station in Nicaragua

(25-8-22) Daniel Ortega, a leader of the Marxist Sandinistas who overthrew the authoritarian regime of Gen. Anastasio Somoza Debayle, ruled Nicaragua from the 1979 Sandinista takeover until his loss in the 1990 presidential election. He returned to power in 2007, and the persecution of the Church has intensified markedly in recent weeks.

Mozambique’s jihadi rebels launch new offensive in north

(25-8-22) An Islamist insurgency began in Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado province in 2017. An estimated 950,000 people have fled their homes in the wake of the offensive.

Sierra Leone: Bishop calls for dialogue, calm in wake of protests

(25-8-22) Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, was said to be “in shock” after police fired on protesters, killing dozens. The West African nation of 6.8 million is 66% Muslim, 21% ethnic religionist, and 12% Christian.

(25-8-22) On August 24, **Pope Francis received former President Nambaryn Enkhbayar of Mongolia.**

Cameroon - Bishops warn of increases in drug abuse in schools

(25-8-22) "We are concerned about the growing frequency of drug abuse and violence in our schools". This is the cry of alarm launched by the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda, an Anglophone western region of Cameroon, where a civil war is underway between the army and secessionist militias.

In their Sunday, August 21 statement, members of the Bamenda Provincial Episcopal Conference (BAPEC) urge the government to "intensify sensitization on the damaging effects of indulging in the abuse of drugs and in violence" and express concern about "the growing frequency of drug abuse and violence registered in schools all over the Country in the course of the 2021/2022 School Year". Citing some serious news stories, which saw students engaged in orgies or involved in the killing of teachers or their peers, the Bishops underline that "such acts of self-destruction can seriously compromise the attainment of the goals of education in schools".

Iraq - Chaldean Church publishes salaries of bishops and priests

(25-8-22) The Bishops of the Chaldean Church, gathered in Baghdad on the occasion of the annual Synodal Assembly, have, among other things, established and published the salary levels for bishops and priests of all Chaldean dioceses. "It has been decided," according to the official channels of the Chaldean Patriarchate, "that the monthly salaries of Patriarch Louis Raphael Sako and members of the Chaldean bishopric hierarchy will be 1.6 million Iraqi dinars (\$1,050 equivalent) from September next year, while the Priests' salaries will be set at 1.2 million Iraqi dinars (about \$850 USD)." The bishops also reaffirmed the absolute gratuitousness of the services provided by the dioceses. The offering of the Mass should continue to go to the diocesan fund.

Talks fail to end Indian fishermen's port protest

(25-8-22) The second round of government-level talks failed to end the month-long protest by Catholic fishermen against the construction of a multi-million-dollar port project in the southern Indian state of Kerala.

Father Eugene H. Pereira, vicar general of the Thiruvananthapuram Archdiocese, told the media on Aug. 24 that the protest will be intensified as government representatives refused to stop construction work at the site of the port.

“Our talks with the government representatives failed as they refused to consider our demand for

temporarily halting the construction work of the port and setting up an impartial experts team, including representatives of the fishermen, to study the social and environmental impact of the port project,” Father Pereira said.

Indonesia's Christians slam ‘legal drama’ over Paniai case

(25-8-22) Catholic and Protestant leaders in Indonesia have condemned the government for its “legal drama” in the handling of the Paniai shooting case which took place nearly eight years ago and killed four Christian students.



The Papuan students aged between 17 and 18 – two Catholics and two Protestants – were shot dead by security forces during a protest on Dec. 8, 2014, in the Paniai district of then Papua province. The incident also left at least 21 protesters injured.

“Families of the victims of the gross human rights violation in Paniai district in particular, and the Papuan people in general, are looking for justice. Yet, they are very pessimistic and even doubtful about it,” Father Bernard Baru, chairman of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Augustinian Order in Papua, said in a statement on Aug. 25, claiming to reflect the feeling of many priests.

Philippines to go after online sex predators

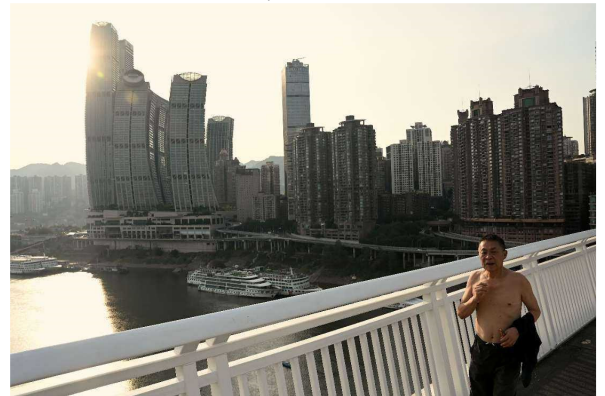
(25-8-22) The Philippine Department of Justice has vowed to crack down on online sexual predators that victimize minors in the country. President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr. said he would not allow those involved in illegal sex trafficking for minors, including parents, to go scot-free if proven guilty. He said his government has prioritized the protection of children and women.

“We should not stop at arrests. We should also look at how the cases are prosecuted and whether the perpetrators are being brought to justice. That’s why the Justice Department and other government branches are crucial in our battle with online sexual abuse,” Father Rafael Ildefonso, executive secretary of Caritas Philippines Ildefonso said.

Half of China hit by drought in worst heatwave

(25-8-22) A crippling drought exacerbated by a record heat wave has spread out across half of China and reached the normally frigid Tibetan Plateau, according to official data released ahead of more searing temperatures on Thursday. The world's second-largest economy has been hit by heatwaves, flash floods and droughts -- phenomena that scientists say are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change.

Southern China has recorded its longest continuous period of high temperatures since records began more than 60 years ago, the agriculture ministry said this week.



26-8-22

‘The Ukrainian heart was broken by the Pope’s words’: foreign ministry summons apostolic nuncio

(26-8-22) “I think of that poor girl blown up by a bomb under her car seat in Moscow,” Pope Francis said on August 24, in reference to the murder of Darya Dugina, an advocate of the Russian invasion who had denied that Russian soldiers have committed war crimes.

The Ukrainian ambassador to the Holy See described the Pope’s remarks as “disappointing.”

Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry has now summoned the apostolic nuncio to express formal disapproval.

“I will say frankly that the Ukrainian heart was broken by the Pope’s words,” said Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.

‘We should daily bear witness to God’s tenderness and love,’ Pope tells secular institutes

(26-8-22) On August 25, Pope Francis addressed participants in the general assembly of the World Conference of Secular Institutes. In 1947, Venerable Pius XII established secular institutes as a form of consecrated life whose members profess vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience while remaining in the world.

“Ours is an outgoing Church, not distant, not separated from the world, but immersed in the world and in history to be its salt and light, the seed of unity, hope and salvation,” Pope Francis said. “You are there; you are called to be there, to bear witness to God’s goodness and tenderness with daily gestures of love.”

Pope willing to visit North Korea

(26-8-22) Pope Francis has indicated that he is ready to visit North Korea if he is invited. In an interview with South Korea's national television network, KBS, the Pope said: "I am just waiting for them to invite me."

In that interview the Pope said that he serves the cause of brotherhood, which is the cause of peace. He remarked that Korea has known the horrors of war, and—in a reference to the current conflict in Ukraine—said that "we are living the third World War within a century."

Hungarian president, Pope discuss family values and Ukraine

(26-8-22) On August 25, Pope Francis received Hungarian President Katalin Novák. (Viktor Orbán is Hungary's prime minister.)

"During my audience @Pontifex was particularly interested in the Hungarian family policy," Novák tweeted. "He welcomed the fact that the [number] of marriages have doubled & abortions have halved in Hungary. The Holy Father thanked us for standing up for traditional families and persecuted Christians." She added, "The Hungarian people await the Holy Father!"

Beijing tells new Catholic leaders to 'fend off infiltration by foreign forces'

(26-8-22) The new leaders of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China have pledged to promote Xi Jinping's socialist thought.

"Top political adviser Wang Yang has urged new Catholic leaders in China to resist foreign influence and ensure that control of the Church remains in the hands of patriots," the pro-Beijing media report begins.

German 'synodal way' to press on with permanent 'synodal council' vote

(26-8-22) In July, the Vatican's Secretariat of State issued a cautionary statement about the German bishops' Synodal Path, saying that the initiative does not have authority to change Catholic doctrinal or moral teachings. The Vatican also warned that the Synodal Way has no authority "to compel the bishops and the faithful to adopt new ways of governance."

In apparent defiance of the Vatican warning, the Synodal Way will press ahead with a vote on a "synodal council" that would help govern the Church in Germany.

Swiss bishops' Synod report: Church denies equality to women and excludes LGBT people

(26-8-22) "Several official Church positions on the role of women in Church and society, on sexuality and lifestyles are perceived as pejorative and exclusionary," the Swiss Bishops' Conference stated in its report on diocesan synod consultations.

Trappists open 4th monastery in Indonesia

(26-8-22) The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance has opened its fourth monastery in Indonesia.

The Southeast Asian nation of 275 million, the world's fourth most populous, has more Muslims than any other country. The nation is 80% Muslim and 12% Christian.

Catholic priest fined under registration law in Russian-occupied Crimea

(26-8-22) A Catholic priest in Crimea has been hit with a heavy fine because his parish did not provide its full legal name on posted material: an offense against the religious regulations imposed by Russia in the occupied region.

The fine—the equivalent of a month's average wage in the region—was the latest in a series of cases brought against religious institutions in Crimea in Russian magistrate's courts. Russian regulations

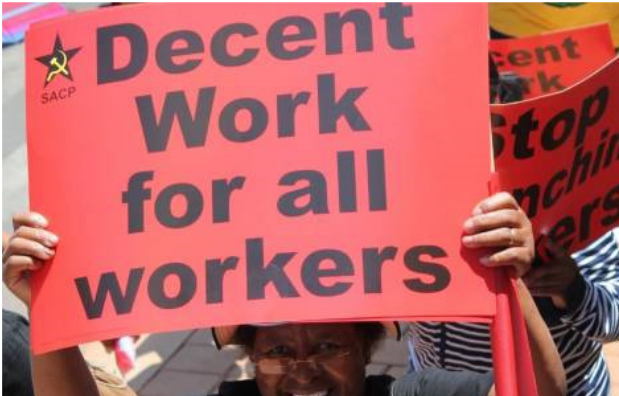


require all religious groups to put their full legal names on any material that is printed, distributed, or posted online, as part of the occupation government's regulation of "missionary activity."

East Timor's founding president meets Pontiff

(26-8-22) Twenty years after largely Catholic Timor-Leste (East Timor) attained independence from largely Muslim Indonesia, the nation's founding president, Xanana Gusmão, met Pope Francis. In 2002, Pope St. John Paul II warmly welcomed the nation's independence. In March, a Vatican diplomat said that Pope Francis will visit Timor-Leste this year, and in May, the Pope named the nation's first cardinal.

South Africa - The Bishops: "Jobs have to be created especially in rural areas"



(26-8-22) Thousands of people took to the streets of Pretoria on August 24 to protest against the worsening economic conditions. The protest was organized by the eight unions, which called for government intervention on high levels of unemployment, rising poverty and the rising cost of living.

Inflation has soared around the world, fueled by supply chain disruptions following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, as well as rising energy and food prices following Russia's war against Ukraine.

According to a World Bank report, some 30.3 million South Africans live in poverty, while 13.8 million people face food

shortages. The situation is aggravated by the continuous blackouts of electricity due to the poor service offered by the national electricity company.

A situation that was at the center of a statement by the South African Bishops published on August 8 in which they express concern "about the high levels of unemployment and the cost of living that are pushing more people into higher levels of household debt and deep poverty".

The Bishops remind politicians of their responsibilities noting that "We strongly denounce the continued preoccupation of our leaders with self-enrichment, party politics and factional battles at a time when the majority in this country are struggling to make ends meet".

The Bishops address a heartfelt appeal to the government "to initiate more, robust measures to address the fuel and food price hike" and also to address economic disparities "that impose great risk to the country's economic growth and national security, creating conditions that could fuel violent unrest and social instability". The Bishops call on "the government to invest more in building thriving and self-sustaining rural economies, including self-sustaining village economies, that generate massive job creation for the rural youth, including those classified as skilled labour".

Algeria - The "Days of Augustinian of Hippo" relaunch St. Augustine's teaching on peace

(26-8-22) It can be fruitful and exciting to rediscover the relevance of St. Augustine's teaching regarding peace and the worldly dynamics that threaten it. This is the intuition that seems to move the third edition of the "Days of Augustinian of Hippo" scheduled for August 27 and 28 in Annaba, at the Basilica dedicated to the Saint, built between the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century on the Hill which dominated the ancient Hippo.

27-8-22

Pope to new Cardinals: 'May we bring fire of God's love to all'



Quoting a passage from Luke's Gospel when Jesus says, "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!", Pope Francis focused his homily on the image of fire, the "powerful flame of the Spirit of God," reflecting "a passionate love that purifies, regenerates and transfigures all things." The Pope was speaking on 27 August Saturday at the Ordinary Public Consistory for the creation of Cardinals held in St. Peter's Basilica. This was Pope Francis' eighth Consistory, and he created 20 new Cardinals, 16 of whom are under the age of

80, thus electors in a future Conclave, and four non-electors, over the age of 80. He also asked everyone to pray for Ghanaian Cardinal Richard Kuuia Baawobr, the Bishop of Wa, Ghana, who fell ill upon his arrival in Italy on Friday and spent Saturday in hospital.

In his homily during the Consistory, the Pope noted that for those who have been given a ministry of particular service, "it is as if Jesus is handing us a lighted torch and telling us: 'Take this; as the Father has sent me so I now send you'." In this way, he said, the Lord gives us His own "apostolic courage" and zeal for the salvation of every human being, without exception.

"Dear brother Cardinals, by the light and in the strength of this fire walk the holy and faithful people from whom we were taken and to whom we have been sent as ministers of Christ the Lord."

Pope Francis encouraged the 20 new Cardinals to reflect how "a man of apostolic zeal is impelled by the fire of the Spirit to be concerned, courageously, with things great and small."

Recalling two particular testimonies, the Pope spoke of Italian Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, known for his openness to promoting farsighted dialogue to respond to the new hopes that opened up in Europe following the Cold War. While he focused on these large issues, he also humbly and quietly carried out regular visits to inmates in his pastoral outreach through prison ministry.

He also recalled late Vietnamese Cardinal Van Thuân, who during the twentieth century "was led by the fire of his love for Christ to care for the soul of the prison guards who watched over him at the door of his prison cell."

In conclusion, Pope Francis encouraged everyone to contemplate Jesus, who shows us "this lowly grandeur, this unassuming power, this universal vision ever attentive to particulars."

"Today, too, Jesus wants to bring this fire to the earth. He wants to light it anew on the shores of our daily lives. Jesus calls us by name; He looks us in the eye and He asks: Can I count on you?"

Pope Francis and new cardinals visit Benedict XVI

(27-8-22) On 27 August Saturday afternoon, at the end of the Ordinary Public Consistory, Pope Francis and the new cardinals visited *Mater Ecclesiae* Monastery to meet Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI for a brief greeting.

After receiving his blessing, along with that of Pope Francis, and praying the *Salve Regina* together, the new cardinals went to the Apostolic Palace or the Paul VI Hall for courtesy visits, according to the Holy See Press Office.

The visit to *Mater Ecclesiae* Monastery in the Vatican Gardens has now become a custom, ever since the 2016 Consistory. On the first two occasions in 2014 and 2015, Benedict XVI had taken part in the celebration in St. Peter's Basilica.

Central Africa - The Spiritans: " First Evangelization in urban and rural areas"

(27-8-22) "The Spiritan missionaries in the Central African Republic work to heal hearts and rebuild people's daily lives, preaching and living the Gospel in its entirety. Despite the limited resources and means, they try to rebuild people's lives spiritually, educationally, materially and in terms of health.

They are also involved in the formation and accompaniment of young people and organize camps and seminars to raise awareness on education for peace and coexistence," says Father William Doctor, Provincial Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (the so-called "Spiritans") in Central Africa. He speaks about the missionary commitment in the African country and the challenges that the religious there have to face every day. The first group of Spiritan missionaries came to Central Africa in 1894 at the initiative of Bishop Prosper Augouard, who was then in charge of the French province of Congo. Today the religious, 29 in number, are active in the Archdiocese of Bangui and in the dioceses of Mbaïki, Bangassou and Alindao.

Benin - Clarification of the Bishops on the creation of a Catholic credit institution

(27-8-22) The Bishops' Conference of Benin announced and initiated the creation of a Catholic credit institution in mid-July, but in a recent statement indicates that the project is still being studied in order to comply with all legal procedures.

"In relation to the provisions of Article 13 of the Law on Banking Discipline, the Bishops' Conference of Benin notifies that it prohibits the use of the terms "Bank", "bank" or "banking" in the commercial name of the company as well as in the Statute and other documents relating to the project being created".

The OHADA (Organization pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires) is the body of 17 West and Central African states for the harmonization of commercial law. The Central Bank of the West African States (BCEAO) is the central bank of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. The BCEAO is the West African Monetary Union, which includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Turkey - Discontent and "discomfort" for the new regulations of the Foundations. The Armenian Patriarch appeals to Erdogan

(27-8-22) In a letter addressed directly to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople Sahak II Masalyan expresses the "discomfort" and growing dissatisfaction among Armenians in Turkey following the publication of the new electoral regulations for Foundations linked to non-Muslim faith communities and their governing bodies need to be renewed. This unique initiative aims to alert Turkey's highest civil authority to the possibility that the growing unease among Turkey's Armenian communities could lead to an outright boycott of the electoral procedures used to allocate managerial and administrative posts within each individual Foundation. In his letter - according to local media, most notably the bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper "Agos" - Patriarch Sahak proposes to provide all foundations with clear guidelines setting out the criteria for submitting electoral lists on a regional basis in accordance with the approved regulations be unequivocally repeated.

Greater control over the non-Muslim groups ('Foundation') by the government introduced in June with regard to election of Board members has found great dissatisfaction particularly among Armenians.

28-8-22

Pope at Mass in L'Aquila: 'God can accomplish all things'

(28-8-22) God can accomplish all things for those who believe.

Pope Francis stressed this during the Mass he celebrated in the central Italian city of L'Aquila, where he made a 28 August pastoral visit for the occasion of Celestinian Pardon. He presided over the Eucharistic Celebration in the square before the Basilica of St. Mary in Collemaggio.



The Pope's visit to the Italian city falls 13 years after a devastating 2009 earthquake which killed 309 people. The month of the quake, then-Pope Benedict XVI visited L'Aquila.

Each 28-29 August in L'Aquila, Catholics renew the solemn rite of Forgiveness ("*Perdonanza*"), the perpetual plenary indulgence that Pope Celestine V granted to the faithful. Pope Celestine V resigned his papacy in 1294

In his homily, Pope Francis drew the faithful's attention to the saints, Pope Celestine V, and God's mercy which frees us and brings us joy.

Pope Francis' visit to L'Aquila falls the day after the Pope's consistory for the creation of 20 new Cardinals in the Vatican, and during the 27-29 August encounter the Holy Father requested for the world's Cardinals to gather in the Vatican together to reflect on the recently-published Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* on reforming the Roman Curia.

Pope prays for flood hit Pakistan during Angelus in L'Aquila



(28-8-22) Despite this being a Pastoral Visit within Italy, the Pope took the time to highlight the plight of tens of thousands of people in Pakistan who have been forced to flee their homes due to severe flooding, which has wreaked havoc on the country.

"I want to assure the people of Pakistan, hit by a flood of disastrous proportions, of my closeness. I pray for the numerous victims, for the wounded and those forced from their homes, and that international solidarity might be prompt and generous."

The monsoon rains and flooding in the country have affected more than 30 million people over the last

few weeks, calling the situation a "climate-induced humanitarian disaster of epic proportions".

The Pope also prayed for the people of Ukraine, and "for all those who suffer because of war. May the God of peace revive a human and Christian sense of pity and mercy in the hearts of the leaders of nations."
