

CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

2-8 May 2022

2-5-22

Pope encourages Slovakian pilgrims to promote peace through charity

(2-5-22) On April 30, Pope Francis received 2,500 Slovak pilgrims, including Church and government leaders. “It was a great pleasure for me to see how the Church in Slovakia lives the richness of the diversity of rites and traditions, like a bridge uniting the West and the Christian East,” the Pope said in his address, as he recalled his visit to Slovakia last September.

Pope encourages pharmacists to combat misinformation

(2-5-22) Speaking on May 2 to an audience of Catholic pharmacists, Pope Francis said that they should act as “a bridge between citizens and the health system.” The Pontiff explained that pharmacists have the opportunity to “unmask misleading information” about health-care issues, and to educate people about healthy living.



Churches burned down in southern Ethiopia; at least 3 killed

(2-5-22) Tension have risen between Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and Muslims over the past week. Following an attack on a Muslim funeral, at least three churches have been burned down.

The African nation of 110.9 million is 60% Christian (41% Orthodox, 16% Protestant), 34% Muslim, and 6% ethnic religionist.

Outgoing bishop warns of humanitarian disaster in Yemen

(2-5-22) Bishop Paul Hinder, who resigned on May 1 after 17 years as apostolic vicar for the Arabian peninsula, called attention to a humanitarian crisis in Yemen during a Vatican News interview. Bishop Hinder reported that as a fragile truce between warring factions threatens to expire in Yemen, an estimated 30 million people are in danger. He added that the situation is unclear, because little reliable information comes from the besieged country. Bishop Hinder’s retirement comes after his 80th birthday. He will be replaced as apostolic vicar for the Arabian peninsula by Bishop Paolo Martinelli, who has been serving as an auxiliary in Milan.

Christians and Buddhists together should promote ‘resilience,’ Vatican says

(2-5-22) In an annual message to the world’s Buddhists, the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue says that “our religious and moral sense of responsibility should motivate us to sustain humanity in its quest for reconciliation and resilience.”

The Vatican message—released for the Buddhist feast of Vesakh, which celebrates the “enlightenment” of the Buddha—says that Christians and Buddhists should work together to ensure the “resilience” of people living in a world beset by crises. The message enumerates the problems: Frequent natural disasters related to the ecological crisis have exposed our fragility as citizens of a shared Earth. Conflicts continue to shed innocent blood and to provoke widespread suffering. Sadly, there are still those who use religion to justify violence.

South Korea: is the Catholic boom over?

(2-5-22) Newly released statistics point to an aging Catholic population and a decline in new vocations to the priesthood.

Cardinal O’Malley sees ‘watershed moment’ for Vatican abuse commission

(2-5-22) Cardinal Seán O'Malley of Boston, the president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, said that Pope Francis's decision to place the commission under the auspices of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith in the reorganization of the Curia marks a "watershed moment."

"For the first time, the Pope has placed the importance of child protection at the core of the Church's central government," he said. "The Holy Father has given the commission a clear mandate to animate the entire Church from within the Roman Curia on the subject of child protection."

Cardinal O'Malley made his remarks on April 29, the same day the Pope assured the commission that it would retain its independence, and three days after the Pope changed canon law to end the automatic dismissal of members of religious institutes who have been found guilty of rape, child pornography, and the sexual abuse of minors and other vulnerable persons.

Pope anxious to meet Putin

(2-5-22) Pope Francis has indicated that he wants to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, and would travel to Moscow for that purpose if the Russian leader "would only open the door."

The Pope has also expressed impatience with the failure of Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill to speak out against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He said: "The Patriarch cannot become Putin's altar boy."

In an interview with the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, the Pope said that he had sent a message to Putin, requesting a meeting, but has not yet received a response from Moscow.

(In February, shortly after the beginning of the Russian offensive against Ukraine, Pope Francis made a personal visit to the Russian embassy in Rome. At that time there were unconfirmed reports that Putin had declined to accept a phone call from the Pontiff.)

The Pope suggested that Western leaders bear some responsibility for the war in Ukraine, saying that "NATO's barking at Russia's door" had prompted Putin to "react badly and unleash the conflict."

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Vatican clears German Cardinal Woelki of wrongdoing on abuse study

(2-5-22) The Vatican has cleared Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki of charges that he violated canon law in his handling of a study of abuse in the Cologne archdiocese.

The Vatican's finding, following an investigation of the Cologne study, comes after Cardinal Woelki's announcement in March that he had submitted his resignation. The cardinal—who had been heavily criticized for his handling of the abuse issue—had taken a leave of absence from active ministry, then resigned immediately upon returning to office.

Cardinal Woelki, who is 65, has been a leading critic of the "Synodal Path" undertaken by the German episcopal conference. He has received little support from his fellow German bishops during the past year.

Irish couple will choose jail over paying fine for traveling to attend Mass during lockdown

(25-22) On Palm Sunday in 2021, Jim and Ann Ryan, in violation of lockdown restrictions, travelled 40 miles to Mass in order to thank God for a medical healing. Refusing to pay the \$315 fine and facing the prospect of jail time. the Ryans “have become an unlikely poster couple advocating for religious freedom in the Republic of Ireland,” according to the report.

Anglican primate apologizes to Canadian residential school survivors

(2-5-22) “The Anglican Church committed grievous sins against the Indigenous, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada,” Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury said during a visit to Canada. “I commit to walking with you on the long journey of renewal and reconciliation for as long as the Lord gives me strength to do so.”

Risking jail and church ire, some Russian Orthodox priests condemn Ukraine conflict

(2-5-22) “If I’m within the Church but censoring myself as I speak, if I’m silent about a sin being a sin, and about bloodshed being unacceptable, then I will just gradually, without noticing, stop being a pastor,” said Father Ioann Burdin, 50, a Russian Orthodox priest who has been fined for speaking out against the war.

Priest among 12 convicted over Malawi albino murder

(2-5-22) The southeastern African nation of has experienced “a wave of assaults over several years against albinos whose body parts are used in witchcraft rituals in the mistaken belief that they bring wealth and luck,” according to the report.

Church leaders point to climate change after South Africa floods

(2-5-22) The KwaZulu-Natal floods have caused at least 435 deaths and \$650 million in property damage.

“Last night in church I talked a lot about climate change because there are people who don’t quite understand, but now we can see its consequences,” Archbishop Siegfried Jwara of Durban said.

Ecumenical Patriarch renews condemnation of invasion, criticism of Moscow Patriarch

(2-5-22) “You cannot claim to be a brother to another people and bless the war waged by your state,” Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who holds a primacy of honour among the Orthodox churches, said of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow.

“You cannot insist that Ukraine belongs to you ecclesiastically, but let the faithful of the ecclesiastical structure under Moscow be killed and their churches destroyed by the Russian bombing.”

How much of Ukraine does Russia control?



Ukraine - Oblate missionaries of Mary Immaculate next to the people, amidst the sufferings of war

(2-5-22) "Now that there is war, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), who have been in Ukraine for 32 years, have not left the country and their pastoral service. Neither from Kiev, which was surrounded by Russian troops for a month, nor from Chernihiv, where the Oblates, together with the more than 70 people who approached the community, lived for more than a month in a bunker, under the church. The city was surrounded, there was no water or light; and it was March, it was cold and there was no food. The Oblates did not leave the people, even though they could have left the city": this is what Father Pavlo Vyshkovskyy, missionary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) in

Kiev, tells Fides.

Mexico - Bishops: "driven by hope. Let us continue to fight for peace, justice, tolerance, solidarity and dialogue"

(2-5-22) "Now it is up to all of us, God's people (pastors and flock), to continue the mission of the Risen One, listening to the voice of the Spirit, discerning what God shows us and asks of us through the signs of the times, to find together the paths that make it possible to experience "the hope that does not disappoint". Hope that drives us that, in the face of what threatens human dignity and the values of the family, life, freedom of expression, democracy, education and hospitality in solidarity, and in the midst of violence, injustice and the prevailing impunity, and that above all affect the poor, migrants, women and the weakest, let us continue fighting for peace, justice, tolerance, solidarity and dialogue".

This is the exhortation of the Mexican Episcopal Conference, published in a message at the end of its plenary assembly, which ended on April 29

Mozambique - The Bishops express their solidarity with the victims of the floods

(2-5-22) The Bishops of Mozambique have expressed their solidarity with the victims of the violent floods that last month affected some countries in southern Africa. "During the recent rainy season, floods and strong winds have again devastated the lives of thousands of people in large areas of the center-north of the country" say the bishops in their message published at the end of the Plenary Assembly of the Conference Episcopal Church of Mozambique (CEM), held at the Major Seminary of Santo Agostinho da Matola from April 26 to 29, 2022.

Indonesia - End of Ramadan: Christians stand in solidarity with Muslims

(2-5-22) Christians in Indonesia expressed full and authentic solidarity to the Muslim faithful who celebrate the conclusion of the holy month of Ramadan on May 2. According to tradition, some logistical facilities (such as car parks and open spaces) have been made available in various churches in Indonesia for the Muslim worshipers who go to the mosque in the morning for the morning prayer of Eid-al Fitr, the last day of Ramadan. This happened in the Cathedral of Jakarta (which stands right in front of a large mosque), in the Church of the Sacred Heart of Malang, in the east of Java, where Christians shared good wishes and friendship with the Muslim faithful at the Great Jami Mosque.



In Malang, Muslim pilgrims gathered in the compound of the Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, better known as the Kayutangan Catholic Church, about 300 meters from the mosque, where they received help from young Catholics who also distributed prayer rugs to all.

Pakistan's former PM, PTI leaders accused of blasphemy

(2-5-22) Church leaders have joined activists in condemning the blasphemy case against Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan and leaders of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for desecrating Al-Masjid an-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque) in the holy city of Medina.

Muhammad Naeem, a local of Faisalabad city in Punjab province, registered the case under Section 295-A of the penal code against 150 people including the former cricket star, who was ousted as prime minister in April, and several former cabinet ministers. This follows the arrest in Medina of at least five Pakistani nationals for raising political slogans which was considered violation of the sanctity of the second-holiest site in Islam, after the Great Mosque in Mecca. Khan has distanced himself from the protesting pilgrims. "I cannot think of asking anyone to do sloganeering at that sacred place. Nobody who loves the prophet (PBUH) can even think of it," he stated.

Human rights activists have condemned the latest case, saying that the use of blasphemy allegations to settle political scores is unacceptable. Such was also the comment of Kashif Aslam, deputy director of the Catholic bishops' National Commission for Justice and Peace.

Church attack in Indonesia's Papua province wounds two

(2-5-22) A soldier and a policeman were shot and wounded by separatist rebels while guarding a church in Papua. Papua police chief Mathius D Fakiri said the attack took place in Apmisibil, a village in Pegunungan Bintang district, at a Protestant church during Sunday morning worship on May 1. The church attack came a day after two other soldiers were wounded in an attack on a military post in Puncak district.

Catholic politician accused of hate speech in India

(2-5-22) A senior Catholic politician in communist-ruled Kerala state in southern India was arrested and released on bail for alleged hate speech targeting Muslims.

The Catholic Congress Global Council has condemned his arrest, saying it was an attempt to appease radical groups opposed to Christianity and that Muslim leaders have made similar hate-speeches against non-Muslims and have gone scot-free.

P.C. George, a former legislator, was arrested at his residence in Erattupetta in Kottayam district and taken to state capital Thiruvananthapuram on May 1. He is charged with promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion and a deliberate and malicious act intended to outrage the religious feelings of any class. The 71-year-old politician, who served as a legislator for more than three decades in the state assembly, was charged over a speech he made on April 29. "In their [Muslim] hotels, if what I've heard is true, they add drugs in the tea to make people impotent. They want to make your men and women infertile and then take over the entire country." The former lawmaker also allegedly appealed to the audience to boycott institutions and restaurants run by Muslims. He also targeted Muslims over "love jihad" in which Muslim men are accused of feigning love to marry non-Muslim girls and convert them to Islam.

India's Dalit Christians protest installation of archbishop

(2-5-22) DCLM opposed to an upper-caste person being head of Pondicherry-Cuddalore Archdiocese. A group of Dalit Catholics in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu held a protest march against the installation of a non-Dalit archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore Archdiocese.

The march was held on April 29 by the Dalit Christian Liberation Movement (DCLM), whose members held banners highlighting the injustice practiced in the appointment of bishops and priests.

Pope Francis on March 19 had appointed Bishop Francis Kalist of Meerut as the new metropolitan archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore. The archdiocese was vacant since the resignation of the late Archbishop Antony Anandarayar on Jan. 27, 2021.

The group described the installation ceremony of Archbishop Francis Kalist as hypocrisy carried out in the name of Jesus in order to thwart the longstanding legitimate demands of Dalit Christians to appoint a Dalit archbishop.



Christian school attacked in Pakistan's Punjab province

(2-5-22) A Christian principal is asking for help after his school was attacked by armed men demanding extortion money in Sheikhpura city in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Fourteen armed men raided Global Passion School on April 29, tortured staff and damaged their vehicles. The school, managed by Presbyterians, has provided free education and food to Christian students from brick kiln families since 2018.

The attackers hurled chairs at the children while they were praying in the hall at 11.30am, according to school principal Simon Peter Kaleem. "They attacked the security guard and demanded 100,000 rupees [US\$536] in extortion money every month, threatening that if their demand was not met they would forcibly stop Christian worship and the school's operations," Kaleem said in a first information report to local police. "They misbehaved with the female staff and issued death threats if we failed to make payment in two days. They also damaged staff cars and motorcycles parked in the building, causing an estimated total loss of 350,000 rupees."

3-5-22

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Italy - Looking at realities with the eyes of Jesus: the Camillian missionaries open the LIX General Chapter

(3-5-22) "May reflection, sharing and fraternity help us to mature more and more the prophetic density of our consecrated life today, especially in the light of our common charism of mercy towards the sick and those who suffer". With these words, Father Laurent Zoungana, Vicar General of the Order of Ministers to the Sick (Camillians), addressed his message of greeting to the Camillian Charismatic Family gathered at the 'Ad Gentes' Centre, in the City of Nemi, on the occasion of the LIX Chapter general.

Fr. William Eronimoose, of the Camillian Province of India, treating the topic: Camillian Prophecy Today, said, "As members of the Camillian Chapter together we are called to look at the reality of the Camillian Prophecy regarding our spirituality, charism and ministry with the eyes of Jesus because it is a Prophecy of intervention directly from God through the merciful eyes of Jesus in the life of Saint Camillus for the vulnerable sick. The missionary defines the Camillian Prophecy as an act of "assuming the burdens of others" that has the message of preaching the Gospel and healing the sick by dressing the vulnerability of the sick."

Vietnam - Bishops express the desire to get the first missionaries beatified

(3-5-22) The Vietnamese bishops, during their recent Plenary Assembly in Thai Binh, expressed the desire to open a beatification process for the two bishops, François Pallu MEP (1626-1684) and Pierre Lambert de La Motte MEP (1624-1679) who were the first missionaries sent to the Far East, in particular in the diocese of Dang Trong and Dang Ngoai.

In this context, the bishops recalled that the two missionary bishops, co-founders of the Paris Society for Foreign Missions, paved the way for the evangelization and growth of the Churches in East Asia.

Colombia - The Bishops for the Day of Reconciliation: "let us continue the commitment to be artisans of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace"

(3-5-22) On the fifth "National Day of Reconciliation", which is celebrated today, May 3, the Bishops have sent a message to the Colombian people to remember "the steps that, as a Colombian society, we have taken in the construction of reconciliation and peace" and they observe that it continues to be a challenge, "for each one, to believe that one more step can be taken on this path that leads us to recognize the liberating centrality that truth entails". The Bishops recall the words of Pope Francis,

during his visit to Villavicencio, on September 8, 2017, in which he exhorted Colombians “not to be afraid to ask for and offer forgiveness”, to “overcome enmities, heal wounds, build bridges, defuse hatred and renounce revenge”.

Argentina – Six Argentine missionaries in the Peruvian Amazon within the framework of the project “Argentine Church, Amazon is your mission”

(3-5-22) Six Argentine missionaries are leaving for the Peruvian Amazon: the Bishop Oscar Ojea of San Isidro and president of the Argentine Bishops' Conference, presided over the Mass in the cathedral of Buenos Aires blessed them.

Together with two other missionaries who have already been sent, the Argentines will carry out their mission in the vicariate of Puerto Maldonado, within the framework of the project "Argentine Church, Amazon is your mission", promoted by the Argentine Pontifical Mission Societies with the support of the Episcopal Conference.

Middle East - First communions of children, new hope for the Churches of Iraq and Syria

(3-5-22) "The land that was attacked a few years ago by the militants of the Islamic State, who wanted to eliminate Christians, today rejoices aloud. Our faith and our Cross have won". Father Karam Shamasha, a Chaldean priest from Mosul, thus expresses his emotion at the spectacle that he has seen happen in the cities of the Nineveh Plain. The sign of the miracle that provokes their joy is the photos of the 126 boys and girls of the cities of Alqosh and Telskuf who received their first communion at the end of April.



With the arrival of spring and Easter time, the celebrations of the first communions of children are celebrated everywhere as a powerful sign of how grace has preserved the faith in the local Christian communities, in the years of conflict and convulsions that have disrupted the daily lives of many people both in Iraq and in Syria, and after the limitations imposed on liturgical celebrations by the arrival of the pandemic.

Duterte vows clean, honest polls in Philippines

(3-5-22) Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has vowed to leave a legacy to Filipinos by ensuring clean, orderly and honest polls on May 9.

Duterte made his promise on May 2 despite his daughter, Sara Duterte, running for vice president alongside presidential frontrunner Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The outgoing president assured the public that he would not meddle in the electoral process.

Cambodia urges Myanmar to help ASEAN special envoy

(3-5-22) Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has called on Myanmar's junta chief to allow ASEAN's special envoy to meet all parties including deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The call came during a phone call between Hun Sen and junta chief General Min Aung Hlaing on May 2 in which Hun Sen raised the issues of taking steps to implement a 5-point consensus, humanitarian aid in conflict areas and maintaining law and order.

Chinese court summons Christian pastor for 'illegal' religious acts

(3-5-22) Jimei District People's Court in Xiamen City in Fujian province of southwest China issued a summons to a Protestant pastor Yang Xibo of Xiamen Xunsiding Church on April 26, over his alleged involvement in illegal religious activities China Aid reported on April 29.

The pastor and his wife have been facing the ire of authorities for their attempts to unite and enliven the members of Xiamen Xunsiding Church, the largest house church in the city that was closed on the

orders of the Chinese Communist Party in 2019. Religious gatherings are alleged to have taken place secretly ever since.

Indian parish hosts interfaith iftar for peace and fraternity



(3-5-22) The Indian city of Mumbai witnessed *Fratelli tutti* (all brothers) in practice when around 200 people of different faiths gathered on the grounds of St. Stanislaus School in the Bandra suburb for an interfaith *iftar*, the meal eaten by Muslims after sunset during Ramadan.

The *iftar* was organized by the interfaith group of St. Peter's Parish, which includes members of other faiths, in collaboration with the Collective for Multifaith Dialogue consisting of a group of activists in Mumbai with the wholehearted support of Jesuit Father Frazer Mascarenhas.

Father Frazer referred to the document "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together," signed jointly by Pope Francis and the grand imam of Al-Azhar in Abu Dhabi in 2019, and pointed out the importance of coming together for the promotion of peace and harmony.

China's first native female religious order marks 150 years

(3-5-22) Members of the first native Catholic female religious congregation in China recalled the order's history and vowed to deepen their commitment to charism as they marked its 150th anniversary.

The Congregation of St. Joseph, based in the [Archdiocese of Beijing](#), has 49 nuns working in various dioceses, parishes, schools, clinics and a nursing institute. A modest jubilee program composed of four segments was held in Beijing. Events included a presentation on the history and life of the congregation, a guided visit, seminar and prayers in the chapel.

4-5-22

Pope at General Audience: the Elderly must uphold honour of faith for youth

(4-5-22) At the weekly General Audience, Pope Francis focussed his attention on the Biblical figure of Eleazar, as recounted in 2 Maccabees 6:18-31. Here is the summary of his talk.

In our continuing catechesis on the meaning and value of old age in the light of God's words, we now consider the example of Eleazar as found in the 2nd Book of Maccabees. At a time of vehement persecution, the Jewish people were being forced under pain of death to eat meat sacrificed to idols. As an elderly and respected member of the community, Eleazar was told that if he merely pretended to do so, his life would be spared. Rather than betray his faith in God, Eleazar preferred death. His witness to the truth and dignity of the faith, even at the cost of his life, thus served as a powerful example to the young. Eleazar showed that faith is not an abstract idea or a set of rules to be followed but a commitment of one's entire being to God. In our own day, the witness of the elderly to a clear and consistent practice of the faith can counter the powerful cultural forces that would dismiss the faith under pressure – sometimes violent – by showing the dignity of the life of faith expressed in community worship and acts of charity. The elderly can help to strengthen the fabric of society and offer the young a model of integrity and fidelity valid for every age.

Patriarch Kirill denies that Russia has attacked Ukraine

(4-5-22) "We don't want to fight with anyone," Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, preached on May 3. "Russia has never attacked anyone, it has only defended its borders."

After asking for the saints' intercession to protect Russia's "sacred borders," Patriarch Kirill prayed

that Russians would have the “wisdom, strength and honor, if necessary, to defend the sacred borders of the fatherland.”

EU bishops’ commission pushes back against resolution on religious freedom and abortion

(4-5-22) A resolution by the European Parliament condemning the persecution of religious minorities also contains language condemning religious teachings against abortion and homosexuality. The resolution also states that religious freedom is “only possible with the assurance of personal and human freedom, including the right to sexual and reproductive health and the right to self-determination, regardless of origin or sexual orientation.”

Father Manuel Barrios Prieto, the secretary-general of the EU bishops’ commission, responded that “any attempt to undermine the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the right to life through abusive interpretations that unduly restrict their legitimate scope or to subject them to newly created and non-consensual ‘so-called human rights,’ including abortion, constitute a serious violation of the international law that discredits the European Union before the international community and before millions of European citizens.”

Argentine nuns accuse archbishop, others of gender violence

(4-5-22) The Vatican’s Congregation for Religious has intervened in a dispute between Archbishop Mario Antonio Cargnello of Salta, Argentina, and a local community of Discalced Carmelites. A May 3 court hearing for Archbishop Cargnello was called off when he said he had to attend a meeting of the bishops’ conference.

Ukraine bishop: ‘As long as there are believers in Kharkiv, I will remain with them’

(4-5-22) Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second-largest city, has been under attack by Russian forces since the war began.

“As long as there are believers in the city, I will remain with them,” said Bishop Pavlo Honcharuk, 44, who was appointed the Latin-rite bishop there in 2020. “God, and my faith, give me the strength for this. We – the priests – are not armed. We are men of the Church. Our weapons are the Word of God, and prayer.”



Pope says use, possession of nuclear weapons is ‘inconceivable’

(4-5-22) Meeting on May 4 with Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Pope Francis argued for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Matteo Bruni, the director of the Vatican press office, said that the Pope had “talked about nuclear weapons and about how their use and possession is inconceivable.”

Vatican plans new barracks for Swiss Guard

(4-5-22) The Vatican has entered into a memorandum of understanding with a Swiss foundation to provide “better and environmentally friendly housing conditions” for members of the Swiss Guard and their families. Construction of the new barracks will begin in 2025, provided that adequate funding can be ensured.

Nigeria - The Bishops of West Africa: "We do not propose solutions to the problems of the region; but our mission is to educate consciences"

(4-5-22) "Youth unemployment, religious and ethnic crises, climate change, land grabbing; diseases even more deadly than the Covid-19 pandemic, money spent on arms instead of using it to remedy the crippling effect of hunger and to foster development; terrorist attacks, kidnappings and corruption". These are the problems that afflict the countries of West Africa according to what was stated by President Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, of Abuja, at the opening of the 4th Plenary Assembly of the Reunion of Episcopal Conference of West Africa (RECOWA), which is being held in the federal

capital of Nigeria.

"We do not claim to have solutions for the multidimensional political, security and social problems", underlined Archbishop Kaigama, recalling that "the Church can only continue to play her role in educating the consciences of Christians, non-Christians and people of goodwill in our society".

Malaysia - The synodal assembly of Melaka-Johor: young people, future missionaries

(4-5-22) Integrating youth and women in the work of evangelization of the Church is the fundamental orientation adopted by the diocesan synodal assembly of the Church of Melaka-Johor. The diocesan assembly which ended on May 3 at the Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, welcomed 40 Tamil-speaking young people in Johor Bahru, who came from the Church of Saint Francis Xavier, from the Chapel of Sant'Anna in Alor Gajah, from the Chapel of St. James in Merlimau and from the Church of the Holy Spirit in Jasin. Fr. Moses Rayappan, head of the Melaka-Johor diocese synodal team reminded the participants that they should focus not only on the liturgical aspect, but on their knowledge and testimony of faith in life, and discern "if they are living as authentic disciples of Jesus." The young people evaluated and answered the synod's questionnaire, which included questions about strengths, weaknesses and dreams for their future as missionaries.

Italy - Cadis missionaries and Tzu Chi Foundation: interreligious love, together for Ukraine



(4-5-22) "Buddha's mercy and God's love exist to save people who suffer and our fundamental values are the same", said Br. Jose Ignacio Santaolalla Saez, MI, President of Camillian Disaster Service International (CADIS), in relation to the recent agreement signed between the Tzu Chi Buddhist Charitable Foundation and the Camillian missionary body in support of Ukrainian refugees. "The Russian-Ukrainian war is an unprecedented man-made catastrophe - underlined Br. Ignacio. "The most innocent people are the ones who suffer. We must face and cooperate for the sake

of Ukrainians who are experiencing difficulties. Ours is a great responsibility, as well as a mission, and we want to offer respect and assistance to Ukrainian refugees with gratitude and love". The aid consists of the provision of basic necessities, food, medical services, temporary accommodation and psychological counseling with the aim of helping more than 40,000 people over a period of about five months.

Holy Land - Haifa, a praying multitude of thousands of people participate in the procession in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

(4-5-22) Thousands of Christians took part in the traditional procession in Haifa in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on the afternoon of Sunday, May 1, popularly known as Taalat al-Adra, the "Ascent of the Virgin". Along the two-and-a-half-kilometer route from the Latin parish of St. Joseph to the Stella Maris Carmelite monastery on Mount Carmel, preceded by teams of scouts from all over the country, believers of all rites marched, reciting prayers and singing hymns to the Virgin. The "Ascension of the Virgin" is a popular devotional act that has deep roots in the lives of Christians in the Holy Land.

Venezuela - Training of Digital Evangelizers continues in the Archdiocese of Coro

(4-5-22) On April 29 and 30, the Secretariat for the Ministry of Communication of the Archdiocese of Coro organized a series of training workshops to raise awareness of the importance of digital evangelization and promote the formation of the Archdiocesan network for the Ministry of Communication in the parishes. Featured in the programme were a training on digital evangelization, on the fundamental aspects to consider in the creation of a line and a graphic structure, as well as the presentation of the guidelines for the creation of a parish ministry of communication. Doubts about radio production and the focus of Catholic broadcasters were also clarified.

Massive drug busts highlight Thailand's narcotics crisis

(4-5-22) Thailand's narcotics crisis was brought into sharp relief on May 2 when Thai drug and border police officers shot dead eight suspected drug traffickers in a firefight in a jungle in the northern province of Chiang Rai and seized around 6.7 million methamphetamine pills.

The officers were on patrol some 5 kilometers from the border with Myanmar when they encountered 10 men, who were armed and carrying heavy backpacks, according to an official account. They belonged to an ethnic minority group in Myanmar.

The same day Thai police seized 8 million amphetamine pills they found in a sports utility vehicle in the northeastern province of Nakhon Ratchasima.

Timor-Leste ratifies conventions on disability rights

(4-5-22) Catholic-majority Timor-Leste has moved forward with the adoption of two international treaties aimed at ensuring the rights of disabled people.

The government in an official statement said the Council of Ministers had at its meeting on May 4 approved ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) along with the Optional Protocol that allows for individual complaints to be submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for any violations. The two documents aim "to promote, protect and guarantee the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and the promotion of respect for their inherent dignity."

French bishop hailed as 'friend of Buddhists' in Cambodia

(4-5-22) Buddhist leaders in Cambodia have honoured French Bishop Olivier Michel Marie Schmitthaeusler for his years of support and donations to local Buddhists and a popular pagoda. Bishop Schmitthaeusler, 51, a member of the Paris Foreign Missions Society (MEP) and the apostolic vicar of Phnom Penh, received the accolade "a great friend of Buddhists" at an event at Ang Monrei pagoda in Tram Kak district of Takeo province in southern Cambodia on April 30, reported Catholic Cambodia, the communications wing of the local Catholic Church.



A certificate of honour to Bishop Schmitthaeusler was issued by the Mahanikaya Council of Cambodia, the country's supreme Buddhist council. He "has extended a helping hand to Buddhists that enabled them to have vegetable gardens and ponds and to construct bridges among other things."

5-5-22

Pope asks religious orders to act with 'great prudence and shrewdness' in selling property

(5-5-22) In a message to a Vatican conference on the cultural heritage of religious orders, Pope Francis wrote that "the disposal of heritage is a particularly sensitive and complex issue, which can attract misleading interests on the part of unscrupulous individuals and be a cause of scandal for the faithful: hence the need to act with great prudence and shrewdness and also to create institutional structures to accompany communities that are less well equipped."

Russian Orthodox Church scolds Pope Francis after 'Putin's altar boy' remark

(5-5-22) Responding to comments made by Pope Francis in a newspaper interview, the Moscow Patriarchate said that "Pope Francis chose an incorrect tone."

"Such statements are unlikely to contribute to the establishment of a constructive dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches, which is especially necessary at the present time," the Patriarchate added.

Orban told Pope that Russia plans to end war on May 9; US officials skeptical

(5-5-22) Two weeks after his Vatican meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Pope Francis revealed in an interview that Orban told him that Russia plans to end the war on May 9, which Russia commemorates as Victory Day.

Pope variety of callings in message for Day of Prayer for Vocations

(5-5-22) In his message for the 59th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Francis says that the variety of different vocations enriches the Church and shows the breadth of God's plan, "like the tiles of mosaic."

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations will be celebrated on Sunday, May 8; the theme selected for this year is: "Called to Build the Human Family." The Pope's message was released on May 5.

The full text of the Pope's message, entitled "Called to Build the Human Family," is available on the Vatican web site.

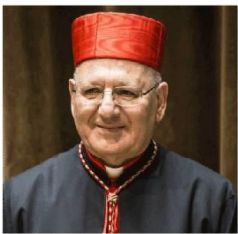
Pope, using wheelchair, speaks on human fragility

(5-5-22) Pope Francis—using a wheelchair, as worsening knee pain restricts his mobility—ironically spoke on the topic of human fragility at a May 5 meeting with the International Union of General Superiors.

The religious superiors have dedicated their annual plenary meeting to a discussion of "embracing vulnerability on the synodal journey." In his prepared remarks the Pope pointed to the example of Jesus, washing the feet of his apostles. He remarked that "the Church learns from her Master that, in order to be able to give her life in service to others, she is invited to recognize and accept her own fragility and, from there, to bow down to the fragility of others."

New barracks will allow for possibility of women Swiss Guards

(5-5-22) New barracks being constructed for the Swiss Guards will have single rooms with private bathrooms because of the "possibility of integrating women into the Guard," said Riccardo Boscardin, a board member of the Swiss foundation that is raising construction funds.



Chaldean Patriarch calls for 'civil and democratic' Iraq to discourage emigration

(5-5-22) Cardinal Louis Raphaël I Sako, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, called for a democratic Iraq in which all citizens are truly equal, whatever their "religious affiliation, ethnicity or gender" may be. Islam is Iraq's official religion, though the Iraqi constitution provides for religious freedom. Cardinal Sako said that Christians are "the original people" of Iraq's Nineveh Plains, with Christians present there "before the advent of Islam."

EU targets Moscow Patriarch in new sanctions

(5-5-22) The European Commission, the EU's executive branch, is proposing sanctions against Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, Politico reported. The Commission describes the head of the Russian Orthodox Church as "one of the most prominent supporters of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine."

Pope sends 'terrible moral signal' to dictators, Wall Street Journal says in editorial

(5-5-22) Reacting to the Pope's papal comment that "NATO's barking at Russia's door" had prompted Putin to "react badly and unleash the conflict," the Wall Street Journal editorialized that "since the invasion, Francis has called for an end to the war and criticized the violence, but he hasn't directly called out Russia for starting the conflict. Now that he finally speaks, he blames NATO for accepting members that want to avoid being invaded by Russia. What a terrible moral signal to send to dictators."

Thai govt upbeat on lasting ceasefire with Muslim insurgents

(5-5-22) Thai peace negotiators and representatives of militant groups agreed to a ceasefire back in March for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and the truce, which runs from April 3 to May 15, has so far been kept apart from a bomb that killed a villager in Pattani province on April 15.

The fact that the truce has been kept by insurgents bodes well for a similar long-term ceasefire in the three Muslim-majority southernmost provinces, according to Gen. Wallop Raksanoh, the head of the government's negotiation team.

Myanmar junta court rejects Suu Kyi corruption appeal

(5-5-22) A Myanmar junta court rejected on 4 May an appeal by ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi against a five-year sentence for corruption handed down last week, a junta spokesman told AFP. Since a coup ousted her government in February last year, plunging Myanmar into upheaval, Suu Kyi has been in military custody and faces a raft of charges that could jail her for more than 150 years. Suu Kyi will remain under house arrest at an unknown location in the military-built capital Naypyidaw while she fights other charges.

Timor-Leste president-elect joins Church to tackle poor education

(5-5-22) Timor-Leste's president-elect Jose Ramos-Horta held meetings with Catholic leaders, including the Vatican envoy, to discuss government and church cooperation in addressing poor education, one of the most pressing problems in the Catholic-majority country.

He held separate meetings on May 4 with Monsignor Marco Sprizzi, charge d'affaires at the apostolic nunciature, and the National Commission on Catholic Education of Timor-Leste (CONNECTIL).

In a statement after the meeting, he said that apart from discussing the political situation in the country, he specifically discussed education, which he hopes will become the focus of the Church's attention during his tenure.



It's time to go, religious leaders tell Sri Lankan govt

(5-5-22) Religious leaders have urged the Sri Lankan government to resign after the main opposition submitted two no-confidence motions against the government and the president.

Oblate Priest Father Rohan Silva, director of the Centre for Society and Religion (CSR), said the people of the country want President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the government to quit.

"Get out of your seats and positions and bow to the sovereignty of the people," said Father Silva, a prominent human rights defender. Buddhist monks have warned that if the prime minister and the cabinet do not resign and an interim government is not formed, a Sangha Convention will be issued and all politicians will be rejected.

6-5-22

Becciu, at Vatican trial, testifies that Pope OK'd spending 1M euros to free kidnapped nun

(6-5-22) Cardinal Angelo Becciu's "bombshell testimony could pose serious security implications for the Vatican and Catholic Church, since he provided evidence that the Pope was apparently willing to pay ransom to Islamic militants to free a nun," the Associated Press reported.

Cardinal Becciu oversaw the internal affairs of the Roman Curia as Substitute (Sostituto) of the Secretariat of State from 2011 to 2018. Pope Francis created him a cardinal in the 2018 consistory and named him Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In 2020, Becciu resigned from the "rights connected to the cardinalate."

Cardinal Pell skeptical of Archbishop Becciu's defence

(6-5-22) Cardinal George Pell has indicated that he has doubts about the “spirited defence” that Archbishop Angelo Becciu presented to a Vatican tribunal, saying that the archbishop’s account of his financial dealing is “somewhat incomplete.”

Christian witness impossible without ecumenism, Pope argues

(6-5-22) Pope Francis underlined the priority of ecumenism in a May 6 address to the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, saying that “one cannot think of journeying on the path of faith without the company of brothers and sisters from other Churches of ecclesial communities.”

“Alone, never,” the Pope continued. “We cannot do it.”

In his remarks the Pope suggested that the Covid lockdown had helped to “strengthen and renew relations among Christians,” by reminding people of their fragility.

Pope Francis also spoke about the war in Ukraine, saying that the violence “cannot fail to challenge the conscience of every Christian and every Church.”



Priest in Nigeria released on 3 May 40 days after abduction

(6-5-22) Father Felix Zakari Fidson was abducted in Kaduna State, where the jihadist terrorist group Boko Haram has been active.

In addition to Fr Fidson, two other priests were kidnapped in Nigeria in March, Fr Joseph Akete Bako pastor of the church of St John, in Kudenda in the local government area of Kaduna South, kidnapped on the night of 8 March in an assault on the parish house during which a person was killed and Fr Leo Raphael Ozigi, parish priest of the church

of St Mary, in the village of Sarkin Pawa, in the local government area of Munya, in the state of Niger, kidnapped on Sunday 27 March. The latter was released on the night of April 8 along the Kaduna-Zaria road

Cardinal Ranjith: German bishops' Synodal Path is unacceptable

(6-5-22) In an interview, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Sri Lanka, a former Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship (2005-2009), praised the Pope’s curial reform and said he “cannot accept” the German bishops’ Synodal Path.

Swiss president meets Pope

(6-5-22) President Ignazio Cassis of the Swiss Federation met Pope Francis on May 6.

A brief Vatican statement released after the meeting said that the conversation had centered on bilateral relations, but included a discussion of the war in Ukraine.

The Swiss leader was in Rome for the swearing-in of new members of the Swiss Guard.

Vatican - Pope Francis: in the Christian mission there are no "protagonists" and "executors"

(5-5-22) The Church "exists to evangelize, to go forth and to sow the seed of the Gospel in history". Each baptized person can be involved in this great adventure, whatever his condition and his role in the Church and in the world is. For this reason "we must beware of the mentality that would separate priests and laity, considering the former as protagonists and the latter as executors, and together carry forward the Christian mission as the one People of God, laity and pastors", recognizing that "the Church as a whole is an evangelizing community. The reference to the very nature of the Christian mission comes once again from Pope Francis, on the occasion of the 59th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which will be celebrated on May 8 Sunday.

Russia - Archbishop Pezzi: leave a door open to dialogue; the other is never an enemy

(6-5-22) "I think that these hopes for dialogue are well founded. I think that mistrust is more unfounded. This is what Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop of the Mother of God in Moscow Paolo Pezzi affirms in an interview, offering some reflections on the need to always leave the door open to

dialogue, as shown by the various attempts of Vatican diplomacy in the current difficult circumstances. Faced with the mistrust that often permeates the current debate in the West regarding a possible negotiated resolution of the conflict and a dialogue with the Russian government, I believe that our hopes, but perhaps also those of the Pope, are based above all on one aspect, namely that the other is never an enemy: he is 'other', 'other than us', different and probably also has different existential positions, but he remains a child of God, a man, a created being, with whom it is always worth seeking dialogue to solve problems".

South Africa - Presentation of the Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees for the South African dioceses

(6-5-22) "The need for Guidelines for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees in the SACBC (Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference) arises from the reflection of how the Church can speak to the needs of Migrants and Refugees living in our Dioceses", says Sister Maria de Lurdes Lodi Rissini, a Scalabrinian missionary, Coordinator of the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees of the SACBC, in presenting the training guideline for the pastoral care of migrants for the South African dioceses. "We are all conscious of the challenges that are faced every day and the need to work together on the socio-pastoral issues in our Church. Our approach, therefore, must be an integrated one that respects both the needs of the displaced persons and those of the hosting community", explains the nun., the most recent statistics indicate the total number of applications registered with the Department of Internal Affairs is around 270,000. Of these 188,296 are asylum seekers and 80,758 are refugees. The top 10 countries of origin of asylum seekers are: Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Congo Brazzaville, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Eritrea, Rwanda, Uganda, Cameroon. Several other refugees also come from non-African states: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, China, East Timor, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Russia, Serbia, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Yemen, Zambia and others.

India - Young Catholics as Messengers of the Gospel in Society

(6-5-22) Young Indian Catholics are messengers of the Gospel in society bringing Christ's gaze to poverty, addictions, between ethnic and religious communities: says Fr. Chetan Machado, executive secretary of the Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CCBI). The Commission, together with the Indian Catholic Youth Movement (ICYM), organized the



Conference" in the Nadiad Pastoral Centre in Gujarat, West India recently. A total of 437 delegates from across the country attended this conference to share their faith and life experiences. The motto of the event was "Youth for a Synodal Church".

Brazil - Conscious choices for the good of the Amazon and the community: Repam-Brazil campaign ahead of the elections

(6-5-22) The Ecclesial Pan-Amazonian Network (REPAM-Brazil), an organization of the National Bishops' Conference (CNBB), has launched the #EuVotoPelaAmazonia Campaign, with the aim of helping Christians and society to reflect on the importance to elect, in the general elections of October 2, politicians and governments committed to integral ecology, agroecology, socio-environmental justice, the well-being and rights of peoples and their territories. The Campaign will run from May to September, will develop various awareness-raising actions such as debates on the Amazon and elections.

7-5-22

Uzbekistan - A journey of fraternity for the Bishops of Central Asia



(7-5-22) In the first meeting of the newly formed Bishops' Conference of Central Asia 26 to 30 April in Nursultan, Kazakhstan, José Luis Mumbiela Sierra, Bishop of the Holy Trinity in Almaty, has been elected president of the Conference. The Bishops' Conference was initially conceived to bring together the Churches of the "Stan" - the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. The Bishops' Conference was initially conceived to bring together the Churches of the "Stan" - the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

While Azerbaijan was a guest-member, Mongolia and Afghanistan have requested membership.

8-5-22

Pope at Regina Coeli: Hear and follow the Lord, our Good Shepherd

(8-5-22) In his catechesis before leading the recitation of the Regina Coeli on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, Pope Francis recalled how today's liturgy speaks about the Lord who uses "the tender and beautiful image of the shepherd who stays with the sheep." The Lord's sheep "hear" his voice, they "know" him, and they "follow" him.

The three verbs - hear, know, follow - illustrate the key message in today's Gospel reading, said the Pope. The sheep "hear" the voice of the shepherd, showing how the initiative comes from the Lord and his grace who calls us to communion, the Pope explained, but this requires us to be available and open to this invitation and relationship. By listening to Jesus we discover "he knows us," the Pope explained, and in the biblical sense knowing means loving. We are always loved by him and are never alone. The Lord sustains us in our suffering, difficulties and crises, times in particular we can discover "we are known and loved by the Lord," said the Pope. Finally, the Pope focused on the verb "follow," as the Lord's followers go where he goes along the same path and direction. Like the Good Shepherd, they seek those who are lost or need our compassion and love.

Prayer for peace that is never obtained with weapons, prayers for victims of hotel explosion in Cuba

(8-5-22) Pope Francis reiterated, after the Regina Coeli prayer his appeal for peace in so many war-afflicted countries and asked all believers to pray that leaders be attuned to the wish of their suffering people who know that weapons do not bring peace.

Pope Francis asked for prayers for the victims of an explosion that took place in Havana, Cuba, saying "may the Risen Christ guide them to the house of the Father and give comfort to their families."

The Blessed 'Aguchita'

(8-5-22) He also paid tribute to a new Blessed from San Ramón, Peru, María Agustina Rivas López commonly known as Aguchita, of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, killed in hatred of the faith in 1990. The newly beatified was known as a heroic missionary, giving her life in her service to the poor, especially indigenous and farm women. The Pope prayed that her example might awaken in everyone "the desire to serve Christ with fidelity and courage."



World Day of Prayer for Vocations

(8-5-22) Today also marks the World Day of Prayer for Vocations with the theme "Called to Build the Human Family", the Pope recalled, saying on this day we all, as baptized, feel called to follow Jesus, to say our "yes" to him, to follow his example and discover the joy of giving our lives with joy and enthusiasm in service of the Gospel. The Pope also congratulated the new priests of the Diocese of Rome, ordained this morning in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran.



Mothers' Day

(8-5-22) Finally, the Pope added that today is Mother's Day, and we remember with affection our mothers, also those who are no longer with us, but live in our hearts. May we all offer moms around the world our prayer, affection, and best wishes, said the Pope.

Greeting the groups from around the world, the Pope also offered special thoughts to those suffering from fibromyalgia with hopes they may receive the necessary care.
