



CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

4-10 July 2022

4-7-22

Pope scoffs at rumours of resignation, cancer

(4-7-22) Pope Francis scoffed at reports that he might soon resign, said that he may yet travel to Ukraine and Moscow, and commented on the US Supreme Court's decision on abortion, in his latest published interview.

In a conversation with Philip Pullella, the veteran Vatican correspondent for Reuters, the Pope said that he is not contemplating resignation, and the prospect "never entered my mind" when he scheduled a visit to the city of L'Aquila, and the tomb of Pope Celestine V, who resigned in 1294. He allowed that he could resign in the future, if he finds himself unable to fulfill his role, but indicated that was not likely soon. "God will say," he concluded. Pope Francis also laughed off a rumour that surgeon discovered cancer during his abdominal surgery last year, saying that doctors "didn't tell me anything about it."

Questioned about the US Supreme Court's decision in the *Dobbs* case, the Pope said that he was not acquainted with the legal arguments, but reiterated his condemnation of abortion, saying that it is tantamount to "hiring a hit man." However, he refused to support American prelates who have said that pro-abortion politicians should be barred from Communion. He said that "when a bishop loses his pastoral nature, it causes a political problem." In perhaps his most surprising comment, Pope Francis said that he still hopes to visit Ukraine, but may visit Russia first, in a bid to advance the cause of peace. He suggested that he might make the trip after his scheduled visit to Canada later this month. Finally the Pope disclosed that he had suffered a "small fracture" in his knee recently, complicating problems caused by an inflamed ligament. He said that the painful condition is gradually improving.

Pope calls on elderly to be 'teachers of tenderness'

(4-7-22) In a video that accompanied his July prayer intention, Pope Francis said that "we elderly people often have a special sensitivity for care, for reflection, and affection."

"We are, or we can become, teachers of tenderness," the Pope continued. "And indeed we can! In this world accustomed to war, we need a true revolution of tenderness. We have a great responsibility towards new generations about this."

The Pope also referred to the elderly as "the bread that nourishes our lives, the hidden wisdom of a people. That is why we must celebrate them."

Brazilian Cardinal Hummes, key liberal leader and papal ally, dead at 87

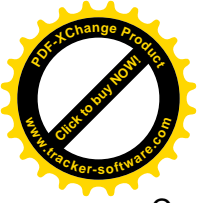


(4-7-22) Cardinal Claudio Hummes, an influential Brazilian prelate who was a close friend of Pope Francis and a leader among the liberal members of the College of Cardinals, dies of lung cancer on July 4 at the age of 87.

Ordained as a Franciscan in 1958, the future cardinal was named coadjutor bishop of Santo Andre, Brazil, in 1975. He was named Archbishop of Fortaleza in 1996, but after a short stay there became Archbishop of Sao Paulo in 1998. He was raised to the College of Cardinals by Pope John Paul II in 2001. In 2006, Cardinal Hummes was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to be prefect of the Congregation for Clergy. He continued in that role until his retirement in 2010 at the age of 76.

Cardinal Hummes reportedly backed then-Cardinal Bergoglio at the papal conclave of 2013, and the newly-elected Pontiff asked the Brazilian prelate to join him on the

loggia of St. Peter's Basilica when he was introduced as Pope Francis—a name that Cardinal Hummes had recommended to him.



Cardinal Hummes was a supporter of liberation theology, who questioned the discipline of priestly celibacy. He was a key figure in the Amazon Synod of 2019.

(6-7-22) In a telegram of condolence following the death of Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Pope Francis spoke of the cardinal's "dedicated and zealous service, always guided by Gospel values."

"I always carry vividly in my memory the words which Dom Claudio said to me on 13 March 2013, asking me not to forget the poor," the Pope added, referring to the date of his election by the College of Cardinals.

German bishop: 'Do not forget Jesus Christ'

(4-7-22) At the beginning of Ulrichswoche (Ulrich's Week)—a commemoration by Augsburg Catholics of St. Ulrich, their patron saint—Bishop Bertram Meier called upon Germany's divided Catholics not to forget Jesus Christ, but to encounter Him anew, as He is "the centre and engine of every reform." The 62-year-old bishop, appointed Bishop of Augsburg in 2020, also spoke of St. Ulrich as a model of prayer, evangelization, and the rejection of pomp and luxury. On the Feast of Corpus Christi in June, Bishop Meier had pleaded for a "de-escalation" in conflicts among German Catholics and called for repentance, evangelization, and a return to the essentials of the faith.

Bishop Meier's July 2 homily at Vespers, at the beginning of Ulrichswoche, followed a July 1 audience with Pope Francis that lasted for nearly an hour. In a German-language article, Catholic News Agency reported that the two discussed the continued relevance of St. Ulrich, an upcoming St. Ulrich jubilee year (2023-24), and the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Augsburg Confession (2030).

+Patriarch Raul Nicolau Gonsalves, 95

(4-7-22) Patriarch Raul Nicolau Gonsalves, who governed the Archdiocese Goa and Damão (India) from 1978 to 2003, died on July 1 at the age of 95.

Located in southwestern India, Goa was the base of St. Francis Xavier's missionary activities a Portuguese possession until 1962. Since 1886, the Latin-rite Archbishop of Goa has concurrently held the title of Patriarch of the East Indies. Patriarch Gonsalves, who was born in the Goa archdiocese, was the first non-Portuguese prelate to hold the position.



At a time when religious vocations plummeted throughout the universal Church, Patriarch Gonsalves oversaw a marked increase in the number of men and women religious in his archdiocese, even as the number of diocesan priests declined.

"He was a man of tremendous endurance, fortitude, humility, loyalty to the Church, devotion to duty and ability to absorb, calmly and serenely, various types of shocks and difficult situations," the Goa Herald reported. "He had the willingness to do what he could and leave in the hands of the Lord what he knew he could not do—qualities which kept him going where a less gifted leader would have perhaps succumbed to serious breakdown, physical drainage of energies, or even despair."

India - More than 200 cases of violence against Christians in 5 months

(4-7-22) In the year 2022, from January to the end of May, 207 cases of violence against Christians have been recorded in India. This is stated in a note sent to Agenzia Fides by the "United Christian Forum" (UCF), an ecumenical body that monitors, with a special and free telephone number, cases of violence. "This year, looking at the data, there has been more than one incident a day," says Catholic A.C. Michael, president of UCF, recalling that 2021 has been described as "the most violent year for Christians", with 505 incidents of violence recorded throughout the country. In 2022, the most violent state so far has been Uttar Pradesh, with 48 reported incidents. It is closely followed by Chhattisgarh with 44 episodes. Incidents include sexual violence, intimidation and threats, social ostracism, vandalism and desecration of religious sites, and disruption of prayer services. In most of these cases, physical brutality and the arbitrary closure of chapels or worship rooms go unreported. Among the cases reported by UCF, in early May there were two incidents of

social boycott and assault against Christian believers in Chhattisgarh, both from Bastar district. "The UCF toll-free number helps people who are targeted for their faith by providing legal advice and guidance", explains Michael, a former member of the Delhi Minorities Commission. "It is alarming that religious freedom is so brutally trampled upon by a few extremists. We strongly appeal to the authorities to take this matter seriously. Peace-loving Indian Christians respect constitutional freedoms and simply wish to live their faith in the nation", he concludes. Christians make up 2.3 percent of India's 1.3 billion people, 80 percent of whom are Hindus.



Martyrs of Zenta beatified in Orán, Argentina

(4-7-22) Two missionaries who were martyred in Zenta, Argentina, in 1683 were beatified on July 2 in San Ramón de la Nueva Orán. Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, presided at the beatification Mass.

The namesake diocese is colloquially known as Nueva Orán or Orán. On July 3, Pope Francis praised the martyrs of Zenta: "These two missionaries, who dedicated their life to the

transmission of the faith and the defence of indigenous populations, were killed in 1683 because they brought the message of peace of the Gospel. May the example of these martyrs help us to bear witness to the Good News without compromise, dedicating ourselves generously to the service of the weakest."

Indian Christian Day observed on St. Thomas feast

(4-7-22) Indian Christians cutting across denominational lines have joined to observe the feast of St. Thomas as a day of Christian celebration in the country, where a tradition says the apostle brought the gospel to the subcontinent in the first century.

Christian groups jointly began to observe July 3 as Yeshu Bhakti Divas or Indian Christian Day in 2021. Organizers have declared 2021-2030 as a decade of celebration marking the 2000th anniversary of Christ's earthly ministry.

"It is an annual day to celebrate the person and message of Jesus Christ which was brought to India in 52 AD by one of his Apostle," said cardinal-elect Archbishop Anthony Poola of Hyderabad in southern India said in his message. "It is for us to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ," he said.

According to a tradition followed by most Christian groups in India, St. Thomas arrived on the south-western coast of India in AD 52 and was martyred in the present-day Tamil Nadu on the southeastern coast. July 3 is traditionally observed as the apostle's martyrdom day.

The July 3 Indian Christian day began amid Christians facing a hostile atmosphere in the country after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a second term in 2019.

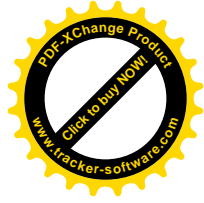
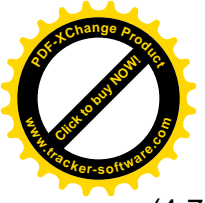
Lawmaker files for legalizing divorce in Catholic Philippines

(4-7-22) A Philippine lawmaker is taking a second shot at legalizing divorce in Asia's Catholic-majority country.

Albay lawmaker Edcel Lagman on July 3 re-filed a bill, dubbed the "Absolute Divorce Act," to liberate "beleaguered and tormented wives" from "irretrievably dysfunctional marriages or inordinately abusive marital relations."

The Philippines is the only country, aside from the Vatican, to outlaw absolute divorce even though the Catholic hierarchy grants canonical dissolution of marriage on certain conditions which find rare applications.

Catholic activists urge 'new relationships' with oceans



(4-7-22) No innovative solution would suffice to stop pollution and protect marine life from man-made disasters unless people truly change and learn to develop a 'new relationship' with oceans, Catholic environmentalists say.

"If we don't feel it here [in the heart], it doesn't matter how much, how little we have in our pocket. We're not going to change," said Jesuit priest Father Pedro Walpole, Global Coordinator for Ecojesuit, a global ecology network of Jesuits and partners.

Myanmar's military escalates attacks in Karen state

(4-7-22) At least 13 people including two children have been killed in Myanmar's Christian-populated southeastern Karen state as the military has escalated air strikes and mortar shelling since June 24.

Junta forces have been increasing their assaults, firing artillery shells into villages, arresting and killing civilians and burning homes in the region, according to the International Karen Organization (IKO).

The IKO said a 25-year-old teacher and her one-year-old daughter were killed by the artillery shelling and 10 people from another village were arrested and killed by junta troops.

At least two people were killed and three others wounded when a bomb dropped by a fighter jet missed its target and landed in a Karen village near the Thai border on July 1, according to Thai media.



Eastern rite Syro-Malabar Eparchy in US gets new bishop

(4-7-22) Pope Francis has appointed Mar Joy Alappatt as the new bishop of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Eparchy, in Chicago in the United States. The date of the installation will be announced later, the press release said.

Bishop-elect Mar Joy Alappatt, 65, is a native of Kerala state and has been serving the Syro-Malabar Eparchy in Chicago, the first outside Kerala, as its auxiliary bishop since 2014.

5-7-22

Pope hopes for renewal of secret China accord

(5-7-22) Pope Francis says that a secret diplomatic agreement with China, governing the appointment of new bishops, is working well, and he hopes it will be renewed in October. In an interview with Reuters, the Pope conceded that the appointment of new Chinese bishops is "going slowly." He suggested this was "the Chinese way," adding "no one can rush them." Since the Vatican reached the accord with Beijing in 2018, allowing the Chinese regime to select episcopal candidates for the Pope's approval, only six new Catholic bishops have been installed; about 40 more appointments are still overdue.

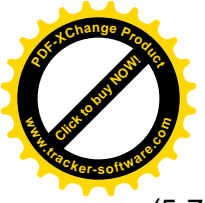
Defending the agreement—which has been criticized for allowing the Chinese government to select Church leaders—Pope Francis said that the Vatican was practising the "martyrdom of patience." He likened the situation to the Cold War diplomacy undertaken by Cardinal Agostino Casaroli when he was Vatican Secretary of State, which was also criticized for refusing to confront Communist regimes.

Vatican diplomat warns: expect crackdown on Church in Hong Kong

(5-7-22) The Vatican's former top diplomatic representative in Hong Kong has warned missionaries to expect further restrictions on religious freedom.

"Change is coming, and you'd better be prepared," said Archbishop Javier Herrera-Corona, who was recently named apostolic nuncio to Congo and Gabon.

Lay brother becomes superior general of Holy Cross congregation



(5-7-22) Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, has been elected by the Congregation of the Holy Cross to be the superior general of that order, having been vicar general for the past six years. The election, approved by the Vatican, is the first instance of a lay brother becoming worldwide leader of a religious community: a possibility that was created by Pope Francis in May.

One million Muslims join in Hajj as Covid restrictions ease

(5-7-22) Saudi Arabia is allowing one million people to participate in the Hajj this year, lifting restrictions that were imposed during the Covid lockdown. More than 2.5 million pilgrims participated in the Hajj in 2019. This year about 850,000 are expected from outside Saudi Arabia. All Muslims who are able to make the pilgrimage to Mecca are expected to do so at least once in their lives.

Only 44% of Australians identify as Christian

(5-7-22) The percentage of Australians who describe themselves as Christians fell from 86.2% in 1971 to 43.9% in 2021, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on July 4. There are 604,900 fewer Anglicans, and 215,900 fewer Catholics, than in 2016.

Bishop given new mission to Ukrainian refugees in Ireland

(5-7-22) Pope Francis has appointed Ukrainian Catholic Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski of London as apostolic visitor for Ukrainian Catholics in Ireland and in Northern Ireland. Nearly 40,000 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Ireland since the war began.

Two more Nigerian priests kidnapped, Italian missionary fights



(5-7-22) Two more Catholic priests were kidnapped in Nigeria over the weekend, although one escaped after fighting. That was 64-yr old Father Luigi Brena. In the northeastern Kaduna state, Father Emmanuel Silas was kidnapped on July 4. Father Luigi Brena, a Somaskan missionary (regular Somasca clergy). After they

arrived the police followed the kidnapers to their camp in the forest. The suspects, after spotting the officers, opened fire, but the policemen neutralized three of the bandits, while the rest of the gang escaped with several gunshot wounds, leaving the victim behind". "Reverend Father was immediately transferred to Igbinedion University Hospital in Okada for medical attention. Meanwhile, an intensive patrol is being carried out in the bush to arrest the kidnapers who have fled," the police said.

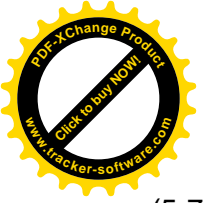
Turkey - Ancient Christian cemetery desecrated in the Tur Abdin region

(5-7-22) Hundreds of desecrated tombs, with mortal remains and funerary objects scattered in the surrounding land. This is the scene faced by the Christians of Yemişli, a village in the south-eastern Turkish province of Mardin, on the occasion of their last visit to the cemetery to honour the memory of their ancestors.

The impious profanation - reported by Turkish newspapers such as Yeni Yaşam Gazetesi - was discovered on Wednesday, June 29, the day in which the liturgical memory of Saints Peter and Paul is celebrated. The cemetery chapel, dedicated to the two Holy Apostles, was erected in 1967, in the center of a funeral area which also includes tombs that date back to the first Christian millennium. Every year, on June 29, the Christians still present in the area - mostly belonging to Syriac, Assyrian and Chaldean communities - go to the cemetery to celebrate liturgies in the chapel dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul and to carry out acts of devotion in front of the tombs of their ancestors.



Indian Jesuit priest's native village eternalizes his martyrdom



(5-7-22) Every July 5 will be observed as 'Father Stan Swamy Day' in memory of the Indian Jesuit priest and tribal rights activist who died as an under-trial prisoner on this day, declared residents of his native village in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The 85-year-old priest was arrested for allegedly having links with Maoist terrorists in the highly controversial Elgar Parishad case and suffered from serious health complications while in custody. He was denied bail repeatedly and died while in custody for which his co-prisoners and lawyers blamed the state for not allowing adequate medical help to reach him on time.

The people of Viragalur village in Trichy district, where Father Swamy was born, want to keep his legacy alive, said Father A. Santhanam, a lawyer in Madurai who joined the local Catholic community to celebrate a memorial mass in his honour. The villagers have declared his death anniversary as Father Stan Swamy Day," he said. Villagers along with family members of the late priest have erected a temporary pillar in his memory in front of the parish Church to enable visitors to pay homage to him. A public meeting was held in the evening in which Tamil Nadu's ministers, legislators and other dignitaries participated.

Meanwhile, the Chennai province of the Jesuits has released a Tamil language translation of Father Swamy's book, "I am not a silent spectator," which was originally written and published in English.

Father Swamy was charged with serious offenses such as sedition and arrested from his residence in Ranchi, the capital of the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand on Oct. 8, 2020, and was remanded to judicial custody in Mumbai the following day. The elderly priest who suffered from Parkinson's and other age-related diseases was denied bail by both the trial court and the high court and finally he died in a Mumbai hospital.

Jesuits have approached the Mumbai High Court seeking to remove the odium of guilt from the name of Father Swamy who lived and died for the poorest of the poor and those exploited. A year later, protesting against alleged state apathy and lack of accountability, 11 of his co-prisoners observed a day-long fast on the anniversary of Father Stan's passing.

In Ranchi, the capital of eastern Jharkhand state, which the Jesuit priest called home for over three decades, a rally was held at Albert Chowk in the heart of the city. A Hindi book, *Jharkhand ki Awaz: Stan Swamy* (Jharkhand's voice: Stan Swamy), highlighting his pioneering work among tribal people, Dalits and other voiceless peoples was launched on the occasion.

In the national capital Delhi, a memorial lecture was organized by the Federation of Associations of the Catholic Archdiocese of Delhi. It was attended by priests, nuns, academics, activists, lawyers, and the laity.

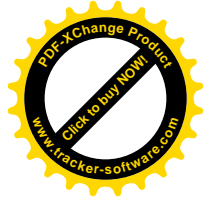
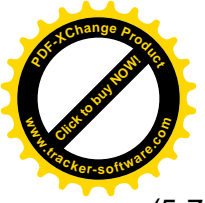
Neera Chandhoke, an academic and author, in her keynote speech, traced the origins of the Indian Constitution and dwelt upon the rights of citizens, regretted that the judges refused to see that the elderly priest, suffering from Parkinson's disease, had difficulty eating and drinking in prison and denied his request for a straw to sip liquids. "The tragedy is that when bail was the norm he was denied it and he was left to die in custody," Chandhoke said.

Sri Lanka admits bankruptcy, warns crisis will linger until 2023

(5-7-22) Sri Lanka is bankrupt and the acute pain of its unprecedented economic crisis will linger until at least the end of next year, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told parliament on 5 July. The island nation's 22 million people have endured months of galloping inflation and lengthy power cuts after the government ran out of foreign currency to import vital goods. Wickremesinghe said the once-prosperous country will go into deep recession this year and acute shortages of food, fuel and medicine will continue.

Meanwhile, four leading Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka have called on the government to stop playing political tricks and appoint an all-party government to help the country get international aid and ease the worst economic crisis in its history.

Myanmar junta 'ignoring pleas not to target churches'



(5-7-22) Myanmar's military junta is still targeting churches and Christian institutions in predominantly Christian regions, ignoring repeated calls by religious leaders for it to protect places of worship.

A church and a school in a village in western Chin state were targeted in aerial bombing on July 2, according to local sources and reports.

Media reports said two civilians were killed and several others, including children, were wounded when jet fighters dropped bombs near the church and school in Chat village, Mindat township, southern Chin state.

Displaced people from nearby villages had taken refuge at the Baptist church and in the school compound, according to local sources.



Korean Church voices concern over rise in abortions

(5-7-22) The Catholic Church in South Korea has joined pro-life activists in voicing concerns over a surge in abortions in the country after it was decriminalized thanks to a court order about two years ago.

A survey by the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (KIHASA) revealed there were an estimated 32,000 induced abortions in 2020, Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation (CPBC) reported on July 1.

Induced abortion refers to the termination of pregnancy

through medical procedure within 12-20 weeks of gestation, according to the *Science Direct* journal. In 2017, South Korea registered 4,800 induced abortions, the state agency report showed. The average age of women seeking an abortion was 27 in 2020, about 1.4 years younger than the average age recorded in a 2018 survey.

Father Park Jung-woo, secretary of the Committee for Life of Seoul archdiocese, noted that the rise in abortions is related to people's apparent lack of responsibility who fail to see life, sex and love as complimentary to each other.

6-7-22

Vote on female diaconate throws Australian plenary council into crisis

(6-7-22) In 2018, Pope Francis approved the Australian bishops' request to convoke their first plenary council since 1937.

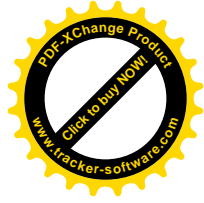
Non-bishop participants in the plenary council have a consultative vote; bishops have a deliberative vote, with a two-thirds majority required for resolutions to pass. A resolution calling for the ordination of women to the diaconate (should the Vatican approve), after gaining the support of over 70% in the consultative vote, gained the support of the majority of bishops, but not the required two-thirds majority.

"This is not the way we were anticipating or hoping the process would go," said Bishop Shane Mackinlay of Sandhurst, the plenary council's vice president. "It is disappointing and a lot of people – women and men, priests and laypeople and bishops – were very distressed" at the failure of the resolution to pass.

Pope will appoint women to help choose Bishops

(6-7-22) Pope Francis said that he plans to add women to the Dicastery for Bishops—the Vatican body that selects candidates for episcopal consecration.

In the third posted segment of a wide-ranging interview with Reuters, the Pope said that "two women will be going to the Congregation of Bishops." The addition of women to a body previously composed entirely of bishops would "open things up a little bit," he said.



Pope Francis pointed out that he has already appointed a woman religious, Sister Raffaella Petrini, as the second-ranking official in the Governorate of the Vatican city-state.

Pope speaks of personal prayer life in new podcast

(6-7-22) Pope Francis spoke about his personal prayer life in a new podcast, recorded with an Argentine priest, Father Guillermo Marco. The Pope said that “the prayer of a bishop is to take care of the flock, to put it in evangelical terms, and the Pope is a bishop, so he follows the same style. It is similar: to ask, to intercede, to give thanks for all the good that is done.”

Pope Francis said that he prefers to pray early in the day, “because if you don’t pray in the morning, you don’t pray anymore, because you are caught in the meat grinder.” Questioned about the effects of growing older, the Pope said that: “At this age, I laugh at myself and move on.”

Cardinal Ranjith demands resignation of Sri Lanka leader

(6-7-22) Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo, Sri Lanka, has renewed his call for the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

At a July 5 press conference the cardinal charged that Rajapaksa has lost the ability to lead the country through a period of crisis. He said that the president’s family “considers their political power more important than the wellbeing of the people.”



Papal condolences upon death of Cardinal Cláudio Hummes

(6-7-22) In a telegram of condolence following the death of Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Pope Francis spoke of the prelate’s “dedicated and zealous service, always guided by Gospel values.” “I always carry vividly in my memory the words which Dom Claudio said to me on 13 March 2013, asking me not to forget the poor,” the Pope added, referring to the date of his election by the College of Cardinals.

Kidnapped Nigerian priest regains freedom

(6-7-22) Father Emmanuel Silas, who was kidnapped on July 4, has regained his freedom. Father Silas ministers in Kaduna State, which “has been one of the hardest hit by the wave of violence and criminality that is sweeping large parts of Nigeria,” according to an Aid to the Church in Need report on the abductions of priests there.

Ethiopia - Evil acts are contrary to any religious teaching

(6-7-22) Chaos and violence continue to affect the Ethiopian population. Currently, there are strong social tensions in addition to the crisis in the country caused by university students who began to protest the killing, on June 18, of about 300 civilians of the Amhara ethnic group in Tole Kebele, 400 km west of Addis Ababa, in the area of West Wollega of the regional state of Oromia.

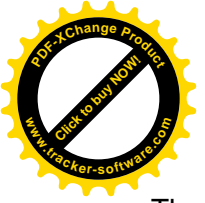
According to local sources, another 40 people died in a recent clash in Gambella.

“The Church strongly condemns the killing of innocent people in Gambella and western Wollega, mostly women and children”, said members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ethiopia (CBCE).

“In recent years in various areas of our country, actions contrary to any religious teaching have been repeated, leading to death, displacement and migration,” the bishops said, “Nobody should be killed because of identity and religion”.

Burkina Faso - Jihadist attacks condemned by the Gulf countries; evidence of national reconciliation

(6-7-22) The 34 dead in two jihadist attacks in Bourasso in the northwest and in Namissiguima region in the north are only the latest victims of the instability that has arisen since 2015 in Burkina Faso, where according to the authorities of Ouagadougou, 40% of the territory is out of control.



The attacks were condemned by the Arabian Gulf countries. The United Arab Emirates expressed their "strong condemnation of these criminal acts" and reiterated their rejection of "all forms of violence and terrorism aimed at destabilizing security and stability in violation of human values and principles". Similar condemnations were expressed by Bahrain and Kuwait.

As part of the national reconciliation effort, former President Blaise Compaoré, who has been in exile in Côte d'Ivoire since the fall of 2014, is expected to meet the military authorities who carried out the coup in January at the weekend in Ouagadougou. On Sunday 3 July, the military in power in Ouagadougou announced the "total liberation" of President Roch Kaboré, whose freedom was limited by the January 24 coup that overthrew him.

China - "Open your heart to welcome the Lord": the retreat of priests and nuns from the diocese of Ningxia underlines the importance of spirituality

(6-7-22) Open your heart, close your mouth, meditate in silence, make an examination of conscience to welcome the Lord during prayer, a face-to-face meeting with the Lord to be able to hear his voice and respond to his call.

These are the characteristics of the annual spiritual retreat of the diocese of Ningxia (Yinchuan), in mainland China, which took place from June 25 to 28. According to reports from Faith, the most authoritative Chinese Catholic bulletin in print and online, 37 priests, seminarians and nuns from the diocese took part in the retreat on the importance of spirituality.



Jordan - Caritas and Catholic Centre for Studies raise funds to send medicines to the Lebanese people

(6-7-22) Two concerts by Lebanese singer Carla Chamoun, also appreciated for her acclaimed performances of sacred hymns in the Arabic language. This is the original initiative undertaken by Caritas Jordan and the Catholic Center for Studies and Media with the aim of raising funds to purchase medicines and medical devices to be sent to Lebanon.

The artist, who arrived in Jordan at the end of June, first held a concert in Fuheis, in the square in front of the Catholic church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which was attended by more than 2,000 people. Then, in Amman, the singer animated an evening-concert hosted at the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the western area of the Jordanian capital with the performance of sacred hymns.

Colombia - After the murder of three Awá indigenous people, the Bishop of Tumaco asks for investigations and protection

(6-7-22) "We express our sadness and our sorrow for the death of our brothers, the Awá indigenous, who were murdered by armed men in their territory. We express our spiritual closeness and our prayer to the family of these brothers so that the Lord transforms this pain into peace and serenity". This is the video message from Bishop Orlando Olave Villanova of Tumaco, in the Nariño region, after the murder of three members of the Awá Inda Sabaleta reserve, which took place on Sunday, July 3. He asked the authorities for an investigation into the incident and protection for the indigenous.

Auditors in China to monitor online religious activities

(6-7-22) The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is seeking to expand its apparatus to monitor and curb religious activities in cyberspace through training and deploying hundreds of "auditors" across the country, triggering concerns from rights groups. Under the guidance of the CCP, the Ethnic and Religious Commission of Guangdong Province in southern China held a test for the first group of auditors for the state-run Internet Religious Information Services in early June, the *China Christian*



Daily reported. The result of the test was announced at the end of June and showed 127 qualified for auditor posts.

US-based Christian rights group, International Christian Concern, termed the move to deploy auditors as a “part of a wider effort to crack down on the spreading of religious information online.”

Pakistan's St. Thomas pilgrimage makes big recovery

(6-7-22) Since May, Prakash Aslam, a volunteer of the St. Thomas group at St. Gerard Church in Faisalabad has been organizing 14 seminars on St. Thomas, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. in Catholic churches in Faisalabad inviting the faithful to join the July 3 pilgrimage to Sirkap which is home to the ruins of the first church on the Subcontinent.

According to tradition, St. Thomas passed through Taxila on his way to India and preached at the court of King Gondophares. An early 3rd-century Syriac work known as the "Acts of Thomas," discovered in 1822 in Syria, says the king gave some money to the saint and ordered him to build a royal palace who spent it on the poor, and the king's dead brother, Gad, appeared to him in a dream and said that a throne had been built for him in heaven. The king therefore pardoned the saint and converted to Christianity, along with the people of the capital.

As the pilgrimage to Sirkap grew over years in northern Pakistan, the tradition of July 1-3 pilgrimages morphed into an annual fair in 1992. Volunteers of the St. Thomas group accompanied eight buses from Faisalabad, singing hymns and distributing refreshments along 322.3 kilometers north towards Taxila. They were among more than 3,000 pilgrims who prayed and lit candles at the meter-high throne. Archbishop Christophe Zakhia El-Kassis, the apostolic nuncio to Pakistan, made history on July 4 by becoming the first nuncio to visit Taxila Catholics. The pilgrims later visited the Taxila Museum which also displays a “holy bone” relic of St. Thomas. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, located behind the Taxila museum, added another attraction for pilgrims this year. Parishioners were advised to wear face masks as coronavirus cases climb across the country. The apostolic nuncio said he learnt about the patron saint of Pakistan from a Muslim guide.



Timor-Leste to promote 'human fraternity' through interfaith music

(6-7-22) The music competition is in line with the papal-endorsed document officially adopted by Asia's youngest nation

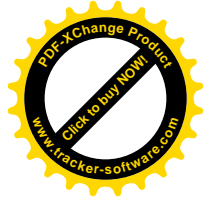
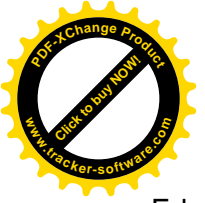
Representatives of five religions in Timor-Leste have come together to hold a music competition for young people to promote a document on human fraternity endorsed by Pope Francis. The event organized by Timor-Leste Religious Tourism Association (ATR-TL), an inter-faith organization, was officially launched on July 5.

The event is an effort to implement the spirit of the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, said ATR-TL coordinator Father Angelo Salshina. The document was jointly signed by Pope Francis and Ahmed el-Tayyeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar, in Abu Dhabi on Feb. 4, 2019, during the pope's visit to the United Arab Emirates. It stressed the brotherhood of people of all religions, and all across the world.

Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, Buddhists and Confucians are members of ATR-TL.

Philippines divorce bill dismays Church leaders, youth group

(6-7-22) Catholic bishops and a youth group have expressed disappointment after a lawmaker filed a bill in the parliament seeking the legalization of divorce in the Philippines under the country's new President Ferdinand Marcos Junior.



Edcel Lagman, a lawmaker from Albay Province, re-filed the “Absolute Divorce Act,” on July 3. The parliamentarian said it aims to liberate “beleaguered and tormented wives” from “irretrievably dysfunctional marriages or inordinately abusive marital relations.”

Father Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines said it was unfortunate that lawmakers who sponsored the divorce bill would rather destroy than protect the family.



Korean bishop donates century-old portrait of St. Andrew Kim

(6-7-22) A South Korean Catholic bishop has donated a priceless 102-year-old portrait of Saint Andrew Kim Tae-gon, the first native Korean priest and martyr, for display at a Catholic University.

Bishop Matthias long-hoon Ri of Suwon handed over the recently discovered oil painting of the saint to the officials of Suwon Catholic University on July 5, Catholic Times of Korea reported.

7-7-22

Pope confident financial reforms will stop scandals

(7-7-22) Pope Francis expressed confidence that Vatican financial reforms would prevent future scandals, in his extended interview with the Reuters news service.

When questioned as to whether new rules would prevent something like the disastrous investment in a London real-estate scheme—the transaction that is the focal point of a landmark Vatican criminal trial—the Pontiff replied: “I believe so.”

In listing the reforms, the Pope spoke of the Secretariat for the Economy, “with expert, technical people, who don’t fall into the hands of ‘benefactors or friends,’ who can make you slip up.” He credited Cardinal George Pell with the idea for the new Secretariat, remarking, “He was the genius.”

In the past, the Pope said, the handling of financial affairs at the Vatican “was very messy.” He said that Vatican officials, unacquainted with financial affairs, would seek help from friends, and “sometimes the friends were not the Blessed Imelda.”

Vatican cardinal: seafarers must be allowed shore leave

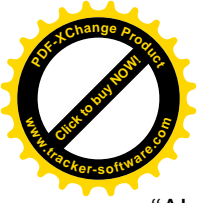
(7-7-22) The prefect of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development has called attention to the plight of seafarers who have been unable to leave their ships because of restrictions imposed during the Covid lockdown.

In a message for Sea Sunday, which will be observed July 10, Cardinal Michael Czerny said that “the pandemic must no longer be used as an excuse for banning the crew from going ashore.” He also expressed concern for the crew members who, because of long periods at anchorage, are unable to return home to their families. The cardinal complained that some shipping companies have enjoyed “exorbitant revenue” because of a surge in demand for good, but have not shared the profits with the crew members who make the system work.

Cardinal Czerny also decried the difficulties caused by the war in Ukraine, saying: “Many vessels have been sunk and human lives have been lost during this unjust and immoral war.”

Australia’s Plenary Council assembly passes motions on Indigenous, abuse

(7-7-22) The Australian bishops’ plenary council, thrown into crisis following a vote on the female diaconate, has passed resolutions on the sexual abuse of minors and on the incorporation of some indigenous symbols into the sacred liturgy.



“Aboriginal people have no doubt that Christ is God, (or of) the supremacy of Christ, and that Christ brings everything to fulfillment,” said Bishop Charles Gauci of Darwin. “If we use some of their symbols for cleansing, what’s wrong with that?”

‘The only necessary fight is the one for peace and development,’ Cardinal Parolin tells South Sudan’s president

(7-7-22) Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See’s Secretary of State, is visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan in the Pope’s place, following the Pope’s decision to postpone his apostolic journey there at the advice of his doctors.

Cardinal Parolin met on July 5 Salva Kiir Mayardit, South Sudan’s president since the nation gained its independence in 2011.

The South Sudanese Civil War began in 2013; six years later, Pope Francis kissed the feet of the nation’s leaders as he appealed for peace. The war officially ended in 2020.



Nigeria - Another priest kidnapped; alarm after the attack on a prison near Abuja

(7-7-22) Fr. Peter Amodu, a priest of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans) was kidnapped on his way to celebrate mass. He belongs to the Diocese of Otukpo, in the State of Benue (north-central Nigeria). The kidnapping took place on July 6 around 5:00 p.m. on the Otukpo-Ugbokolo road while the Spiritan father was on his way to celebrate mass in Okwungaga-Ugbokolo.

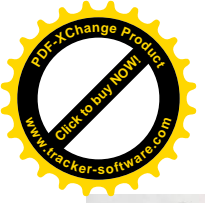
Fr. Amodu, who serves at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Eke-Olengbeche, is just the latest of the priests who have been victims of kidnapping or attempted kidnapping in recent days in different parts of Nigeria. Among them is the Italian missionary, Luigi Brena, a Somascan missionary (regular Somascan clerics), who “defended himself from the kidnapping by holding on to a railing. So the kidnapers started shooting. Then they beat him and wounded him with a knife: they cut off half of his ear, for which he was hospitalized.” Meanwhile, three other kidnapped priests have been released. Fr. Emmanuel Silas, kidnapped on July 4 in Zambina, in the northeastern state of Kaduna, as well as Fr. Peter Udo, from the parish of St. Patrick Uromi, and Fr. Philemon Oboh, from the Saint Joseph Retreat Centre, in Ugboha, in the local government area of Esan, in the state of Edo, in southern Nigeria, kidnapped on July 2.

Chile - Priests of the Archdiocese of La Serena reflect on the vocational crisis

(7-7-22) The priests involved in the pastoral service of the ecclesial communities of the provinces of Elqui and Limarí, of the Chilean Archdiocese of La Serena, met on July 5, in the retreat house “El Tránsito”, to reflect on the vocational situation. The objective was to become aware of the lack of vocations, especially for the Church of La Serena, and to commit to promoting vocational paths for young people in the area, considering that it is one of the priorities of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Guidelines.

Dogmatism reflected by priests in their attitude and preaching distances the youth from getting closer to the church, said a speaker. It was also pointed out that the political and social situation of the country and the Church have not been conducive for youth to think of God’s call to priestly or religious life. Attention is called also towards families, which implies paying attention to children, adolescents, youth and young adults, who can then be at the service of parishes as catechists, committed lay people or future priests and religious, some others pointed out.

Mexico - Day of prayer for peace on July 10: "the indignation of our people, faced with the barbarity of violence, is opening a door for peace"



(7-7-22) "The murders and disappearances that are committed daily in the country are a call from God to unite to ask for peace. The spilled blood of these brothers and sisters is the blood of Jesus that falls to the earth to make it fertile and to embark on a path of peace. That is why we call for a Day of Prayer for Peace. We need to be united at this time when the indignation of our people, in the face of the barbarity of violence, is opening a door for peace for us". Thus begins the Message of the Mexican Episcopal Conference, the Conference of

Major Superiors of Religious of Mexico and the Mexican Province of the Society of Jesus, inviting Bishops, priests, members of religious life, faithful and people of good will of Mexico, to "pray together for justice and reconciliation for peace".

Vatican envoy 'warned HK missionaries of impending repression'

(7-7-22) A Vatican representative in Hong Kong warned Catholic missionaries there to be prepared for a tougher future as China tightened its control over the former British colony, says a news report based on interviews.

Archbishop Javier Herrera-Corona, the unofficial Vatican representative in Hong Kong, had four meetings with 50 Catholic religious orders before he ended his six-year term in March. He warned the missionaries during these meetings, Reuters reported on July 5.

The 54-year-old Mexican prelate left Hong Kong after he was appointed apostolic nuncio to Congo and Gabon on Feb. 5. The Vatican envoy urged missionary groups to take appropriate measures to protect the property, files, and funds of their missions, people familiar with the meetings told Reuters. Their identities were kept secret due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Methodist university opens Korea's largest Jesus sculpture park

(7-7-22) A Methodist-run university in South Korea has opened a park depicting Jesus Christ's life and death through sculptures, which is billed as the largest of its kind in the region.

The Garden of Blessings Park located on the campus of Mokwon University in Daejeon was opened on July 4 in the presence of Yoo Young-wan, chairman of the Methodist Academy, reported Korean news agency Dong-A Ilbo. According to the University, it is a textbook for students to confirm and experience the work of Christ.

The park spreads over 8,700 square meters and was built while preserving the existing vegetation and adding more to it.

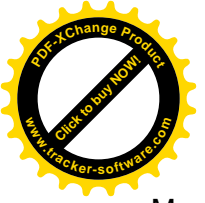
Sri Lankan religious leaders urge army to stop attacking citizens, Cardinal asks Rajapaksa's resignation

(7-7-22) Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thera, an internationally acclaimed Buddhist scholar, researcher and philanthropist has urged the armed forces not to attack unarmed civilians after a video clip of an army officer kicking a man in the chest as he queued up at a gas station went viral on social media. He said people are experiencing hunger, pain and despair with little or no hope at the moment for an end to the ongoing economic and social crisis in the country.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith has urged the president and the government to resign immediately to show responsibility for the tragic situation in the country. "Resign from your positions and hand over the future of the country to the people. The biggest obstacle to liberating the country from this sad situation is the fact that the Rajapaksa family continues to stay in power," the cardinal said at a press conference on July 5.

Displacement surge in Myanmar as fighting escalates

(7-7-22) The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has increased in conflict-torn Myanmar, especially the northwest and southeast regions, as fighting escalates between the army and the combined forces of established armed groups and new militias.



More than 5,400 people from 12 villages were displaced in Kyaukkyi township in eastern Bago while more than 3,000 people from Launglon township in the Tanintharyi region have sought refuge in nearby forests and safe areas since mid-June, according to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The agency said the total number of IDPs has surpassed one million.

Pakistan monsoon floods claim at least 77 lives

(7-7-22) At least 77 people have died in monsoon rains lashing Pakistan, prompting the Catholic Church's social action group to join government rescue efforts. Caritas Pakistan, which has units in all seven Catholic dioceses, on July 6 activated its Emergency Response Team in a planning and coordination meeting at its national secretariat in Lahore.



8-7-22

Biden signs order to promote abortion access

(8-7-22) Responding to the US Supreme Court's decision in the *Dobbs* case, President Joe Biden has signed an executive order expanding the federal government's promotion of abortion. The presidential order, issued July 8, encourages broader access to abortion pills, and orders a new federal initiative to protect confidential medical information related to abortion.

Pope says crackdown on abuse is 'irreversible'

(8-7-22) Pope Francis said that the Church is thoroughly committed to ending the scandal of sexual abuse, and "the direction taken on this is irreversible." The Pontiff spoke about the changes in the Vatican's handling of abuse during an interview with the Reuters news agency. The latest segment of that wide-ranging interview was made public July 8. Pope Francis praised the work of the special commission on sexual abuse, chaired by Cardinal Sean O'Malley, which has continued to recommend policies for the universal Church. "There is resistance," he said, "but each time there is more awareness that this is the path." Pope Francis himself continues to face criticism for his moves to protect some prelates who have been accused of sexual abuse.

Australian plenary council concludes; voters favor female deacons, general absolution

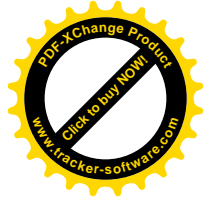
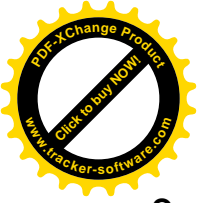
(8-7-22) The Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic Church concluded its work on July 8, with final votes that favoured the ordination of women as deacons, a new English translation of the Roman Missal, and a call for broader use of general absolution. The final votes represented compromises on some controversial issues, especially on the female diaconate. Earlier this week, the failure of a stronger resolution on that topic had prompted a tumultuous protest. Rather than an outright call for women deacons, the participants approved a final resolution "that, should the universal law of the Church be modified to authorize the diaconate for women, the Plenary Council recommends that the Australian Bishops examine how best to implement it in the context of the Church in Australia." The Council voted against a resolution that would have authorized lay people to deliver homilies at Mass.

EU bishops decry pro-abortion resolution

(8-7-22) The Catholic bishops of Europe have denounced a resolution of the European Parliament calling for universal recognition of abortion as a human right.

China deploys hundreds of auditors to monitor religious activities online

(8-7-22) "Both legal and illegal religious groups have been facing a renewed crackdown," UCA News said in its report on the implementation of the practice in Guangdong Province.



Cardinal Parolin at Mass in Juba: 'War and corruption cannot bring peace'

(8-7-22) Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See's Secretary of State, is visiting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan in the Pope's place, following the Pope's decision to postpone his apostolic journey there at the advice of his doctors.

"Never again violence," Cardinal Parolin preached at Mass on July 7 in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, which suffered civil war from 2013 to 2020. "Never again fratricidal conflicts. Never again war".

The previous day, Cardinal Parolin visited a camp for 150,000 displaced persons in Bentiu, South Sudan, and lamented the conditions there.

Holy See becomes party to UN climate-change convention

(8-7-22) The Holy See has formally accepted the terms of the UN's climate-change convention. On July 6, Archbishop Gabriele Giordano Caccia, the Vatican's permanent observer at the UN, submitted the documents making the Holy See a party to the convention. A Vatican statement indicated a desire "to contribute and to give its moral support to the efforts of all states to cooperate, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in an effective and appropriate response to the challenges posed by climate change to humanity and to our common home."

Pro-abortion protesters disrupt Mass in Chicago

(8-7-22) The incident took place at Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph Parish in Chicago, which "has hired security officers for weekend Masses, weddings, and parish events over the past three years," according to the pastor, Father Lawrence Lisowski.

Ukrainian Catholic leader: Russian troops are targeting grain warehouses



(8-7-22) Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, said on July 7 that "Ukraine is flowing with blood."

"The epicenters of the confrontation were once again the cities of Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, and Bakhmut," he continued. "The city of Kharkiv was again hit by a heavy rocket attack. Our Odesa region was also attacked with rocket strikes. There, warehouses which stored bread and grain, with the potential to feed millions of needy people, were deliberately destroyed."

Reflecting on repentance, Major Archbishop Shevchuk said that "from time immemorial, when Ukrainian soldiers went to defend the homeland, before taking up arms, they went to confession, they repented of their sins, they received Holy Communion, and then, in the fullness of God's grace, they were ready to give their

lives for the homeland."

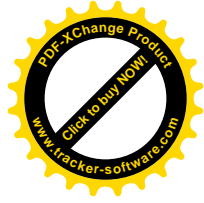
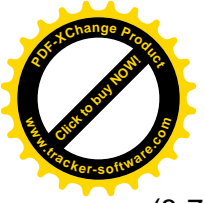
"O God, bless Ukraine," he added. "O God, bless the Ukrainian army."

Argentine women complain of mistreatment in Opus Dei

(8-7-22) A group of Argentine women who worked as "numerary assistants" in the Opus Dei prelature have complained to the Vatican about mistreatment, saying that they were obliged to work under "manifestly illegal conditions."

The 43 women say that they were given false hopes that they would obtain higher education, asked to work long hours without pay, and not registered in Argentina's national pension system. But their complaints have evidently not prompted a response from Argentine civil authorities. Opus Dei leaders in Argentina have set up a commission to hear the women's complaints and respond to them.

India - The Camillians mobilize with medical aid camps in the flooded areas of the State of Assam



(8-7-22) The death toll of the floods that are seriously affecting the State of Assam has so far exceeded 150. Four million people are affected by this emergency. This is what Fr. Bijoy K George, Camillian missionary (MI), National Director of the Camillian Task Force (CTF) said. Very heavy rains have been recorded in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in recent days. According to the report of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), the affected population has sought refuge in high places, including school buildings and embankments. The refugees in the different relief camps have increased from 1.76 to 3.12 thousand in the same period. Several roads have been washed away by the fury of the water.

"Knowing this disastrous situation and the worsening living conditions of the poor in the State of Assam", explains Father George, "the CTF, in association with St. John's Medical College Hospital and the Guwahati Gana Sevana Society, has organized medical aid camps in the most affected districts of the State" – because of shortage of food, water and medicine.

Bolivia - Diocesan clergy: "May the synodal journey be a source of profound renewal for the Church and for all of society"

(8-7-22) "May this time of synodal renewal be a source of profound renewal, not only for our Church, but for our whole society and of a personal conversion for all". Thus, we will be able to discern the signs of the times, grow in fidelity to the Gospel and to the Magisterium of the Church, encouraging ourselves and our people "not to fail in the face of so many anxieties and pains, and to strengthen ourselves in joys and hopes in the different situations we live in". This is the exhortation of the diocesan clergy of Bolivia to the People of God at the end of the July 4-7 assembly on Synodal Church.

Costa Rica - The Missionaries of Charity expelled from Nicaragua have been welcomed

(8-7-22) The Episcopal Conference of Costa Rica confirmed that the 18 Sisters of Charity of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, expelled from Nicaragua by the regime of Daniel Ortega, were welcomed in the Diocese of Tilarán Liberia, led by Bishop Manuel Eugenio Salazar: "We welcome them with all the love they deserve for their service and their dedication to God and to the Church". The "Consecrated Life of Costa Rica," has expressed its solidarity with the sisters "who, in their generous dedication, have committed themselves to reaching the most vulnerable and impoverished."

Indian Christians protest inaction after vandalism at pilgrimage centre

(8-7-22) Catholics in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh organized a silent protest against police failure to take action against the vandals who damaged statues of Jesus and Mother Mary at a local pilgrimage centre.

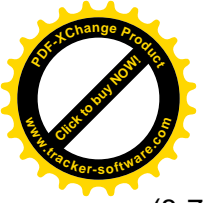
Ahead of the silent rally on July 8, parishioners of Dongargarh in the Raipur archdiocese conducted an hour-long adoration. "We want the police to take immediate action against those who are behind this attack," said Parish priest Kishore Ekka after registering a complaint at the local police station

in Rajnandagoan district. The priest said the vandalism at Mount Calvary, which is a popular pilgrimage spot for Christians, was noticed on July 3.

There were statues installed at all the 14 Stations of the Cross on the way to the mount but only three among them were spared by the vandals. "The statues were standing intact until 4 in the evening on July 2. What happened later is not known to us," Father Ekka told UCA News on July 8. Although it had been five days since his complaint, there was no progress in the investigations, he added with displeasure.



Saintly Japanese Jesuit's first icon unveiled



(8-7-22) Jesuits in Japan have unveiled the first-ever icon of Blessed Peter Kibe Kasui, a Jesuit priest who was martyred for his faith in the 17th century.

The icon was unveiled on July 1, three days before his feast day and is currently on display in Kibe Hall in the capital Tokyo, according to the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP).

It comprises elements of traditional iconography and Japanese symbolism that tell the story of Blessed Kibe, who traveled great distances on foot and by boat to become a Jesuit priest and to preach Christianity in Japan before his martyrdom at the hands of royal forces in 1639.

Painter Aleksandr Griaznov said he felt proud to create the first icon of the great Japanese Jesuit.

Malaysian diocese forgives church vandal

(8-7-22) A diocese in Malaysia has forgiven a churchgoer, said to be mentally ill, for vandalizing its main church.

The 34-year-old man vandalized a cross, a statue of the Virgin Mary and parts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Keningau diocese, in Sabah state on July 7. In the photos published by the diocese, partially broken statues can be seen lying on the floor. Keningau district police detained the man, who is allegedly mentally ill, after he was handed over by his mother.

Bishop Cornelius Piong said: "We need to forgive, we need to pray for the perpetrator, especially because we know he is not in a normal condition," he said. He praised the man's mother who immediately confessed her son's actions.

Former Japan PM Abe shot dead: local media

(8-7-22) Japan's former prime minister Shinzo Abe has been confirmed dead after he was shot at a campaign event on Friday, public broadcaster NHK and Jiji news agency reported. Abe was showing no vital signs after being shot at a campaign event in the Nara region on 8 July. He was 67. Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, held office in 2006 for one year and again from 2012 to 2020.

9-7-22

South Sudan - Anniversary of the Country's independence: "As Catholics we must strive to ensure that peace and justice reign in the country"

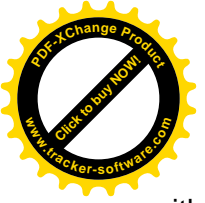
(9-7-22) "July 9 has always been a joyful moment for me dedicated to planning, reflecting and reuniting with family and friends to thank God for the freedom and gift of our beloved nation". These are the words that Bishop Barani Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala of the diocese of Tombura Yambio addressed the population on the occasion of the anniversary of the independence of South Sudan.

"The celebrations this year were very spiritual, crowned by the visit of Pope Francis' special envoy, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who was in our capital Juba for three days, praying, encouraging and blessing all of us as a nation!"

Bishop Hiiboro also specified how different this year's event is certainly: "we continue to suffer from the effects of the pandemic, internal conflicts and various forms of violence that limit our meetings and celebrations. We must recognize the God-given inalienable rights of life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness. As Catholics we must pray and work for a nation in which peace and justice reign for all, respect for every single individual."

Kazakhstan - A missionary organizes a "Cooking School" for the children of the "Ark Village"

(9-7-22) The Ark Village, a home for 45 poor children, some of orphans and 30 of whom are handicapped mentally or physically, brings new life to the inmates this summer thanks to 'Almaty Marathon' foundation. The sports area has been renovated, lighting and water systems given new life and a new kitchen inaugurated – to produce food and ready meals – which will help raise funds,



with garden-produce and give opportunity to the children to learn cooking. This is said by Fr. Guido Trezzani, a missionary in the community of the "Ark Village" in Talgar, near Almaty. It was founded on June 1, 2000.

In addition to the maintenance works, Fr. Trezzani says, there will be moments of leisure, combined with moments of human and spiritual growth.

Sri Lanka - Cardinal Ranjith: international aid is urgently needed for the country, especially in health care



(9-7-22) Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo appealed to the international community to assist in providing Sri Lanka with medicines and equipment for hospitals amid its economic crisis and in recent days invoked once again also the help of the Holy See.

"We need to support the children's hospital in Borella and the cancer hospital in Maharagama, especially for medicines and equipment", said the Cardinal, touching on the issue of corruption: "There will be investigations in the future into the disappearance of the national gold reserves: people have a

right to know how they have squandered the country's wealth". Due to poor management of the economy, essential goods are scarce in Sri Lanka, which is experiencing its worst economic crisis since 1948. "Doctors working in hospitals find it difficult to come to hospitals on time due to the fuel crisis. We are with the people in their grief", the Cardinal noted.

In the midst of the crisis, the Church does not forget the case of the Easter attacks three years ago: Cardinal Ranjith filed a written petition at the Court of Appeal asking for an order ordering the government to implement the recommendations contained in the Final Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the 2019 Easter Sunday Attacks.

10-7-22

Pope at Angelus: See and have compassion like the Good Samaritan

(10-7-22) Ahead of the traditional mid-day prayer of the Angelus on Sunday, Pope Francis reflected on the Gospel of the day on the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) which, he said, teaches us to be aware of others and to have compassion. He said, "the Samaritan, despite having his plans and being directed to a distant destination, does not seek excuses and allows himself to be questioned by what happens along the way".

Pope Francis called upon the faithful to ask God to be freed from "selfish indifference. *"Let us ask the Lord to see and have compassion towards those we meet along the way, especially those who suffer and are in need, to draw near and do what we can to lend a hand."*

Pope makes appeals for Sri Lanka, Libya, Ukraine

(10-7-22) After the Angelus, Pope Francis renewed his appeal for peace in Sri Lanka, urged constructive dialogue and reconciliation in Libya ("serious social and economic problems in the country"), and called once again for an end to the "senseless war" in Ukraine.

The president of Sri Lanka, Kotabaya Rajapaksa, who is in hiding, has announced that he will resign on Wednesday 13 July. The Prime Minister, Ranil Wikramasinghe had announced earlier that he would resign and make way for a coalition government.
