

CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

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Pope's 'State of the World' address

(9-1-23) In his annual "State of the World" address to the members of the Vatican diplomatic corps, Pope Francis offered a new reason for saying that "the possession of atomic weapons is immoral;" criticized Iran's use of the death penalty; decried the war in Ukraine and a "third world war" being fought piecemeal; and warned about threats to democracy.

In his January 9 address to the ambassadors accredited to the Holy See—an annual event anticipated as a sketch of the Vatican's diplomatic priorities—the Pope said that "diplomacy is an exercise of humility,"

contrasting it with "the human pride and arrogance that are the cause of every will to wage war."

After reviewing the diplomatic pacts that the Holy See signed in 2022, and mentioning in particular the renewal of a secret agreement with China, the Pope launched into the main body of his address by speaking about the danger of nuclear weapons.

Here I can only reaffirm that the possession of atomic weapons is immoral, because, as John XXIII observed, "although it is difficult to believe that anyone would dare to assume responsibility for initiating the appalling slaughter and destruction that war would bring in its wake, there is no denying that the conflagration could be started by some chance and unforeseen circumstance."

That argument borrowed from Pope John XXIII suggests that the most cogent argument against the possession of nuclear weapons is the possibility of accidental nuclear war—a possibility that world powers have successfully avoided for decades—rather than the inherent immorality of using weapons designed to produce massive civilian casualties.

However, the Pontiff did denounce the toll that warfare takes on civilians in other contexts, particularly as he spoke of "the third world war" in which "conflicts involve only certain areas of the planet directly, but in fact involve them all." He spoke passionately against the war in Ukraine, but also mentioned the continuing bloodshed in Syria, the Holy Land, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Myanmar.

Turning then to the prospects for peace, Pope Francis lamented: "Despite the commitments undertaken by all states to respect human rights and the fundamental freedoms of each person, even today, in many countries, women are considered second-class citizens." He went on to say: "The right to life is also threatened in those places where the death penalty continues to be imposed, as is happening in Iran in these days."

The Pontiff also remarked that the right to life is endangered by "the promotion of an alleged right to abortion," and an "ideological colonization" that disdains traditional cultural norms. He added that "we increasingly witness the emergence of a fear of life," noting the collapse of birth rates—specifically mentioning the "dangerous" trend in Italy.

Pope Francis then made a plea for solidarity, stressing the need for generous treatment of migrants and "care of our common home."

As he moved toward the conclusion of his address, the Pontiff observed that "in many parts of the world, there is a weakening of democracy and of the breadth of freedom." He pointed to such dangerous situations in the Americas—in Brazil and Peru and Haiti—and in Lebanon, a country that is "still awaiting the election of a new president."

Vatican lists states with diplomatic relations with Holy See

(9-1-23) In its annual report on the Vatican diplomatic corps—timed to coincide with the Pope’s “State of the World” address—the Vatican says that there are now 183 countries that have formal diplomatic ties with the Holy See, not including the European Union and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. There are 91 countries whose ambassadors to the Holy See are stationed in Rome, as are representatives of the Arab League, the International Organization of Migration, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Nigerian bishop assesses reasons behind increased priest abductions

(9-1-23) “The attacks by Boko Haram groups are part of their agenda to impose Islam and Sharia on all communities in Nigeria,” explained Auxiliary Bishop Luka Sylvester Gopep of Minna. “However, some kidnappings and killings of priests by various bandit groups in northern and southern Nigeria are largely for extortion purposes.”

Public now can see Benedict’s tomb at St. Peter’s Basilica

(8-1-23) The public can now visit the tomb of Pope Benedict XVI in the grottoes under St. Peter’s Basilica.

The pontiff was buried on Jan. 5 immediately following a funeral in St. Peter’s Square. His tomb lies in the grottoes under the basilica’s main floor. The Vatican announced on Saturday 7 January that the public could visit the tomb starting 8 Jan Sunday morning. Benedict had lived since 2013 as pope emeritus, following his retirement from the papacy, the first pontiff to do so in 600 years. He died on Dec. 31 at the age of 95, in the Vatican monastery where he spent his last years. The remains were placed in the former tomb of Benedict’s predecessor, St. John Paul II. John Paul’s remains were moved up to a chapel on the main floor of the basilica following his 2011 beatification. Some 50,000 people attended Benedict’s funeral, following three days of the body’s lying in state in the basilica, an event which drew nearly 200,000 viewers.



Turkey’s 1st new church in a century prepares for opening

(8-1-23) According to the report, a new Syriac Orthodox church in Istanbul will be the first church built in Turkey since the nation became a republic in 1923.

In Kyiv, Ukrainians celebrate Orthodox Christmas in reclaimed cathedral

(8-1-23) Packed a cathedral for Orthodox Christmas on 7 January Saturday, hundreds of worshippers heard the service in that church in the Ukrainian language for the first time in decades, a demonstration of independence from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Richly decorated with golden icons and panels, the Dormition Cathedral at the Kyiv-Pechersk monastery — part of the complex known as the Monastery of the Caves and a UNESCO World Heritage Site — put up a video screen outside for the overflow of worshipers, despite the frigid temperatures of -10 Celsius (14 F).

Overlooking the right bank of the Dnieper River, the cathedral and monastery complex has been a pilgrimage site for centuries. And for the first time in the 31 years of Ukraine’s independence, the service there was held in the Ukrainian language. Ukrainian army troops in uniform were among those singing well-known Ukrainian carols.

Ukraine’s government on Thursday took over the administration of the cathedral, built about 1,000 years ago then rebuilt in the 1990s after being ruined in World War II, had been under control of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which formerly had ties with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Togo- The expectations of the Togolese people for the new year that has just begun: to live in peace and harmony



(9-1-23) "There are many expectations for the new year that the Togolese would like to see fulfilled in 2023, in the political, economic, socio-cultural spheres", writes Fr. Silvano Galli. The missionary, who left Kolowarè in December 2021 and has been a formator in the preparatory seminar of the Society for African Missions in the capital Lomé for more than a year.

"On a political level," continues Father Galli, who has been living and working in Togo since 2004, "in addition to the democracy that they have been demanding for years, the Togolese also want transparency in political affairs and non-interference of politicians

in certain areas. The Togolese also want this transparency in the economic area". The missionary affirms the need for well-managed and equitably distributed economic and financial resources so that everyone can benefit from them.

Regarding the health system, the priest underlines the precarious situation and hopes that the public hospitals will be better managed and equipped so that people are not forced to go to private clinics reserved for the wealthy. All Togolese wish to live in peace and harmony.

Benin - The Bishops: "We welcome the return to the Catholic faith of a large number of former followers of the Banamè sect"

(9-1-23) "We welcome the return to the Catholic faith of a large number of former followers of the Sovidji sect in Banamè", say the Bishops of Benin in the statement issued at the end of their 68th Plenary Assembly, held in Cotonou from January, 3 to 5.

Back in 2013, the Bishops' Conference called on Christians to consider this church a schismatic prayer group and banned all Catholics from attending.

"As a sign of gratitude for the return of many believers to the Catholic faith, and at their request, a solemn Mass was celebrated for them on Saturday, November 26, 2022 at the diocesan Shrine of Maria Tokpa in Porto-Novo," the bishops recall. "This celebration was preceded by catechetical formation and penance according to the provisions of the Code of Canon Law." The bishops assure the faithful that the Church trusts in their sincerity. "She remains ready to accompany them on the path of genuine faith in Jesus Christ, the only Savior and Redeemer".

Venezuela - Decrease in the number of churchgoers: pastoral concepts need to be reconsidered

(9-1-23) "What is happening in Venezuela is part of what is happening in a world that is not just experiencing a period of change, but a turning point and it is commonplace to speak of a crisis", said the President of the Venezuelan Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Jesús González De Zárate of Cumaná in his opening address at the beginning of the Ordinary Plenary Assembly Bishops' Conference on Saturday, January 7, in Caracas. The Archbishop also mentioned what he considers to be the appropriate pastoral measures to be taken according to the signs of the times, to be discussed at the Plenary Assembly, which is due to end on January 12th.

"We live in a world marked by social injustice and the scandal of inequality between peoples," said the Archbishop, recalling the drama of the displaced people, among whom are seven million Venezuelans, and criticizing the refugee policies of the states concerned.

Venezuela does not escape the consequences of systematic environmental degradation, exploitation of minors and human trafficking, as well as maintaining economic and political models that cannot guarantee integral human development, said the President of the Bishops' Conference. The President of the Bishops' Conference also believes that the effects of the ongoing wars being waged in various parts of the world should not be ignored.

Philippines - Catholics celebrate the feast of the "Black Nazarene", a moment of deep popular faith

(9-1-23) "Christ knows the pain of the sick, the fatigue of the workers, the homesickness of Filipino workers and migrants, the thirst and hunger," said the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jose Advincula during the midnight mass celebrated at the "Tribuna Quirino", in Manila's Rizal Park, for the feast of the Black Nazarene, which the Catholic Church of the Philippines celebrates today, January 9th.

"Christ knows us and understands what we experience, he knows the sacrifice of honest civil servants, the repentance of those who have sinned, the dreams of young people and the tenacity of the elderly", he added. Cardinal Advincula wanted to reassure the faithful by saying that Jesus Christ is present for them in their suffering: "Christ never leaves us alone. He remains with us even if we are far from him", he said.

Father Daniel Franklin E. Pilario, professor of theology at Adamson University in Manila, affirms the devotion to the Black Nazarene: "We experienced a period of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. We survived the pandemic. People are still mourning the loss of loved ones. Jobs are scarce, prices are rising, daily life is difficult. These people are bringing this suffering before the Nazarene. It is a people who raise their hands to God. These religious practices are the way people express their faith in God and combine it with daily life.



Vatican - First celebration of the liturgical memory of Blessed Pauline-Marie Jaricot

(9-1-23) "Today, January 9, 2023, we celebrate for the first time the feast of the foundress of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith and inspiration of all the Pontifical Mission Societies, Blessed Pauline-Marie Jaricot, beatified in May 2022.

Pauline (1799 -1862) dedicated her life to announcing the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Her secret was her deep union with Christ Jesus. With her, we renew our call to holiness," said Father Tadeusz J. Nowak, OMI, Secretary General of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, during the mass celebrated this morning in the chapel named after John Henry Newman, in the building of Propaganda of the Faith, seat of the Dicastery for Evangelization and of the International Secretariats of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

Father Nowak recalled with joy that "for the first time in history, this memory will be celebrated in the universal Church, and in particular in the Archdiocese of Lyon, where our foundress is buried".

Pauline, he continued, "is an example of total dedication to the mission of the Church, confirmed by a life of holiness and joyful abandonment to the Lord". Pauline-Marie Jaricot was a woman of profound faith and charity. Coming from a wealthy family, she chose to renounce the wealth in which she was born to live, in simplicity, a radical adherence to the Gospel.

Muslim arrested for desecrating Catholic cemetery in India

(9-1-23) Police arrested a Muslim man on Jan. 8, a day after he allegedly vandalized 18 crosses and tombstones in a Catholic cemetery in Mumbai, India's commercial hub and capital of the western state of Maharashtra.

Dawood Ansari was detained after Father Bernard Lancy Pinto, parish priest at St. Michael's Church in the city's Mahim neighborhood, made a police complaint soon after the incident, urging police to arrest the culprit.

If convicted, the accused could be in jailed for up to two years. The police tracked down Ansari, 22, after analyzing CCTV footage. Police claim man accused of vandalizing 18 crosses and tombstones is mentally disturbed.

Philippine court acquits religious sisters of perjury charges

(9-1-23) A court in the Philippine capital Manila acquitted ten members of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines including two religious nuns from perjury charges on Jan. 9. Missionary of Sisters of Mary Sister Emma Cupin and Good Shepherd Sister Elenita Belardo were among the human rights activists whose perjury charge was junked by the court in Quezon City of Manila “on the ground of reasonable doubt.” A perjury charge refers to a criminal act that occurs when a person lies or makes statements that are not truthful while under oath. Former President Rodrigo Duterte’s national security adviser Hermohenes Esperon filed a case against the nuns in 2019 for allegedly lying under oath that their group – the Rural Missionary of the Philippines – was a non-stock, non-profit organization. Human rights groups condemned the perjury charge as part of harassment to silence the nuns and their companions from their strong advocacy for human rights.

Indonesian Catholics seek resolution of community grievance

(9-1-23) Indonesian Catholic groups have sought the appointment of a permanent head in the federal religious affairs ministry to oversee issues concerning Catholics in the country. Groups representing Catholic women, students, youths, and scholars have written to President Joko Widodo on Jan. 8 seeking his immediate intervention in the matter and finding a replacement for the acting chief of Catholic Community Guidance unit. The letter pointed to the controversy surrounding Albertus Magnus Adiyarto Sumardjono, the acting chief, who is accused of committing irregularities and flouting rules by his subordinates.



Indian inter-faith leaders slam attacks on tribal Christians

(9-1-23) Some 300 people from different faith groups have joined for a prayer meeting on the side of a street in New Delhi to express solidarity with tribal Christians who were forced to flee their homes due to the violence in central India’s Chhattisgarh state. Leaders from Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Bahá’í faiths prayed with lighted candles on Jan. 8 asking the government to end violence against Christians for their refusal to recant their Christian faith. The Delhi Archdiocese’s Commission for Ecumenism and

Interfaith Dialogue organized the program in front of its Sacred Heart Cathedral drawing attention to the plight of tribal Christians in Chhattisgarh’s Narayanpur and Kondagaon districts, who were forced to flee their homes due to the violence.

Non-Christian tribal groups, backed by right-wing fringe elements, are reportedly insisting that tribal Christians give up their faith and return to their traditional animist practices. Nearly 18 villages in Narayanpur and 15 in Kondagaon were attacked, according to a fact-finding team. The team, which visited the affected districts, said more than 1,000 people have been displaced due to the attacks and social boycotts which started in the second week of December in tribal-dominated Chhattisgarh state.

Vatican replaces Indian bishop accused of serious crimes

(9-1-23) An Indian Catholic bishop probed by a Vatican-appointed team of bishops for alleged involvement in serious crimes like murder, rape and misappropriation of church funds, has been ordered to “take a period of absence from the ministry.”

Bishop Kannikadass A William of Mysore (now Mysuru) has been replaced by retired Archbishop Bernard Moras of Bangalore as apostolic administrator of southern India's Karnataka state, said Archbishop Felix Machado, secretary-general at the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, in a Jan.7 communication to cardinals, archbishops and bishops in India. The appointment became effective from Jan. 7, he added.

10-1-23

Act to advance human fraternity and women's rights, Pope tells Zayed Award committee

(10-1-23) "It is important in your work to uphold the dignity of women as women's rights are often outlined on paper, but not practiced in reality," Pope Francis told members of the Zayed Award's judging committee.

The award was established in the wake of the Pope's 2019 apostolic journey to the United Arab Emirates, during which he and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar signed Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.

Pope says artificial intelligence should not foster discrimination

(10-1-23) Speaking on January 10 to a conference on artificial intelligence, co-sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life, Pope Francis said that in the development of artificial intelligence, researchers should "be vigilant and work to ensure that a discriminatory use of these instruments does not prevail, at the expense of the most vulnerable and at the expense of the excluded."

Italian populist premier meets Pontiff

(10-1-23) On January 10, Pope Francis met for the first time Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, whose populist victory had raised concerns at the Vatican.

The Italian leader was an admirer of Pope Benedict XVI, and ordered that all Italian government buildings should fly their flags at half-staff to honour him after his death on December 31.

The Italian leader told reporters that she was looking forward to the meeting with Pope Francis, hoping that she would be able to understand him better. (AP)



Brazilian bishops condemn storming of Congress

(10-1-23) In the 2022 Brazilian general election, former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva defeated incumbent Jair Bolsonaro by a 51%-49% margin. Brazil's bishops deplored the storming of Brazil's Congress, Supreme Court, and presidential palace by pro-Bolsonaro rioters.

Peru - "Let's not allow Peru to be destroyed by our actions or fall into an institutional abyss"; still dead and wounded in the clashes

(10-1-23) "We cannot allow Peru to be destroyed by our actions, nor let it fall into an institutional abyss" is the new appeal launched by the Peruvian Bishops a few hours ago after the latest clashes that took place on 9 Jan. in the south-east of the country. In fact, the serious tension that the Peruvian people have been experiencing since December 7, 2022, following the dismissal of the President of the Republic, Pedro Castillo and his subsequent arrest for attempting to dissolve parliament, followed by the swearing in of the new President Dina Boluarte, who was Castillo's deputy, does not seem to ease.

The toll of the latest clashes that took place on 9 Jan. in the city of Juliaca, in Puno, in south-eastern Peru, where a general strike has been underway since January 4, speaks of 17 dead and dozens injured, even among the police forces.

Pakistan - A new National Commission for minority rights is being studied

(10-1-23) In recent days, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif announced during a meeting in Islamabad that a bill to establish a National Commission for Minority Rights is underway. "Although this is a commendable initiative, it is necessary to evaluate the work of existing national human rights institutions before creating a new body."



A critic of the China-Vatican deal finally meets Pope

(10-1-23) Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kium, 90, may have had to wait almost three years but he finally gained a private audience with Pope Francis, the day after the Jan. 5 funeral for retired Pope Benedict XVI.

"It was wonderful. He was so very warm," Zen told Jesuit magazine *America* after the audience.

Cardinal Zen said he thanked Francis for giving Hong Kong "a good bishop," by appointing Jesuit Father Stephen Chow in 2021 over the

top of other more conservative, pro-China candidates. He said Francis quipped, "He's a Jesuit!"

He also told the pope about his decade-long pastoral ministry visiting prisoners in Hong Kong's jails and that he had baptized a number of prisoners when they requested the sacrament.

Cardinal Zen had previously travelled to Rome in 2020, seeking an audience with Pope Francis after sending him a letter concerning the Vatican's controversial deal with the Chinese Communist Party regarding the appointment of bishops but did not manage to see him. Pope Benedict's death served to open recent wounds over the deal.

The Shanghai-born Salesian cardinal has long been a vocal critic of the deal — still considered provisional — originally struck in September 2018 for two years, and since renewed twice for two years each time, most recently in September 2022. In 2020, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, then newly appointed dean of the College of Cardinals said that Benedict had effectively approved the structure of the deal. Pope Francis has long leaned into the fact that it was Benedict's 2007 Letter to the Church in China that paved the way for the deal. But the Cardinal could not see the letter of Pope Benedict XVI nor the text of the Vatican agreement with China. He has continued to claim that Cardinal Parolin has 'manipulated' Pope Francis regarding China.

Due to his various run-ins with the increasingly tough authorities in Hong Kong, Zen had to obtain special permission to travel to Rome this time.

At the end of his meeting with Pope Francis, the Pontiff invited Cardinal Zen to his apartment. Here, he showed the cardinal a copy of the statue of Our Lady of Sheshan that he was given on his election. "I hope one day, you can see Sheshan," Cardinal Zen told the pope who has long expressed a desire to visit China.

More than a million Filipinos join Black Nazarene feast

(10-1-23) Over 1.6 million Catholics flocked from Jan. 6 to 10 to the popular Black Nazarene feast to honour Jesus in the Philippine capital Manila, church officials say - this despite the cancellation of the *Traslacion* - the solemn grand procession attended by millions of devotees who walk barefoot, according to the Archdiocese of Manila.

India's top court says conversions a 'serious matter'

(10-1-23) India's top court has called forced and deceitful conversions "a serious matter" and sought assistance from the federal government's top law officer in seeking steps to stop them.

"Religious conversions by force, allurement, etc... if that is happening then what should be done?

What are the corrective measures?" the Supreme Court bench of Justice M R Shah and Justice C T Ravikumar observed on Jan. 9 while discussing a petition. The court also requested Attorney General R. Venkataramani to act "as *amicus curiae* or otherwise in any form" in the matter.

The bench was hearing a public interest litigation filed by Ashwini Upadhyay, a lawyer and member of the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), seeking a national law to check religious conversions through force and other fraudulent means. The judges brushed aside questions about the maintainability of the petition and the credibility of Upadhyay raised by P. Wilson, government counsel of the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Wilson said the petition for a national anti-conversion law was politically motivated. The top court maintained that the alleged antecedents of the petitioner made “no difference” to the issue of religious conversions. “When a case is brought to the court, the court will decide...,” Justice Shah reportedly said. Upadhyay maintained that religious conversion is “an act of aggression” and was widespread in the country.

The top court, at an earlier hearing of his petition, had observed that forced religious conversion may pose a serious danger to national security and impinge on the religious freedom of citizens. It also directed the federal government to step in and make efforts to tackle the “very serious issue” of proselytization through deception, allurements and intimidation.

11-1-23

Cardinal George Pell dead at 81, “persevering in times of personal trials” - Pope

(11-1-23) The Australian cardinal died unexpectedly, of cardiac arrest, after undergoing what had appeared to be a routine hip-replacement surgery.

Tony Abbott, Australia’s prime minister from 2013 to 2015, paid tribute to Cardinal Pell following the prelate’s death calling him ‘a saint in our times.’

In a blistering article for *The Spectator*, released on the day after his death, Cardinal George Pell denounces the preparations for the Synod on Synodality as a “toxic nightmare.” The late Australian cardinal describes the preparatory report for the Synod as “one of the most incoherent documents ever sent out from Rome,” a document that is “couched in neo-Marxist jargon” and “hostile to the apostolic tradition.”

In a telegram of condolences addressed to Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Dean of the College of Cardinals, Pope Francis said that he was praying for “this faithful servant, who unwaveringly followed his Lord with perseverance even in the hour of trial, may be received into the joy of heaven and receive the reward of eternal peace.”



Evangelization is not proselytism, Pope insists

(11-1-23) Pope Francis began a new series of Catechetical talks at his public audience on January 11 speaking about “the passion for evangelization.” Here below is a summary of what he said.

Today we begin a new series of catecheses on apostolic zeal. Christ’s Church, founded on the apostles, was born with missionary zeal, sent by the Holy Spirit to radiate the light of Christ to every land and people. Apostolic zeal is the very oxygen of our Christian life and an index of the Church’s spiritual health. Drawing upon the Scriptures and the Church’s living tradition, we can find a first, eloquent example of this in the calling of the apostle Matthew. The Gospel tells us that Jesus “saw” this despised tax collector; he looked at Matthew with eyes of mercy and called him to become his disciple. Matthew then “got up and followed him”; now a changed man, he left behind his ill-gotten gains and embraced, with Jesus, a life of discipleship and service to others. Significantly, the first thing Matthew did was bring Jesus to a dinner with many other “tax collectors and sinners”. He went back to where he lived and introduced Jesus to others. This can be our primary lesson in apostolic zeal; in the words of the late Pope Benedict, it proclaims Jesus not by proselytism but by attraction, out of a joyful desire to share with others the loving gaze of Jesus and the call to follow him as his disciples.

True evangelization, the Pope explained, means reaching out to people, helping, them, and inviting them to find the Truth. Underlining his point, the Pontiff said: Don't forget this: when you see Christians proselytizing, making a list of people to come... these are not Christians, they are pagans disguised as Christians, but the heart is pagan.

Church's mission is seen in care for the sick, Pope says in message

(11-1-23) Pope Francis has issued a message for the 31st World Day of the Sick, which will take place on February 11, the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The theme of the Pontiff's message is "Take care of him': Compassion as a synodal exercise of healing." ("Take care of him" is a reference to Luke 10:35, in the parable of the Good Samaritan.)

Catholic bishop arrested by dictatorship in Nicaragua to be put on trial



(11-1-23) Bishop Rolando Álvarez, who has been held under house arrest in Nicaragua by the dictatorship of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, since August 2022, will be put on trial, accused of "conspiracy" and spreading "fake news" against the regime.

In a hearing held on Jan.10, amid complaints of serious irregularities in the process, the case against Bishop Álvarez, of the Diocese of Matagalpa, was

referred "to trial."

According to a statement from the judiciary, "in the Managua Criminal District Courts, the initial hearing of the criminal proceeding was held, in which Rolando José Álvarez Lagos appeared as accused of the crimes of conspiracy to undermine national security and sovereignty and the propagation of fake news through information and communication technologies to the detriment of the Nicaraguan State and society."

The Ortega dictatorship's judiciary also stated that Father Uriel Antonio Vallejos, who managed to leave Nicaragua and has been living in exile in Costa Rica for a few months, is accused "of the same crimes" for which "the official letter to INTERPOL for his capture remains in effect."

Church in New Zealand commits to sexual abuse changes, including mandatory reporting

(11-1-23) "We note that exemptions [from mandatory reporting] will need to be made for some settings to protect legal, confessional, and therapeutic privilege," New Zealand's bishops said in anticipation of an upcoming report by the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Abuse in Care.

Dozens still in captivity after Christmas Day attack in Nigerian state, priest says

(11-1-23) "The church worship service was about to commence when the attackers arrived at the village riding on motorbikes and shooting sporadically," said Father Justine John Dyikuk, who ministers in a village in Nigeria's Kaduna State. "They killed one Christian and kidnapped 53 other Christians who are still held captive."

Russian Orthodox official sees Catholic conspiracy in Ukraine, says Pope is a monster and thief

(11-1-23) Massimo Introvigne, founder of the Turin-based Centre for Studies on New Religions, reports on recent statements made by Protodeacon Vladimir Vasilik, a member of the Russian Orthodox Church's liturgical commission.

Senior cop appointment angers Sri Lankan Church

(11-1-23) Church officials in Sri Lanka have criticized the promotion of a senior police officer, which they said ignored allegations that the officer, despite having intelligence information, did not act to prevent the Easter Sunday bombings of churches in 2019.

Nilantha Jayawardena was recently made acting Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police (Administration) and is tipped to become the next Inspector-General of Police (IGP), the island nation's top police job.

Church spokesman Father Cyril Gamini said Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo was unhappy that Jayawardena had been appointed to such an influential post, adding the new posting aims to hide the truth behind the bombings, which killed 269 people, including 37 foreign nationals, and injured more than 500.

Bangladesh – Radio Veritas Asia: 95% of listeners are non-Christians

(11-1-23) Radio is a valuable tool for proclaiming the Gospel in Bangladesh. This was confirmed by the Bengali service of "Radio Veritas Asia" (RVA) which recently held a meeting with its listeners in the capital, Dhaka. The meeting revealed that 95 percent of RVA listeners are not Christian. Participants at the event in Dhaka, representing different faiths and ethnicities, emphasized that they enjoy listening to Catholic radio, expressing appreciation and that it has a positive impact on their lives. The coordinator of Radio Veritas Asia



in Bangladesh, Father Augustine Bulbul Rebeiro, confirmed that "RVA is committed to expressing the truth, charity, mercy and human dignity, and therefore the Gospel of Jesus". And he said that this will continue to be the case in the future. Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario CSC, who attended the meeting, stressed that "RVA is the voice of Asian Christianity...In Bangladesh", said the Cardinal, "the majority of RVA listeners profess Islam. Our radio helps create awareness, mentality and culture in our country. It is working as a voice of the voiceless".

The Catholic broadcaster is the voice of the Church in Asia and promotes dialogue on questions of religion, culture, spirituality and current affairs. Radio Veritas Asia, headquartered in Manila, was established in 1969 as a continental Catholic radio station to serve Asian countries in their respective local languages. Today it proclaims the Good News through websites, podcasts and social media platforms in English and 22 Asian languages.

Vietnamese Catholics help Hmong kids survive cold

(11-1-23) Catholics in northern Vietnam have done a yeoman's job by providing support materials for hundreds of Hmong ethnic students, some 300 kilometers away, to survive the cold winter.

On Jan. 8, nearly 25 members from One Heart, a charity that supports ethnic minority people in northern provinces in Vietnam, visited Xa Ho Secondary School in the mountainous province of Yen Bai to offer students warm clothes, sandals, school items, and sweets.

Members of the group were drawn from the capital Hanoi.

Efforts on to resolve Indian Church's liturgical dispute

(11-1-23) The Eastern rite Syro-Malabar Church in southern India has initiated a dialogue process to resolve a decades-old liturgical dispute that has led to division and conflict between its hierarchy and the priests and laity.

A five-member delegation of bishops led by Archbishop Joseph Pamplany of Tellicherry held prolonged closed-door discussions with representatives of the priests and laity of Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese, who have been on a warpath over the mode of celebrating Mass in the southern state of Kerala, on Jan 10.

A majority of priests and laypeople in the archdiocese, which is the seat of power of the Church's Major Archbishop Cardinal George Alencherry, want to continue with the traditional mode wherein the priests say Mass facing the congregation. They refuse to accept the synod-approved form, in which the celebrant has to turn away from the faithful during the Eucharist.

The five-member delegation of bishops discussed the issues with five priests and five laypeople representing the archdiocese. "The delegates of the priests and laity refused to have any interaction

whatsoever with the apostolic administrator and have asked the synod to withdraw him," the Church source said.

Christian Indonesian governor arrested for bribery

(11-1-23) Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) arrested Lukas Enembe, the governor of the Christian-majority Papua province, about four months after he was charged with alleged bribery.

Enembe, 55, a Protestant Christian, was arrested from a restaurant in the provincial capital Jayapura on Jan. 10, according to the commission. Enembe's supporters believe allegations against him are part of a state plan to silence him and weaken the struggle for independence of the restive Papua region.

12-1-23

Pope appoints lay Curial official to help direct Pontifical Academy for Life (12-1-23) Pope

Francis has appointed Gleison De Paula Souza, 38, to the six-member Governing Council of the Pontifical Academy for Life.



According to the Academy's statutes, which were promulgated by Pope Francis in 2016, the Governing Council assists the President (Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia) and Chancellor (Father Renzo Pegoraro) in giving direction to the academy and suggesting new members to the Pontiff for appointment.

Born in Brazil, De Paula Souza was a member of the Sons of Divine Providence from 2005 to 2016. He studied for the priesthood in Rome, left the community before his ordination, and is now married and has children. He received his bachelor's degree in theology from the Salesian Pontifical University in 2015 and his master's degree in philosophical sciences from the University of Salento (Italy) in 2019.

De Paula Souza was teaching religion at a high school in Galatina, a small city in southern Italy, when Pope Francis appointed him the Secretary, or second-ranking official, of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life less than two months ago. He remains in that influential position as he undertakes his new concurrent duties at the Pontifical Academy for Life.

Before icon venerated in Belarus, Pope prays for peace (Aleteia)

(12-1-23) At the conclusion of his January 11 general audience, Pope Francis renewed his invitation to pray for "martyred Ukraine, always in our hearts."

Nearly 91,000 Austrian Catholics—a record—formally left Church in 2022

(12-1-23) On January 11, the Austrian bishops' conference released a German-language report on Church statistics for 2022.

According to the bishops' conference, there were 287 adult baptisms in Austria in 2021, the most recent year for which baptismal statistics are available.

In 2015 letter, Pope-emeritus spoke of rising power of Antichrist

(12-1-23) In a 2015 letter to Slovak politician Vladimir Palko, Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI wrote: "We see how the power of Antichrist is expanding, and we can only pray the Lord will give us strong shepherds who will defend his Church in this hour of need from the power of evil."

(12-1-23) **Catholic peace entity fears for civilian killings in Mozambique's new military offensive.** An Islamist insurgency began in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province in 2017.

Mali - The drama of the village of Douna, threatened by jihadists

(12-1-23) "The situation is still blocked. We continue to pray for our brothers while we hope that mediation efforts will be successful to allow the faithful to continue to live in peace", says to Fides

Bishop Jean Baptiste Tiama of Mopti, describing the situation of the Christian community of Douna (Barapireli parish) threatened by jihadists.

"For some time the village of Douna has been threatened by jihadists. On January 4, they returned to the village again to force the two Christian communities to close the churches", says a statement of January 5 from the diocese of Mopti. "It is forbidden to ring bells, play musical instruments and pray in churches. What is even more disturbing is that the jihadists are asking Christians to practise the Muslim religion", underlines the diocese of Mopti which invites the faithful "to persevere in prayer to overcome the forces of evil".

Precisely in the Mopti region, in central Mali, fourteen Malian soldiers were killed and eleven injured on January 9 in clashes with jihadists. For its part, the Malian army claims to have neutralized "31 terrorists".

Mali has been suffering from the violence committed by various groups of jihadists since 2012. The centre of the Country is one of the hotbeds of violence that has spread to neighboring countries, Burkina Faso and Niger, and is spreading towards the south.

Vietnam - Communion in Christ unites North and South Vietnam

(12-1-23) Walking together in following Christ. This has united and continues to unite Catholics from all over Vietnam, representing a close link between the South and the North of the country.

Geographical and cultural differences mean that the people of North and South Vietnam are very different from each other, in terms of ways of life, dialects, traditions and mentality.

Furthermore, for a long period of more than 20 years, between 1955 and 1975, North Vietnam and South Vietnam were separated due to the devastating Vietnam War, which exacerbated the divisions. It was not until 1980, five years after the reunification of the country, that the first unified session of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Vietnam was held.

This unity was evident in recent days in the two episcopal ordination masses of the newly elected Dominican Bishop Dang Van Cau, at the head of the diocese of Thai Binh, in the North; and of the newly elected Bishop Joseph Bui Cong Trac, called to lead the Archdiocese of Ho Chi Minh City, in South Vietnam. The image of the bishops gathered to give thanks to God is an image that circulates in communities and on social networks, offering the faithful an example to follow and increasing the synodal spirit of full communion and participation in the same mission.

Iraq - Chaldean Patriarch Sako: the unity of the Churches is not a "gesture of courtesy", but a secret of the Christian presence in the Middle East

(12-1-23) "The Eastern Churches need a breath of fresh air", is how the Iraqi Cardinal Louis Raphael Sako, Patriarch of the Chaldean Church, entitled his message for the forthcoming Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January, 18-25). In the statement he addresses the present and future of the Christian communities in the Middle East and concludes with an urgent appeal to find ways of unity and fraternal communion among Christians in the Middle East in order to ensure the continuity of the Christian presence in the region of the world in which Jesus was born, died and rose again.

Given the urgencies of the present, priority must be given to the issue of unity, "especially as we have become a minority in our own countries." Our strength," said the Primate of the Chaldean Church (in the photo together with Mar Awa III, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East), "lies in our harmonious unity, which is a guarantee of our survival and our continuity in spreading our message". Christians today are called to be vigilant. In lands marked by conflict, discrimination, violence that fuels exodus and migration In particular, "Church leaders must overcome petty differences, fanaticism and fear in order to safeguard the Christian presence in the Middle East".



Chile - Institutions and organizations of the Church and the State at the same table to face the tragedy of immigrants

(12-1-23) The great concern for the difficulties that hundreds of immigrants are facing, especially the most vulnerable ones, to regularize their status in the face of a law deemed "inflexible", was expressed by the Chilean Bishops during a meeting with representatives of the state and civil society. The meeting, which took place in the premises of the Episcopal Conference of Chile, in Santiago, was attended by the Bishops of the Standing Committee, who convened it, and representatives of the Migration Division of the General Directorate of Consular Affairs, Immigration and Chileans abroad; from the Migration Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; of the National Office of Religious Affairs, Caritas Chile, the Catholic Institute for Migrants (INCAMI), the Jesuit Migrant Service and the Conference of Religious, CONFERRE.

The participants in the meeting, according to the note of the Episcopal Conference shared the concern of the Bishops on the process of regularization of immigrants, as well as the need to support the communities in which large migratory flows arrive.

Islamic State behind blast that kills 5 in Kabul

(12-1-23) The Islamic State jihadist group claimed responsibility on 11 January for a suicide bombing outside the foreign ministry in Kabul that officials and witnesses said killed at least five people and wounded 40 others.

An IS member slipped by Taliban security barriers "before blowing up his explosive belt in the middle of employees and guards," the Amaq news agency of the local chapter of Islamic State said on the Telegram messaging app. An AFP team was conducting an interview inside the information ministry next door when Wednesday's blast took place.

13-1-23



Pope to Augustinians: 'Place Christ at the center of your life'

(13-1-23) Place Christ at the center of your life and mission, and witness the love of God in all you do.

This was the recommendation Pope Francis gave to the Primatial Council of the Confederation Canons Regular of Saint Augustine on Friday morning in the Vatican.

The Confederation was established in 1959 by Pope St. John XXIII.

In his address, the Pope recalled that consecrated life is like water, "if it does not flow, it stagnates," and like salt, "if it loses its flavour, it becomes useless." He also warned against isolation and self-referentiality, and encouraged religious to always work together and help each other.

The fundamental rule of religious life, the Pope said, is the following of Christ proposed by the Gospel. *"Take the Gospel as the rule of life, to the point of being able to say with Saint Paul: 'I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.'"*

"Let the Gospel be your *vademecum*," the Pope exhorted, "so that, while staying away from the temptation to reduce it to ideology, it always remains spirit and life for you." The Gospel, he continued, constantly reminds us to place Christ at the centre of our life and mission.

IAEA director, Pope Francis discuss nuclear weapons

(13-1-23) In a January 12 audience, Pope Francis received Rafael Mariano Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"Humbled & grateful to meet @Pontifex, who highlighted #ClimateChange impacts & the danger posed by nuclear weapons," Grossi tweeted. "I deeply appreciate his encouraging words regarding the importance of our work in promoting dialogue & solutions based on multilateral negotiations, incl in Ukraine." In an interview with Vatican News, Grossi lauded the Pope for his leadership in expressing concerns about the threat of nuclear war. Referring to himself in the third person, Grossi said that "listening to the voice of the Holy Father is indispensable: that is why the director general of

the agency — not only because he is Catholic — finds himself in this spiritual guidance of the Holy Father, but also because of the real strength in the world of this voice at this time of war.”

Exhibit at Beijing archbishop’s residence lauds ‘Sinicization’ of Church

(13-1-23) Every time Chinese authorities talk about the role of religions in the country, they insist on the need for “sinicisation”.

In his speech at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China marking his third term in office, President Xi Jinping renewed his commitment “to the sinicisation of religion, guiding the adaptation of religion and socialist society to the Chinese context”. But what does sinicisation mean specifically? An example of how official bodies want this directive to be interpreted comes from an exhibition that opened recently at the Archbishop's Palace in Beijing marking the 15th anniversary of the appointment of Archbishop Joseph Li Shan for the capital in 2007 with the assent of the Holy See even before the signing of the 2018 Provisional Agreement. Some 41 panels of the exhibition reinterpret the history of Christianity in China, according to Xi Jinping's directives. More emphasis is given to patriotism than to Matteo Ricci.

Bishop laments Islamist terrorism in Burkina Faso: “50% of our territory is under occupation”

(13-1-23) Bishop Laurent Dabiré of Dori (Burkina Faso), president of the bishops’ conference of Burkina Faso and Niger, lamented the rise of jihadist terrorism in Burkina Faso since 2015 and contrasted it “the current society, which is multireligious, and marked by dialogue and coexistence.” The West African nation of 21.9 million is 56% Muslim, 23% Christian (15% Catholic), and 20% ethnic religionist.

Maronite Patriarch asks for international help for Lebanon

(13-1-23) Lebanon faces serious economic and political crises. Cardinal Bechara Boutros al-Rahi, who has led the Lebanon-based Maronite Church since 2011, made his appeal during a visit to the United Kingdom,

Sri Lanka - 2019 Easter attacks, the Supreme Court condemns former President Sirisena

(13-1-23) The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka has ruled that former President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena, and four other senior officials were negligent because they did not take the necessary preventive measures to thwart the terrorist attacks on Sunday which killed 279 people, despite well-founded intelligence warnings on April 21, 2019. In a historic sentence delivered on January 13, the court ruled that Sirisena was specifically responsible for failing to try to prevent the attacks, which saw coordinated suicide attacks on hotels and Catholic churches and which caused more than 500 injuries. Sirisena, 71, was ordered to pay compensation of 100 million rupees (273,000 USD) to the families of the victims who filed the lawsuit. Alongside him, Former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Pujith Jayasundara, former Ministry of Defense Secretary Hemasiri Fernando, former head of State Intelligence Service Nilantha Jayawardene, and former National Intelligence Chief Sisira Mendis are held accountable and ordered to pay compensation to the relatives of the victims.



This is the first time that a Sri Lankan head of state has been held responsible for failing to prevent a terrorist attack. Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, Archbishop of Colombo, urged the government and public institutions to honour their commitment to bring justice to the victims and “cleanse the country of all elements of terror”

Nigeria - The serious insecurity in the region has contributed to aggravating the consequences of the fire at the Kateri Seminary

(13-1-23) The insecurity in which large parts of Nigeria live can have unexpected consequences. According to the rector of the minor seminary of Kateri, in the state of Kaduna (northwestern Nigeria),

Father Edward Sati, the fire which seriously damaged the seminary on January 9 could have been avoided or at least limited in its damage, if the students had been present. Instead, the priest points out, due to the insecurity in the area, all students and villagers have moved to safe areas, while the school and the neighborhood have become deserted places. "So when the fire broke out, the security men raised the alarm, and before the young men came running to help us put out the fire, the damage was done; however, we praise the brave young men who helped us".

Father Sati explained that for more than two years the management has been transferring students to Kafanchan and Zaria due to continuous bandit attacks.

The Seminary (St Peters Minor Seminary Kateri) suffered damages estimated at more than 100 million Naira (about 204,240 euros). The fire destroyed the fully equipped science laboratory, two accommodation blocks, a 500-seat student canteen with an adjoining kitchen.

India urged to close airspace to Myanmar air force

(13-1-23) A global rights watchdog has called on India to prevent Myanmar junta fighter jets from accessing its airspace in order to protect ethnic Chin and Indian civilians in border areas.

Fortify Rights said the Myanmar air force dropped bombs on both sides of the Myanmar-India border, killing five ethnic-Chin opposition soldiers and destroying civilian structures on Jan.10-11.

"New Delhi shouldn't tolerate the junta's incursions on its airspace and Indian authorities should do everything in their power to ensure the security of civilians and border areas," Matthew Smith, chief executive officer of Fortify Rights, said on Jan. 12.



Philippine bishops issue appeal for stranded ship's crew

(13-1-23) The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has expressed concern over the well-being of 30 seafarers from the Philippines stranded in Australia after the owner of their China-based vessel abandoned them.

The crew members of the cargo ship, *Yangtze Fortune*, are stranded after being allegedly abandoned by their shipping company, Soar Harmony

Shipping of China, on Jan. 4.

On Jan. 11, the Philippine bishops urged the faithful to give shelter to the seafarers. The CBCP also launched a scathing attack on the employer for leaving the sailors in a foreign land and for violating international maritime laws.

"We pray that our seafarers may be given immediate assistance and every effort made to protect their rights," Bishop Santos added.

14-1-23

Egypt - Coptic Patriarch Tawadros II: homosexuality contradicts God's plan and the Bible

(14-1-23) Homosexual behavior does not conform to the Bible and to the creative will of God, who «created Adam and Eve». This was reiterated by Coptic Orthodox Patriarch Tawadros II, in an Egyptian television interview, Pope Tawadros also referred to specific programmes introduced in kindergartens and primary schools that belong to the Coptic Church to raise boys and girls and protect them from theories and theses considered ambiguous and not compliant with the Bible regarding issues related to the relationship between the sexes and sexual orientation.

Myanmar - Appeal for ceasefire: "Peace is the greatest gift"

(14-1-23) "We urgently ask the parties for a ceasefire. We ask that they lay down their arms and seek a peaceful solution. We see many people suffering and it is necessary to create humanitarian corridors in areas of extreme humanitarian crisis, which allow all organizations, local and foreign, to assist displaced people", says to Agenzia Fides Joseph Kung, a lay Catholic from Yangon, head of a private university institute, interpreting the feelings and desires of Catholics and many other citizens of

other confessions, in the country tormented by an internal conflict between the army and the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), born in the aftermath of the coup.

Currently, he notes, there is an urgent need "to alleviate the suffering of the millions of people who, in many areas of the country, have been forced to flee their homes and seek precarious shelters".

For this reason, the appeal for peace, from the population, exhausted by months of conflict, is addressed to the State Administration Council (SAC), that is, to the military junta in power; but also the National Unity Government (NUG), which is in exile, and the Popular Defense Forces (PDF).



Many Burmese faithful spent the Christmas season as displaced people, in camps set up by parishes or by Karuna (as the Burmese Caritas is called) or scattered through the forests, where they are camped to stay away from the fighting and preserve the lives of the elderly, women and children. In this context of widespread violence, Catholics remember Pope Francis' trip to Myanmar. The Pope entrusted the Catholic Church of Myanmar with the mission of "building peace and healing the world". Carrying this responsibility and this mandate in their hearts, the faithful, united with their Pastors, invoke "the greatest gift, which is peace" and pray intensely for peace.

In his New Year's message, Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon and President of the Myanmar Bishops' Conference, also made a strong appeal for peace, quoting the words of Pope Francis: "Myanmar hungers for peace." According to the "Myanmar Peace Monitor", run by fifteen independent Burmese newspapers, united in the "Burma News International" network, the civil conflict in Myanmar worsens day by day, while violence and reprisals by the Burmese army continue.

In December 2022, the UN Security Council adopted its first resolution on Myanmar in 74 years. The resolution calls for an end to the violence and urges the country's military rulers to release all political prisoners, including the democratically elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.

15-1-23

Pope at Angelus: Be free from attachments, make way for the Lord

(15-1-23) In his customary address before leading the Sunday Angelus prayer in Saint Peter's Square, Pope Francis spoke about the witness of John the Baptist we hear in today's Gospel where after baptizing Jesus he says "After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me." These words reflect John's spirit of service, the Pope observed, as John has prepared the way for the Messiah and is now ready to step aside.

One might think that John the Baptist would have been given a "prize," or prominent place in Jesus' public ministry, the Pope said, but instead John knew he had accomplished his mission and, having seen the Spirit descend upon Jesus, he indicates him as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John's spirit of service and the ability to step aside, mission accomplished, shows the importance of the need to be free from attachments, the Pope explained, as it is easy to become "attached" to our positions in life, and the need to be esteemed and rewarded.

The Pope said, like John, we can cultivate the virtue of stepping aside at the right time and so bear witness that Jesus is the point of reference in our lives. The Pope recommended we look at our own lives and ask ourselves if we also make room for others in our lives, listen openly to them, and acknowledge their freedom, without demanding recognition for what we do for them.

Following the Angelus, Pope Francis asked everyone to remember the suffering people of Ukraine.

"Brothers and sisters, let us not forget the battered people of Ukraine who are suffering so much. Let us stay close to them with our thoughts, with our help, and with our prayers."

Pope announces Ecumenical Prayer Vigil for Synod



(15-1-23) After the Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis looked ahead to the traditional Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which takes place each year from 18 to 25 January. This year's theme, he noted, is taken from the prophet Isaiah: "Do good, seek justice" (1:17). In light of this, Pope Francis asked that we each give thanks to the Lord "who faithfully and patiently guides His people towards full communion, and let us ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and sustain us with His gifts". Pope Francis went on to note that the path to Christian unity

and the Church's synodal conversion are linked. For this reason, he announced an Ecumenical Prayer Vigil, set to take place in St Peter's Square on Saturday 30 September. At the Vigil, he explained, "we will entrust to God the work of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops". The Pope added that for the young people who will come to the Vigil there will be a special programme throughout that weekend, organised by the Taizé Community. "As of now", the Pope concluded, "I invite brothers and sisters of all Christian denominations to participate in this gathering of the People of God".

Nigeria: Catholic priest killed and another injured after attack by bandits

(15-1-23) Another tragedy in Nigeria has taken place with two Catholic priests who are victims of senseless violence, one fatally. On 15 January Sunday morning in Nigeria's Niger State, a group of bandits attacked the parish residence of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Kafin-Koro, Paikoro region, at around 3 am. According to the police, when the bandits failed in their attempt to enter the residence, they set fire to the house. Unable to escape, Fr Isaac Achi was charred to death while Fr Collins sustained wounds and is now in the hospital.

