

CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

4-10 Apr 2022

4-4-22

Pope, in Malta, decries ‘icy winds of war’ waged by nationalist ‘potentate’



(4-4-22) In an address to civil authorities and the diplomatic corps during his apostolic journey to Malta, Pope Francis—without mentioning Russia or its leader by name—lamented the invasion of Ukraine.

“We had thought that invasions of other countries, savage street fighting and atomic threats were grim memories of a distant past,” Pope Francis said.

“However, the icy winds of war, which bring only death, destruction and hatred in their wake, have swept down powerfully upon the lives of many people and affected us all. Once again, some potentate, sadly caught up in

anachronistic claims of nationalist interests, is provoking and fomenting conflicts, whereas ordinary people sense the need to build a future that, will either shared, or not be at all.”

The Pontiff also called for respect for creation and a defense of “life from its beginning to its natural end,” include the lives of migrants and refugees who are fleeing across the Mediterranean Sea.

“Creation must be kept safe from rapacious greed, from avarice and from construction speculation, which compromise not only the landscape but the very future,” he said. “The Mediterranean cannot become the largest cemetery of Europe.”

Papal letter exhorts Syro-Malabar faithful to obey decision on the celebration of the Mass

(4-4-22) Pope Francis has exhorted the faithful of the Syro-Malabar Major Archeparchy of Ernakulam Angamaly to heed the synod’s decision.

Last year, despite strong opposition from some of the clergy and laity, a synod of the Syro-Malabar Church’s leading bishops agreed to a uniform method of celebrating the liturgy in all of the church’s eparchies (dioceses).

The uniform method envisions the celebrant turning towards the faithful in the initial rites but then turning towards the altar during the Eucharistic sacrifice. The decision of the Syro-Malabar synod led to protests—particularly in Ernakulam Angamaly Archeparchy, where the Metropolitan Vicar, in opposition to his Major Archbishop, granted priests a dispensation that permitted them to continue to celebrate Mass facing the people.

In March, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for Eastern Churches, ordered the Metropolitan Vicar to revoke his dispensation, which led some laymen to burn the cardinal in effigy. Eventually, an appeal was made to the Pope to intervene.

The love of God drives our joy, Pope emphasizes in Malta

(4-4-22) In an address at a prayer meeting at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Ta’ Pinu, Pope Francis emphasized love, welcome, and evangelization.

“You must return to the essence of Christianity: the love of God, the driving force of our joy, which sends us forth to the world; and the love of our neighbor, which is the simplest and most attractive witness we can give before the world,” he said.

“In this way, you keep going forward in the journey of life, for



the joy of the Church is to evangelize.”

Russian Orthodox Synod strained by Ukraine fighting, “Patriarch Kirill a Nazist”

The Russian Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow has acknowledged that because of “the international situation,” four bishops from Ukraine did not attend a meeting of the Russian Orthodox Synod last week.

Of the four Ukrainian bishops who still maintain allegiance to the Moscow patriarchate, three have issued public statements opposing the Russian invasion. Their absence from the meeting underlines the tensions within the Orthodox fold, as Ukrainian Orthodox believers grow estranged from Russia. In a related development, Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, in a service for the armed forces, said that “we love our fatherland and will be ready to defend it in the way that only Russian can defend their country.” He indicated that he sees the Russian intervention in Ukraine as such a defense, saying that “these are the people and peoples of Holy Rus’, all these are our brothers and sisters.” He lamented that “various forces pushed the brothers against each other.”

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Epiphanius I, the head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, said that the “Russian world” teaching associated with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow “is the same as the ideology of Nazism.”



Cardinal Turkson named head of Pontifical Academies

(4-4-22) Pope Francis has named Cardinal Peter Turkson the chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. Cardinal Turkson had resigned in December from his previous post, as prefect of the dicastery for Integral Human Development.

1st Ramadan prayers in Hagia Sophia in 88 years

(4-4-22) Dedicated in 537, Hagia Sophia has been the cathedral of the Patriarch of Constantinople (until 1453), a mosque (until 1931), and a museum; it became a mosque again in July 2020.

In new book, Pope answers 100 questions from the impoverished

(4-4-22) In the new book, *In dialogo con il mondo: Il Pape Risponde* [In Dialogue with the World: The Pope Replies], Pope Francis responds to 100 questions posed by members of Association Lazare, a French organization whose young members help provide shelter to the homeless.

Members of the association conducted the interview in Domus Sanctae Marthae (Casa Santa Marta), where Pope Francis resides; they asked questions gathered from homeless and other impoverished persons from 80 countries.

7 Marian shrines, in open letter to Putin, denounce invasion of Ukraine

(4-4-22) “We reject Russia’s invasion of Ukraine,” the representatives of seven European shrines—Altoetting (Germany), Czestochowa (Poland), Einsiedeln (Switzerland), Lourdes (France), Loreto (Italy), Fatima (Portugal), and Mariazell (Austria)—said in an open letter to the Russian leader. “We call for the immediate end of this inhuman war and the restoration of peace for Europe and the world.”

Nigeria - The Christian denominations of Kaduna: "No to the hypothesis of hiring foreign mercenaries to fight against terrorists"

(4-4-22) "We are surprised by the news reported by some newspapers according to which governor Nasir el-Rufai has threatened to deploy foreign mercenaries if the federal government fails to fight banditry and put an end to terrorism" said Reverend John Joseph Hayab, President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN, a body that brings together the country's main Christian denominations) in Kaduna, the state in northern Nigeria, where episodes of violence have multiplied in recent weeks, including the kidnapping on March 28 of two Catholic priests. "While CAN agrees that terrorists have had a field day," says Reverend Hayab. "CAN doubts if any section of the Nigerian Constitution allows any officeholder, other than the Commander in Chief, to invite foreign fighters into the Country".

Liberia - Society of Africa Missions wants to ensure educational opportunities in rural areas

(4-4-22) "The level of education in Liberia differs greatly between urban and rural areas. In the rural areas we are disadvantaged, we have no help from the Ministry", says Joseph Vayombo, director of the 'St. John Vianney' Catholic Primary and Junior School, run by the Society for Africa Missions mission in Foya and named after Cure of Ars. Father Vayombo spoke about the school situation in north-west Liberia and emphasized that "the few aid supplies that arrive go to the big schools in the cities. We have no laboratories or libraries and teachers are poorly trained. Furthermore, in Africa, parents have to pay tuition to attend all types of schools, including state schools. A family of 7-8 children with little means is forced to send some of these children, especially girls, to work in the fields". The director explains the problems that families face when it comes to buying books and school supplies, and laments the lack of staff.

Peru - The right to protest is legitimate, but violence must be condemned

(4-4-22) "The Church recognizes the legitimate right to protest, protected by our political Constitution (Article 2), and condemns the violence expressed in the blocking of roads because it prevents the free movement of people and the transport of food. Every human being's food is a right that must be guaranteed". This was stated by Archbishop Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, OFM of Truillo and President of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference, in a message entitled "Dialogue and conflict prevention are the path to the common good", released on April 2 after the incidents that occurred in Huancayo. Within the framework of the indefinite national strike of heavy cargo carriers and farmers, on Sunday April 3, the government of Peru issued a rule that temporarily exempts fuel tax. In addition, a decentralized session of the Council of Ministers is scheduled to be held in Junín on April 7. In his message on April 2, Archbishop Cabrejos Vidarte launches an appeal "to reject the use of violence, wherever it comes from, and to promote dialogue".

Novice found dead in Kerala convent

(2-4-22) Another mysterious death on April 2 of a novice nun was reported from Kerala, the southern Indian state with a sizable Catholic population.

According to "Mathrubhumi," a Malayalam daily newspaper, Anu Alex was found hanging from the ceiling fan in her room in the Sacred Heart convent in Kothamangalam, some 55 km northeast of Kochi, Kerala's commercial capital. The 21-year-old nun trainee had gone to room at 10:30 pm on April 1. When she did not join a special night prayer in the convent chapel, sisters went to her room and found her hanging. They rushed Alex to a nearby Dharmagiri Hospital where she was declared brought dead.

After completing the autopsy, the body was buried in the cemetery of St Augustine's Church in Ramapuram, 35 km south of Kothamangalam, deepika.com reported.

The Kothamangalam police have registered a case and completed preliminary enquiry and inquest. They have found a suicide note that says nobody was responsible for her death.

Missing Filipino priest found alive, tied up in car

(4-4-22) A Catholic priest in the Philippines was found unconscious and tied up in his car after being reported missing two days earlier, said police who suspect he was the victim of a kidnap attempt.

Father Leoben Peregrino, 58, disappeared on April 1 after last being seen around lunchtime that day by parishioners getting into his white sports utility vehicle in the town of Rosario in Cavite province, south of Manila. He was supposed to be going to buy candles in the nearby town of Imus.



However, parishioners and members of his family said he failed to return to the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Rosario.

Father Peregrino remained missing for 48 hours until he was found in his vehicle on April 3 with his hands and feet tied by a passerby in the nearby town of Silang. The priest was rushed to the nearest hospital where was recovering from his ordeal on April 4. Police, who have yet to interview Father Peregrino, said the case could have been a kidnap for ransom.

Indian Christians condemn call to boycott halal meat

(4-4-22) Church leaders have joined political parties and the Muslim community to condemn a call by Hindu groups to boycott halal meat during the traditional New Year celebrations in the southern Indian state of Karnataka. The state celebrated the Ugadi festival followed by Hosa tadukua, which is supposed to be a day of non-vegetarian feasting, on April 2-3.

The call to boycott halal meat came close on the heels of Karnataka High Court's ban on wearing the hijab in educational institutions and a ban on Muslim traders at Hindu temple premises and fairs.

Pakistani Christians hold business expo

(4-4-22) More than 70 Christian companies and entrepreneurs displayed their products at the first-ever national Christian Business Expo 2022 at United Christian Hospital in Lahore. The Pak Mission Society (PMS) organized the April 2-3 event to support Christian entrepreneurs. Human rights organizations claim non-Muslim businessmen are forced to survive by hiding their identity. The PMS urges Christian entrepreneurs to hire Muslim partners where needed.



Priests, nuns join public protests against Sri Lankan gov

(4-4-22) Catholic priests and nuns joined the public to protest the Sri Lankan government's handling of the country's economic crisis while suppressing public dissent.

Sister Rasika Pieris of Sisters of the Holy Family said nuns could not remain silent in convents as people suffer all over the country. "People are in queues from morning till evening to buy essential items but they have only extreme uncertainty about their lives," said Sister Pieris while addressing people in the centre of Negombo during a protest on April 2.

Thousands of people in the city supported the demonstration as protesters shouted slogans accusing politicians of keeping them hungry, taking commissions during the civil war, dividing people by race and religion, and robbing the central bank. Father Sherard Jayawardana said the government is responsible for protecting people from all these crises. "We chose the rulers to attack the Tamils and we were silent when the government attacked the Muslims — and the same thing happened to us Christians during the Easter Sunday attack," said the priest. "They deceived us and came to power by creating conflicts among religions and nations."

(6-4-22) Catholic bishops, priests and nuns, including Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo, joined street protests on April 6 against the government while people surrounded parliament as Sri Lanka faces its biggest economic crisis since gaining independence in 1948.

Hong Kong's Catholic leader Carrie Lam to step down

(4-4-22) Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam today announced that she will step down in June, ending a divisive term that saw democracy protests squashed and strict pandemic curbs plunge the business hub into international isolation.

Ending months of speculation, Lam confirmed she would not seek a second term when a committee made up of the city's political elite chooses a new leader next month.

5-4-22

Ranking Vatican Official speaks in Dignity Conferene

(5-4-22) Sister Nathalie Becquart, the undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, delivered a keynote speech on April 3 for an online conference hosted by New Ways Ministry, a group that has drawn cautions from both the US bishops and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith because of its stand on homosexuality.

Sister Becquart—whose appointment last year by Pope Francis made her the first woman entitled to vote in the Synod of Bishops—delivered the Father Robert Nugent Memorial Lecture. Father Nugent and Sister Jeannine Gramick, the co-founders of New Ways Ministry, were ordered by the Vatican in 1999 to cease addressing the issue of homosexuality.

Sought to avoid bad publicity in London deal, Vatican archbishop testifies

(5-4-22) Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, the deputy Secretary of State, has disclosed that he chose not to report suspected extortion to authorities because he feared the Vatican might suffer “unpredictable reputational damage.”

In a May 2019 letter to Pope Francis, the archbishop explained that he planned instead to negotiate with Gianluigi Torzi, who is now a key defendant in the Vatican's dramatic financial-misconduct trial. Archbishop Peña Parra has sharply criticized the investment policies that he discovered when he took his role at the Secretariat of State, replacing Cardinal Angelo Becciu—who is also a key defendant in the current trial. He said that the office had engaged in speculative transactions and tried to cover up losses. Nevertheless, he did not report the problems to the Vatican's own Financial Information Authority.

Jerusalem's Christian leaders lament Holy Land violence

(5-4-22) “With this sudden increase in bloodshed, we share the widespread concern that tensions will continue to increase during the rare confluence of major religious festivals among the three Abrahamic faiths: Ramadan, Pesach, and Holy Week/Easter,” the Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches of Jerusalem said of a surge of violence in Israel and the West Bank.

“We therefore call upon the faithful within each of these three traditions to show forth the mutual respect and care for one's neighbor that is central to the teachings of each.”

Cologne cardinal calls Pope 'old man,' reportedly adds Pope is 'out of touch with reality'

(5-4-22) At an archdiocesan pastoral council meeting on April 2, Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki called Pope Francis “an old man” who is “out of touch with reality,” several attendees said.

“An archdiocese spokesperson confirmed ... that Woelki had called Francis an ‘old man’ but emphasized that the remarks were not meant to be disrespectful to the 85-year-old Pope,” according to the report.

Nigeria - The Bishops: "The government should stop trying to play the ostrich and take urgent steps to ensure the safety of citizens"

(5-4-22) "The government should stop trying to play the ostrich as the nation profusely bleeds and take urgent steps to unmask these marauding terrorists who terrorize innocent Nigerians", say the Nigerian Bishops on the serious situation of insecurity in the Country. They referred to the March 28 Abuja-Kaduna train tragedy caused by



terrorists and the violence at the Kaduna international airport and said: "The fact that all these atrocities against the people and the nation happen without a single arrest or prosecution seem to give credibility to the widespread belief that the government is complacent, helpless or compromising... Nigerians are sick of flimsy excuses and bogus promises of the government to deal with terrorists."

China - National Catholic Collection Day, an expression of the synodal journey in charity

(5-4-22) In spite of the pandemic-caused restrictions, the heart of the Chinese Catholic community beats for the needs of all, Catholics and non-Catholics, Chinese and non-Chinese. For the sixth consecutive year, the Catholic community in mainland China will celebrate next Sunday, April 10, Palm Sunday, the "National Day of Collection in favour of the victims of natural disasters". According to information sent to Fides, until March 22, 2022, therefore in the first 5 years, the initiative has collected ¥ 5,067,275.45, equivalent to € 745,187.5 and financed projects for ¥ 4,697,660.27, equivalent to € 690,832.35.

Paraguay - Archbishop Martinez Flores to the laity: "Go to the suburbs and announce the good news"

(5-4-22) "Although the collaboration of the lay faithful is precious and necessary also in pastoral tasks and activities directly linked to the life of the parish ... the fundamental mission of the laity is outside the limits of the parish church, or its group or apostolic movement". Metropolitan Archbishop de la Santisima Asuncion and President of the Episcopal Conference of Paraguay, Adalberto Martinez Flores, spoke thus to the participants in the meeting organized by the National Coordination of the Laity of Paraguay, held recently in the city of Luque.

Paraguay, with a Catholic majority, the Archbishop stressed, "is one of the most iniquitous countries in the world, where corruption and impunity are part of our daily landscape. Furthermore, many of those who commit or tolerate acts of corruption and those who promote impunity are baptized Catholics and this situation should put us to the test. We Bishops, clergy, consecrated life and lay people need to examine our conscience on our evangelization".



South Korea - President-elect Yoon visits the Catholic Church and serves meals at the soup kitchen

(5-4-22) "I hope he will keep his promises to restore justice with a policy of unity and not of division": said Archbishop Peter Chung Soon-taick when meeting, in his Seoul office, President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol and Korean Catholic MPs, the day after the election of South Korea's new president. Archbishop Peter Chung of Seoul and Apostolic Administrator of Pyongyang received president-elect, also Catholic like the previous Korean President Moon Jae-In, on March 30. After the meeting and conversation, President Yoon, whose catholic

name is Ambrosio, visited the "Myeongdong Babjib" soup kitchen, opened by Cardinal Andrew Yeom in January 2021, and, in a gesture of volunteerism and service to the poor, served meals to the homeless.

The soup kitchen run by the "One Body One Spirit Movement, and located right next to Myeongdong Cathedral, provides free meals to homeless people every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday and welcomes approximately 1,500 homeless people each week.

Costa Rica - The Bishops send the President-elect a document on the 7 challenges that society must face

(5-4-22) The Bishops of Costa Rica have sent a letter to the President-elect of the Republic, Rodrigo Chaves Robles, who won the ballot on Sunday, April 3 with 52.89% of the votes. In the letter, they express their congratulations and readiness to collaborate.

"In order to show the main concerns of the Catholic Church, the letter says, we have prepared this document which reflects what, in the light of the Magisterium of the Church and our point of view and pastoral discernment, we consider as the main challenges of Costa Rican society": a truly participatory democracy, elimination of corruption and attention to housing, road infrastructure, decent jobs, health and quality education, culture of life and family cohesion, abolition of death penalty and a search for common good.

Singapore's 'freeze and share' conundrum faces would-be mothers

(5-4-22) After much debate, it was recently announced that Singapore will permit elective egg freezing from 2023 onward for fertility preservation of women without medical indications, commonly referred to as social egg freezing.

All women aged 21-35 are eligible to undergo this procedure, regardless of marital status, but they must be married in order to subsequently utilize their frozen eggs for IVF (in vitro fertilization) and other assisted reproduction procedures.

One scheme to make this expensive procedure affordable is "freeze and share," in which fees are heavily subsidized for women freezing their eggs in return for a donation of some of their surgically extracted eggs to other patients.

One ethical problem among others is women who may ultimately fail to get pregnant with their frozen eggs would undoubtedly suffer from immense psychological problems due to the unsettling possibility of them having unknown anonymous donor offspring.

Vandal targets Catholic church's statues in Bangladesh

(5-4-22) Catholics in Bangladesh's Rajshahi Diocese are feeling anxious after a miscreant entered a church and desecrated statues of Jesus, Mother Mary and St. Teresa on April 3.

Police arrested Jannatul Ferdous, 22, for breaking into Mother Teresa Church in Joypurhat district and wrecking the statues besides a copy of the Bible. The arrested Muslim youth is mentally challenged, people from his village claimed, but police said they were investigating the incident and will initiate legal action.

Speaking to the diocesan online portal Borendradut.com, Bishop Gervas Rozario of Rajshahi strongly condemned the incident and demanded strict action against the culprit. "Every person in Bangladesh has the right to practice their religion freely and that freedom is given in the Constitution. None of us are above the law," said the bishop, who is also president of the Peace and Justice Commission of Catholic bishops in Bangladesh.

Since 2013 Bangladesh has seen an upsurge in Islamic militancy that has so far claimed the lives of 50 people.

Pakistan Church censures PM Imran Khan for political chaos

(5-4-22) Church leaders in Pakistan have condemned Prime Minister Imran Khan for causing a political and constitutional crisis by blocking an opposition attempt to oust him.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan on April 4 adjourned without deciding on the legality of the premier calling an early election, sidestepping a no-confidence vote that would have booted him out from office.

Simultaneously, Khan asked the presidency — a largely ceremonial office held by a loyalist — to dissolve the assembly, necessitating fresh elections within 90 days.

"He is blaming others one after another for his own profit. One person cannot make all the rules and decisions. The priority should be the reputation of the country and the people. The Church wants stability and improvement in human rights," Bishop Indrias Rehmat of Faisalabad told UCA News.



“Inflation, human rights violations, insecurity and a lack of respect for religious freedom have led to plunder. Partial truths and injustices have resulted in lawlessness in our country. The situation won’t improve without following constitutional guidelines.”

India's top court admits cardinal's appeal in land case

(5-4-22) The Supreme Court of India has admitted an appeal by Cardinal George Alencherry to discharge him from criminal cases related to the sale of church land in Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese in Kerala state.

The head of the Eastern-rite Syro-Malabar Church is seeking to quash the order of Kerala High Court delivered in August 2021 ordering him to face trial over seven criminal charges registered against him in connection with controversial land deals he conducted four years ago.

A group of priests and laity in Ernakulam-Angamaly had publicly accused Cardinal Alencherry of selling off several plots of land over a period of two years, incurring a loss of about US\$10 million to the archdiocese.

6-4-22

At the General Audience Pope Francis comments on his journey to Malta, UN’s failure

(6-4-22) At the Wednesday General Audience on 6 April, Pope Francis spoke of his 2,3 April visit to Malta. Here is the summary of his remarks:

Following my recent Apostolic Journey to Malta, I renew my thanks to the President and civil authorities, to the Bishops and faithful, and to the many volunteers for their generous welcome. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that Paul, after his shipwreck off the island of Malta, was received there with “unusual kindness” (28:2). This spirit of welcome and charitable concern shown by the Maltese to the Apostle and his companions should inspire our own response to the complex issue of migration today, which is not simply an emergency but a sign of our times. Malta is at the forefront of these efforts, as I saw at the “John XXIII Peace Lab” Centre. There we were reminded that migrants bring with them unique stories and have a wealth of gifts to offer. At the Grotto of Saint Paul, I prayed for a renewal of the missionary spirit that has always distinguished the Church in Malta. Our prayer meeting at the National Marian Shrine of Ta’ Pinu in Gozo reflected the strong devotion of the Maltese people to Our Lady, who always brings us back to what is essential: to Christ crucified and risen and to the joy of the Gospel with its saving message of God’s merciful love for our human family. May God bless Malta and its people with prosperity and peace.

The Pope lamented the **impotence of the United Nations** to bring the Russia-Ukraine war to an end. He said: “In the current war in Ukraine, we are witnessing the impotence of organizations of the United Nations,” Pope Francis said at his weekly audience on April 6. The Pope said that despite the wishes of people throughout the world, “the dominant logic is the strategies of the most powerful countries to affirm their own interests.” That logic of power must be broken, the Pope insisted: “Put an end to this war; silence the weapons; stop sowing death!”



The Pope also expressed his dismay at what has happened to Bucha in Ukraine. He said: The recent news of the war in Ukraine, rather than bringing relief and hope, attests instead of new atrocities, like **the massacre in Bucha**: ever more horrendous cruelty done even against defenseless civilians, women and children. They are victims whose innocent blood cries to Heaven and implores: put an end to this war! Silence the weapons! Stop sowing death and destruction! Let us pray together for this...

And yesterday, precisely from Bucha, they brought me this flag. This flag comes from the war, precisely from that war-torn city,

Bucha. There are also some Ukrainian children who are here with us. Let us greet them and pray

together with them. These children had to escape and come to a foreign land: this is one of the fruits of war. Let us not forget them, and let us not forget the Ukrainian people. It is hard to be uprooted from your own land due to war.

'International Day of Sport for Development and Peace'

(6-4-22) April 6th being the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, Pope Francis said: "I turn to the men and women of sport so that through their activity, they might be active witnesses of fraternity and peace. With its values, sports can carry out an important role in the world, opening the way to harmony among peoples, a pact that never loses its capacity of gratuitousness. Sport for the sake of sports: may it not become commercialized – the amateur aspect typical of true sports."

Ukrainian Catholic leader laments 'mountains of corpses, rivers of blood, a sea of tears'

(6-4-22) Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, said in a message published on April 5 that "Ukraine is suffering, but it is defending itself." "Ukraine is showing the whole world that there are some values, such as love for neighbour and country, which are worth giving your life for, because that is the way to salvation," he continued. "We feel more and more that Ukraine's struggle is a spiritual one, against evil, the devil, and his minions." "If the enemy kills us and sows death, we must continue to serve life, to honour human life from conception to natural death," he added. "We see that the enemy is robbing Ukrainians, stealing, looting... Let us then be benefactors, be generous and support those who need works of Christian mercy."

Finnish Orthodox leader: The Russian Orthodox Church has gone astray

(6-4-22) The head of the Orthodox Church of Finland deplored Russia's conduct toward civilians in the invasion of Ukraine and appealed to Patriarch Kirill of Moscow to "wake up and condemn this evil."

"The leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church has so far stood by the state *leadership* to bless this war and even present it as a legitimate, 'holy war,' said Archbishop Leo Makkonen. "Now is the high time for the Church in Russia to realize that it has gone astray. I appeal directly to the Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill: Remember the promises you have made before God as a bishop and patriarch," he continued. "They must be accounted for before the Almighty. For Christ's sake, wake up and condemn this evil."

Burkina Faso - The community of Yalgo in shock after the kidnapping of an American missionary

(6-4-22) "The diocese of Kaya joins in prayer for the release of Sister Suellen Tennyson, kidnapped on the night of Monday 4 to Tuesday 5 April 2022 in the parish of Yalgo, 110 kilometers from Kaya, the capital of the Center-North Region". This is the appeal launched by Bishop Teophile Narè of Kaya, at the news of the kidnapping of the elderly American nun, Sr Suellen Tennyson (83) member of the Congregation of the Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross.



But there is no peace, how can we go back? Today, in Nzakoundou and Nzelete, my village, in the Bocaranga region, armed groups are still active. We will not be safe there", explains Benjamin Laoulé, one of the refugees. Gado-Badjeri, Traditional Head of this Cameroonian town, stresses that the problem of insecurity also affects the area where refugees are staying. "The security problem threatens the population here a lot. Because, on the other hand, the rebels of the 3Rs (Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation, a Central African rebel group) who are wreaking havoc on the other side of the border, under pressure from the Russian army and mercenaries, are entering here with weapons." A group of unidentified gunmen broke into the sisters' community in Yalgo and, after vandalizing the rooms, sabotaging the community vehicle they attempted to take away, kidnapped

Sister Tennyson", the Bishop continues. The five religious in the community may be transferred for security reasons. Since October 2014, Sister Tennyson has been serving at the Holy Family of Nazareth Parish in Yalgo, founded on January 14, 2012, and is in charge of a health center in the area. (9-4-22) The kidnapping of Sister Tennyson, missionary of the Congregation of the Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross, kidnapped by force on the night between April 4 and 5, 2022 in northern Burkina Faso has not yet been claimed.

Even as of 9 April, no individual or group has claimed responsibility for kidnapping on the night of 4-5 April of American Sister Suellen Tennyson. There are five more Western hostages kidnapped in the Sahel of whom there is no news.

Central Africa - "We want to go home but we fear for our safety": the cry of Central African refugees in Cameroon to Cardinal Nzapalainga

(6-4-22) More than 20,000 people, Central African refugees living in Gado-Badjeri, 26 km from Garoua-Boulai, on the road to Bertoua in Cameroon, have expressed their strong desire to return to the Central African Republic, to Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui, and Bishop Mireck Guckwa of Bouar, during a meeting held on March 31.

"But there is no peace, how can we go back? Today, in Nzakoundou and Nzelete, my village, in the Bocaranga region, armed groups are still active. We will not be safe there", explains Benjamin Laoulé, one of the refugees. Gado-Badjeri, Traditional Head of this Cameroonian town, stresses that the problem of insecurity also affects the area where refugees are staying.

Uzbekistan - The Apostolic Administrator: "Priests and missionaries are always needed"



(6-4-22) The growth and change of the Korean speaking faithful community in Uzbekistan leads to a growing need for priests. In this regard, Fr. Jerzy Maculewicz, OFM Conv., Apostolic Administrator of Uzbekistan, says: "I often ask Korean Catholic organizations to send us a missionary who, in addition to following the faithful of that nationality, can help us in the care of local Catholics.

Peru - Bishops: "crises cannot be resolved with the suspension of rights"

(6-4-22) Archbishop Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, President of the Peruvian Bishops' Conference, asked the government of President Pedro Castillo to cancel the decree on the prohibition of social mobility (curfew), which he announced on April 4 for the cities of Lima and Callao, since it is "contrary to the basic rights of the population". In the statement entitled "Crises are not resolved with the suspension of rights", released on April 5, the Archbishop explains that the measure taken following Police-given information about the complex situation in the country, "is disproportionate and the government must make the reason for its decision transparent. This is almost like a state of siege which only applies, according to our Constitution, to cases of invasion, foreign war and civil war, to manage the social conflicts that have arisen in recent days in many areas of the country."

Calls for ban on loudspeakers for Azan get shriller in India

(6-4-22) Calls from Hindu groups in India to ban the use of loudspeakers for *Azan*, the Islamic call to prayer recited by a muezzin at prescribed times of the day from mosques, are growing shriller by the day.

It all began with Raj Thackeray, leader of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), a political party in the western state of Maharashtra, warning on April 2 against the use of loudspeakers atop mosques. Thackeray even threatened to rival the Islamic call to prayer by reciting the *Hanuman Chalisa*, a devotional hymn in praise of Hindu god Hanuman, from loudspeakers near mosques.

But his calls received a lukewarm response from his party cadres across Maharashtra. Some Muslim leaders and MNS party workers appeared dejected and disappointed by his sudden outburst against a minority community.

Christians want Easter declared public holiday in Bangladesh

(6-4-22) The Bangladesh Christian Association (BCA) has urged authorities not to allow educational institutions to hold examinations on Easter Sunday. In a press statement on April 4, BCA president Nirmol Rozario and secretary Hemanta Corraya called on the government to declare Easter, now an optional holiday, a public holiday and on educational institutions not to hold examinations on April 17.



Sri Lanka urged to respect people's right to protest

(6-4-22) A global civil society alliance has expressed serious concern over Sri Lanka's clampdown on civic space and urged the government to release those detained arbitrarily and investigate and punish abuses by security forces.

"We urge the government to refrain from deploying violence against protesters and instead respect and protect people's rights to peaceful protest," said Josef Benedict, Asia Pacific researcher of CIVICUS, in a statement on April 5. He called the restrictions on access to the internet and social media platforms and the arrest of Thisara Anuruddha Bandara, a youth activist, for promoting the #GoHomeGota social media campaign against the president "a clear violation of the right to freedom of expression and information guaranteed by the constitution and under international human rights law." Benedict urged authorities to drop all charges against Bandara immediately.

In March, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet had similarly reported to the Human Rights Council that "the government's response to criticism has constricted democratic and civic space."

Court admits appeals against Indian bishop's rape acquittal

(6-4-22) Save Our Sisters (SOS), a social forum formed to support nuns, has expressed renewed hope after a top court in the southern Indian state of Kerala admitted appeals against the acquittal of Bishop Franco Mulakkal in a nun rape case.

Kerala High Court admitted the appeals filed by the accuser and the Kerala government on April 5.

7-4-22

Ukrainian religious leaders denounce Russian genocide, call on other countries to send weapons

(7-4-22) Deploring "the genocide of the Ukrainian people, committed by Russian troops in the Kyiv region," the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) called on "world leaders, NATO, and the EU to provide Ukraine with all the necessary weaponry to defeat Russia as a terrorist state, including air defence systems, fighter jets, lethal offensive weapons, tanks, and anti-ship missiles."

"The whole world should realize that this is not a 'Ukrainian crisis,' it is not even a 'war of Russia against Ukraine'—it is a war of humanity, moral values, virtue with concentrated evil that has a satanic fascist nature," the religious leaders added in their April 6 statement.

The UCCRO has 16 members, including the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), the Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, and the Latin-rite Catholic bishop of Kyiv-Zhytomyr.

Congressional report documents Chinese government's persecution of Catholics, other believers

(7-4-22) On March 31, the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China, chaired by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), released its 2021 annual report. The 24-page section on freedom of religion chronicles incidents of the Chinese government's persecution of Catholics and other religious believers.

Anglican primate to travel to Canada, meet with residential school survivors

(7-4-22) Days after the Pope's apology for abuses committed by Catholics in the Canadian government's residential school system, Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury announced he will visit Canada in May to meet residential school survivors.

The Anglican Church of Canada oversaw three dozen residential schools and hostels.

Cameroon: Boko Haram raiders ravage villages

(7-4-22) In an eye-witness account given in an interview to Aid to the Church in Need, the Islamic State's Boko Haram's atrocity was recounted.

"In the past they entered villages, ostentatiously yelling war cries," said a priest in northern Cameroon. "But recently they have come discreetly, taking advantage of the full moon, to surprise people in their sleep. They kill the fathers of the family and the teenagers, especially the boys. Then they pillage the family's property and destroy everything they can't carry off."

The jihadist group is active in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.

Ukraine - Welcoming and supporting others, against the horror of war



(7-4-22) "Despite the ongoing war and all the difficulties, they continue to accompany and work for and with the population". This is what Father Michal Wocial, Salesian missionary of the Poland-Krakow Province (PLS), resident in Zhytomyr, located about 150 kilometers from the capital Kiev, said in an interview with Fides.

"Although everyday life here appears normal compared to other cities - notes Fr. Michal - in the country the situation continues to be difficult. We are trying to create safe spaces for those who have taken refuge in our

Salesian structures and setting up shelters in case of bombing". "Our confreres in Odessa, Przemyślanya, Bóbrka and Korosteszów are among those whose lives are at risk, but all have told me they are ready to stay there. Our goal - he says - is to welcome as many people as possible in accessible Salesian houses".

Ethiopia - Peace and humanitarian aid to avert a preventable famine that is wiping out the population of Tigray

(7-4-22) "The aid that manages to arrive, following the military truce promoted by Prime Minister Abiy is not changing the lives of the besieged people and all the services of basic necessities is lacking: food, medicine, all forms of communication, salaries have been blocked, banks closed, there is no free movement to and from Tigray". This is what Bishop Tesfaselassie Medhin of the Catholic eparchy of Adigrat denounces, on the devastating genocidal war that has been underway in the Ethiopian region since 3/4 November 2020.

The bishop, through a pastoral letter, addressed all the partners of the international community and United Nations agencies and launched his appeal for a rapid intervention of humanitarian aid in favour of millions of people who are dying from the famine this war is fueling.

Philippines - "Silsilah" movement: "Ramadan, time to deepen faith and dialogue"

(7-4-22) "This year the month of Ramadan in the Philippines (April 2 to May 2) coincides with the period of the electoral campaign for national and local elections; we also live it in conjunction with the alarming period of war in Ukraine and in other parts of the world. Together, Christians and Muslims,

as part of the same human family, are called to respond to the signs of the times that invite us to overcome the divisions and conflicts accumulated over the centuries.

It is the time to fulfill the goals of the Islamic-Christian Dialogue "Silsilah" Movement. "It is time for all of us to deepen our faith, understand our identity and love our faith, at the same time to respect the faith of others.

Cuba - Vocations, families, synodal journey among the topics addressed by the Bishops in the Plenary Assembly

(7-4-22) From March, 28 to 31, the 159th Plenary Assembly of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Cuba was held.

The Bishops prayed with the Word of God and the texts of Vietnamese Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan, Saint Teresa Benedict of the Cross and Edith Stein, and reflected on the theology of the cross and the martyrdom testimony of these brothers in the faith. Contemplating the gift of the priesthood, the Bishops dwelt on the challenges, anxieties and joys of priests in Cuba today.

They decided to strengthen and promote vocational ministry, so that young people, whom the Lord calls, find the environment and the appropriate accompaniment to respond to their vocation. They continued the debate on the implementation of the Guidelines for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Vulnerable Adults. The Bishops also decided that a delegation from the Cuban Church will participate in the World Meeting of Families to be held next June in Rome. The Cuban bishops reaffirmed that they will continue to promote God's truth about marriage and the family, aware that what is based on truth is what guarantees authentic progress and happiness for families and peoples. During the Assembly, the Bishops assessed the progress of the synodal process in the dioceses.

Venezuela - Help children and young people to know better the message of Christ celebrated during Holy Week

(7-4-22) Bishop Enrique Parravano of Maracay, promotes the "Mosesan" project, Holy Week Movement, an initiative that aims to help children and adolescents aged 8 to 15 to better understand the message of Jesus Christ which the Church celebrates with particular solemnity during Holy Week, recalling his Passion, Death and Resurrection. Fifteen parishes of the diocese of Maracay were chosen for this project and received the visit of Bishop Parravano who explained to them the purpose of this project and motivated the participation of young people. The Holy Week Movement consists of developing various recreational, dynamic and catechetical activities during Holy Week, led by seminarians, who will share with children and young people the aspects of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ on which our faith is based.



Desperate Myanmar migrants continue to enter Thailand illegally

(7-4-22) Thai authorities are continuing their crackdown on migrants from Myanmar fleeing political repression and economic destitution by arresting all those found to have crossed into Thailand illegally.

In one incident alone on April 6, as many as 40 migrants, including nine women, were detained after they were discovered hiding at a rubber plantation in the southern province of Songkhla.

The migrants from several states in Myanmar were reportedly on their way to the island of Penang in Malaysia where they were hoping to get jobs. They told police they had crossed into Thailand on March 31 with the help of people smugglers and a broker, whom they had each paid 3 million kyat (US\$1,675).

Korean bishops launch audiovisual catechism for Asia

(7-4-22) Catholic bishops in South Korea have launched an audiovisual version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in English to help Asian dioceses teach catechism to adults from other religions who aspire to be Catholic.

The Catholic Pastoral Institute of Korea (CPIK) and the Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation (CPBC) on March 24 released the English version of the video, originally published in the Korean language in 2020 to support the teaching of catechism to catechumens, re-education of Catholics and Sunday school learning.

The Korean version was produced after a 2017 search on the problems in catechesis for catechumen, which showed the lack of visual material in catechesis. The English version is dubbed and subtitled in English.

Korean faithful urged to pray for peace in Myanmar

(7-4-22) A Catholic priest from Myanmar has called on the Korean people to continuously pray and support his country. "I would like to ask all the clergies, religious and the faithful to pray for our country and world peace. Please pray for the people of Myanmar in their struggle for justice and peace," said Father Joseph Lal Vum Thawng, who studied at the Catholic University of Korea's seminary and was ordained a priest in February. He serves as the priest secretary to Bishop Felix Lian Khen Thang of Kalay Diocese in Myanmar. He said people fear going outside in the city due to the gunfire every day.

Indonesian Christian jailed for 10 years for blasphemy

(7-4-22) An Indonesian court has sentenced a Christian YouTuber to an unprecedented 10-years-in-prison for blasphemy and hate speech after he was found guilty of making insulting remarks about Islam on social media.

Muhammad Kace, 56, a former Muslim who converted to Christianity, was convicted on April 6 at Ciamis District Court in West Java province. He was accused of insulting Islam and the Prophet Muhammad by claiming the prophet was "surrounded by devils and liars." Kace, who used to be an Islamic cleric, reportedly began criticizing Islam after he was baptized a Christian in 2014. While a Muslim, he taught at an Islamic boarding school and went on the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia three times.

Police said Kace had posted at least 400 videos on YouTube insulting Islam since converting.

8-4-22

Pope Francis: Promote reconciliation, as Pope Adrian VI did

(8-4-22) On April 7, Pope Francis received seminarians from the Pontifical Teutonic College, which is celebrating the 500th anniversary of the election of Pope Adrian VI, who was born in Utrecht, then part of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire.

Pope Adrian "sought to promote above all reconciliation in the Church and the world, putting into practice the words of St. Paul according to which God entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Apostles," Pope Francis told the seminarians. "Considering his care for promoting agreement and reconciliation, I urge you to follow his path, especially as ministers of the Sacrament of Penance."

Cardinal Parolin hopes for larger Vatican role in mediation

(8-4-22) Cardinal Pietro Parolin sees a possibility that the Vatican could establish an "office of papal mediations" to intervene in future world conflicts.

The Secretary of State said that such an office could not be set up now because it "involved a massive investment," and the Vatican would have "difficulty in finding resources." But he remarked that a future change in the structure of the Roman Curia might bring such an agency into being. In the latest Vatican reorganization, set forth in *Praedicate Evangelium*, "the Secretariat of State is seeing some of its power diminished," Cardinal Parolin said; "but it will continue to carry out its task of direct aid to the Pope."

Vatican's Secretary of State affirms 'legitimate self-defense,' warns against escalation of war

(8-4-22) Speaking to reporters on April 7, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See's Secretary of State, affirmed the "principle of legitimate self-defense" but cautioned that "an armed response in a manner proportional to the aggression, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us, can lead to an escalation of conflict which can have disastrous and deadly consequences."

Describing the Bucha massacre as a "turning point" in the war, the prelate expressed hope that "we all return to reason and find a negotiated way to get off this one-way street."

Cardinal Parolin said a papal trip to Kyiv was a possibility. "Certainly, the Pope would not go to take a position either in favor of one side or the other, as he has consistently done in this situation that has been created." Referring to relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, Parolin added that "this aspect will also have to be taken into account in the overall consideration of the possibility of making the trip or not."

With reservations, joint Catholic-Lutheran text on 'Baptism and Growth in Communion'

(8-4-22) The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation have issued 'Baptism and Growth in Communion', an 80-page text which, because of Vatican reservations, has the status of "an open-ended study document not yet ready for reception."

As part of the 2008-2019 phase of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, the document was drafted by a group of clergy and theologians whose Catholic co-chairman was Auxiliary Bishop William Kenney of Birmingham (England).

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "with the assistance of experts," expressed "serious concerns" about "ecclesiological presuppositions and consequences as well as ambiguities and misunderstandings in the chosen terminology."

Nonetheless, the document, according to the pontifical council, "includes important pneumatological impulses for ongoing theological and ecclesiological discussion. It makes a significant step in proposing a differentiating consensus on baptism."

Pope officially welcomes Ukraine's ambassador to the Holy See

(8-4-22) On April 7, Andrii Yurash, appointed ambassador to the Holy See in December, presented his credentials to Pope Francis.

Yurash tweeted that he had an "inspiring and extremely motivating conversation" with the Pope and the Vatican's Secretary of State, and that the Holy See is a "sincere partner of Ukraine, doing everything possible to stop the war."

Bomb safely removed from French cathedral

(8-4-22) An unarmed explosive device was removed by police from St. Etienne cathedral in Toulouse, France, on April 8.

Police are searching for an unidentified man who was seen—and captured on security cameras—leaving a package at the cathedral early in the morning. The package was found to contain an improvised bomb, but no detonator—leading police to theorize that the perpetrator was an unbalanced individual rather than a trained terrorist.



Ukraine - The Order of Malta operations to help refugees have been extended

(8-4-22) With more than 12 million people in difficulty in Ukraine, of whom 6.5 million are internally displaced, the network of the Order of Malta is intensifying its aid operations both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries, where more than 4.2 million people have sought refuge from the war. The Order of Malta has distributed in Ukraine some 33,000 food rations, 4,500 blankets, tent beds and

sleeping bags. Two ambulances have been delivered to hospitals and a mobile medical clinic from the

international aid agency of the Order of Malta, the "Malteser International".

With Eastern and Western Ukraine's children's psychological welfare in mind, first aid training is being provided to more than 3,000 people. In Lviv and Ivano Frankivsk shelter is provided for more than 200 displaced people and in Berehove, close to the Hungarian border, the Order of Malta supports refugees by providing shelter, food and relief items.

Italy - Sisters of Charity: 10 years of the Thouret Foundation, on the paths of charity in the peripheries of the world

(8-4-22) The Thouret Foundation, an organization inspired by the charism and missionary tradition of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Jeanne Antida Thouret, founded in Besançon, France, on April 11, 1799, celebrates its first 10 years of work in the different peripheries of the world, on 4 continents. Service is carried out in places ravaged by the horrors of war, such as Syria and the Central African Republic. The path of listening and social inclusion aimed at children and young people in Albania. The day center for the disabled in Thailand. Training in the cultivation of corn, rice and vegetables in the diocese of Sintang, Indonesia. Accommodation with a music workshop for Vietnamese students. And again, the reconstruction of school buildings, such as the one in Shahdara in Pakistan, damaged by the floods, or the Saint Anna school in Beirut, Lebanon, hit by the devastating explosion on August 4, 2020. Support for the Covid emergency in Italy. And finally, the "Jeanne Antide" Centre in Sarh, Chad, chosen as the symbolic project of the Foundation's tenth anniversary: a house where girls in vulnerable conditions have the opportunity to complete their studies and find work.

Benin - Christian and Muslim religious leaders held an inter-religious celebration

(8-4-22) "We met in the cathedral to celebrate, at the invitation of the Archbishop with other religious confessions, namely Muslims, Catholic Christians, Protestant Christians, Methodists and the traditional religions of our country, peace, justice and sharing", said Father Augustin Ismaëlou Sidi, in presenting the inter-religious meeting held on the evening of April 6 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mercy in Cotonou.

Archbishop Roger Houngbédji addressing the gathering said: "The goal is to unify our common beliefs, our actions and our opinions in favor of the critical and responsible promotion of our culture and our cultural values on the one hand, and of a civic and responsible commitment in favor of a better social cohesion, on the other hand".

Pakistan - The Eucharist, source of mission

(8-4-22) "The Eucharist is the source and summit of our life and our mission. We are Eucharistic people, called to live and bear witness to the faith in the Holy Eucharist in Pakistan. We open our hearts to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to understand the mystery of our faith in the Eucharist. The Eucharist strengthens our faith and binds us, in communion, as a single community": this is what Archbishop Christophe Zakhia El Kassis, Apostolic Nuncio to Pakistan said, addressing the faithful present at the special "Eucharistic Congress" organized recently in the church of St. John Mary Vianney in the city of Peshawar.

Brazil - Course for missionaries who will work in Brazil begins again in presence, "current and indispensable for evangelizing action"

(8-4-22) The Intercultural Training Course (CENFI) organized by the Missionary Cultural Center (CCM), an organization linked to the Brazilian Episcopal Conference, has 22 participants, priests, men and women religious, from 16 different countries, who will prepare for missionary work in Brazil. The 122nd such course started on the evening of April 5th and will end on July 1st. The Auxiliary Bishop of Rio de Janeiro and Secretary General of the Bishops' Conference of Brazil (CNBB), Bishop Joel Portella Amado, presiding over the opening celebration held in person after a gap of two years, said: "With training, none of the missionaries will abandon their way of being, their history, tradition and culture that they received from their country and their ancestors. To the formation received in the

dioceses and congregations of origin, something specific to the Brazilian way of being will now be added.”

Chile - Church-State Relations: putting Christ at the centre

(8-4-22) The Chilean Church organized a Conference on Church-State Relations that was held through digital platforms. At the beginning of the meeting, Bishop Juan Ignacio González of St. Bernard presented the historical context of the Church-State relationship, underlining the importance of the Church as a guide and active agent in the review of political decisions that govern the lives of Chileans. Archbishop Fernando Chomali of Concepción invited politicians to take up the values, concepts and common good promoted by the Catholic Church in Chile, through continuous work to build a just society that prioritizes the dignity of each person. Among the questions asked by those who followed the meeting, one of them concerned the participation of Catholics in political activities. Archbishop Chomali replied: "It is completely compatible to be Catholic and to participate in political life", adding that one should not ignore what one professes in relation to involvement in political parties, for Catholics must be vigilant about what the Church promotes.



Bangladesh Church against raising age limit for govt jobs

(8-4-22) A Church official and Catholic student leader in Bangladesh have backed a federal minister who on April 5 declined to increase the upper limit for recruitment to government jobs from the current 30 to 35 years. There is great pressure from job-aspirants.

Holy Cross Father Bikash James Rebeiro, executive secretary of the Youth Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh, felt the 30-year upper limit was a fair deal and needn't be increased – lest there be very tough competition for jobs..

Swopnil Cruze, president of the Bangladesh Catholic Students Movement, concurred: "I don't think you need that many years after graduation to prepare for a government job. Also, waiting too long to crack the entrance test can lead to frustration," said Cruze, who is a master's degree student at the University of Dhaka.

Chinese police interrogate Christians for attending Sunday liturgy

(8-4-22) Police in Shanxi province in northern China raided a Protestant house church during a Sunday service and detained seven Christians for joining an "illegal gathering".

Local Christians said police stormed into Zion Reformed Church in the provincial capital Taiyuan city on April 3 and detained seven Christians for allegedly violating rules for prevention of Covid-19 pandemic, China Aid reported April 6. They were released after interrogation.

Philippine city intensifies anti-smoking campaign

(8-4-22) The Philippines has developed a reputation for being a dangerous place for drug users, but smokers in one city are also having to look over their shoulder.

Authorities in Baguio City, north of Manila, intensified an anti-smoking campaign on April 6 by arresting and imposing stricter fines to educate the public on the effects of smoking on public health. Known as the summer capital of the Philippines because of its cool weather, Baguio City has banned tobacco use in all public places. The ban, introduced three years ago, also covers electronic cigarettes.

Unannounced visits and spot checks are being made in public places such as markets, parks and malls to catch offenders.

India's Hindu hardliners jump on Kashmir blockbuster

(8-4-22) Indian Hindu hardliners are exploiting an explosive new film endorsed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the mass flight of Hindus from Kashmir 30 years ago to stir up hatred against minority Muslims.

The Kashmir Files is the latest offering from Bollywood — more famous for its song-and-dance love stories — to tackle themes close to the political agenda of Modi's Hindu nationalist government, critics say. Released last month and already one of the country's highest-grossing films this year, it depicts in harrowing detail how several hundred thousand Hindus fled Muslim militants in Indian-administered Kashmir in 1989-90. Authorities have made entrance to the film tax-free in many states, with police and others given time off to go watch.

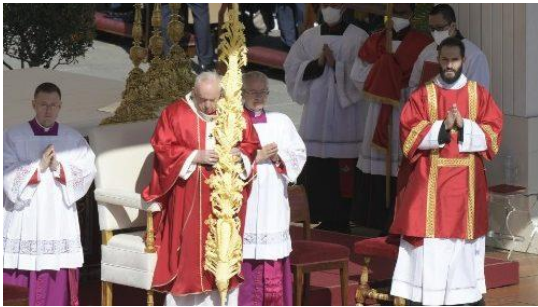
9-4-22

Bangladesh - A new church built thanks to the donations of a Catholic layman

(9-4-22) The Catholic layman Solomon Hasda, a retired policeman of the Santal ethnic group, has donated funds and land to build a church in Chirgaou, in the diocese of Dinajpur, in northern Bangladesh. Bishop Sebastian Tudu, the local Bishop, inaugurated and consecrated the newly built church together with the 200 local faithful.

Brazil - Palm Sunday: national solidarity collection "Fraternity and Education"

(9-4-22) As a concrete gesture of the Fraternity Campaign, every year a national solidarity collection takes place throughout Brazil on Palm Sunday: in 2022 on April 10. The funds collected are destined to the Diocesan and National Solidarity Funds, which contribute to works for the promotion of human dignity, initiatives in favour of the poor and a full life.



10-4-22

Pope at Palm Sunday Mass: With Jesus, it is never too late

(10-4-22) Presiding over the liturgy of Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Pope Francis encouraged everyone to journey toward Easter with God's forgiveness, and recalled that as Christ gazes upon "our violent and tormented world," Jesus never tires of repeating: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." With Jesus, it is never too late. With Him, things are never over, the Pope said.

The Pope presided over the liturgy of Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion in St. Peter's Square, marking the first time since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic that the Holy Father could lead the celebration among numerous masked faithful outdoors, rather than from inside St. Peter's Basilica with very limited numbers permitted to protect against contagion.

In sharp contrast with those who crucified Him and kept saying the mantra: Save Yourself", Jesus would only to Himself "Offer Yourself" and cry to His Father "Father, forgive them, they do not know what they do."

"Let Easter truce begin"

(10-4-22) As the war wages on in Ukraine and the massacres continue, Pope Francis has appealed for a truce in the war-ravaged nation this Easter.

During his remarks prior to the recitation of the Angelus prayer this Palm Sunday, the Pope exclaimed, "Let the weapons be put down! Let the Easter truce begin."

The Holy Father also said he is near the people of Peru, "who are experiencing a difficult moment of social tension."

Another Ambulance for Ukraine

(10-4-22) Meanwhile, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the Papal Almoner, is set to return for the third time to Ukraine and deliver another ambulance on Pope Francis' behalf on Holy Thursday, in an effort to "console and embrace" people suffering in the war-ravaged nation.