

CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

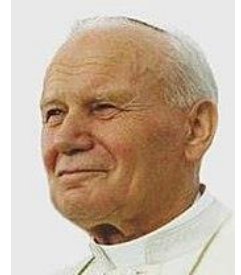
17-23 Apr 23

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Pope Francis calls insinuations against St. John Paul II unfounded

(17-4-23) “Certain of interpreting the feelings of the faithful throughout the world, I direct a grateful thought to the memory of Saint John Paul II, the object of offensive and unfounded inferences these past few days,” Pope Francis said on April 16, at the conclusion of his Regina Caeli address.

Pope Francis was responding to comments by the brother of Emanuela Orlandi, the “Vatican girl” who disappeared in 1983, insinuating that Pope St. John Paul II sexually abused young women.



Pope ends voting for Eastern Catholic patriarchs over 80

(17-4-23) Pope Francis has barred retired prelates over the age of 80 from voting in the synods of the Eastern Catholic churches.

With a new *motu proprio* entitled *Iam Pridem*, he has amended the canon law of the Eastern churches. The code for these churches will now reflect the practice of the Roman Church, in which prelates over the age of 80 do not participate in policy votes.

The change is particularly important for the Eastern churches, in which the synods select bishops, set policies, and elect patriarchs. The rule does not apply to bishops or patriarchs who remain in office beyond their 80th birthdays. (Maronite Catholic Patriarch Bechara Rai and Major Archbishop Lucian Muresan of the Romanian Catholic Church are both over 80.)

Pope Francis said that he was making the change in the Eastern canon law at the request of leaders of those churches, who had questioned the prominent role that retired prelates played in their decision-making processes.

Pope encourages Community of the Beatitudes

(17-4-23) Pope Francis met on April 17 members of the Community of the Beatitudes, and told them: “Your charism, which was born from the impetus of Catholic charismatic renewal, is a gift for the Church and for the world.”

At Easter liturgy, Moscow Patriarch describes Ukraine as part of ‘historical Russia’

(17-4-23) At an Easter Vigil liturgy attended by President Vladimir Putin, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, referred to the invasion of Ukraine as a “grave [event] taking place on our Russian historical land” and prayed “that peace and a common good life [and] fraternal relations again unite our peoples, who were once the one people of united Russia.”

Croatian cardinal resigns at 74

(17-4-23) Citing “impaired health”, Cardinal Josip Bozanic of Zagreb (Croatia) resigned on April 15 at the age of 74.

Pope St. John Paul II appointed him to his position in 1997 and created him a cardinal in 2003. Cardinal Bozanic was succeeded by Archbishop Drazen Kutlesa, whom Pope Francis appointed as coadjutor earlier this year.

Sudan - Coup in Khartoum: the situation continues to worsen in the country under armed attack for three days

(17-4-23) After days of ever-increasing tensions between the Sudanese army and the paramilitaries of the Rapid Intervention Forces (RSF), the capital of Sudan is under siege amid bombs. Fighting broke

out on Saturday, April 15 and there seems to be no respite in the rest of the country as well. Missionary sources reached by Fides confirm that the situation is dramatic and very delicate. The number of civilian deaths and injuries continues to rise, and hospitals in Khartoum have reached their maximum capacity. To date, one hundred deaths have been recorded and thousands injured.



Myanmar - Catholics in Adoration before the Eucharist to invoke, with the Pope, the gift of peace

(17-4-23) The Catholic faithful in Myanmar express emotion and gratitude to Pope Francis who has launched a new universal appeal to prayer for Myanmar and, at a time of extreme suffering, they place themselves in Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament to invoke, with the Pope, the gift of peace in their tormented land.

Receiving pilgrims from the diocese of Crema, the Italian city that was the birthplace of Blessed Father Alfredo Cremonesi, a missionary killed in Myanmar on Feb. 7, 1953, at the Vatican on April 15, Pope Francis recalled the violence that still disrupts the lives of the people of Myanmar, saying: "As you know, it is a troubled land, which I hold in my heart and for which I invite you to pray, imploring of God the gift of peace".

Mexico - For a dignified job: transforming precariousness and injustice, recognizing workers' rights

(17-4-23) Three out of ten Mexicans, according to the Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo, work in the informal sector, that is, without having access to any type of social or work benefit. Job insecurity is accentuated in the most vulnerable sectors of the population. 85% of indigenous people work in the informal sector. According to INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía), women earn 15% less than men in similar positions and have access to fewer social benefits. These are the figures reported in the latest issue of the weekly of the Archdiocese of Mexico "Desde la Fe", which titles its editorial "For a society with dignified working conditions", thus taking up the theme indicated by the Mexican Episcopal Conference for the Day of Prayer on Sunday 16th April. "In a world where the prices of basic goods and services are rising like foam due to inflation, more and more people are forced to accept precarious working conditions in order to survive", underlines Desde la Fe.

The Catholic weekly joins the intentions of the Mexican Episcopal Conference, which has invited the faithful to participate in the monthly day of prayer on Sunday April 16 to ask God "to transform the precariousness and injustice of work, to recognize the rights of workers and the efforts of employers".

Hong Kong's pro-democracy activist jailed for 'doxing'

(17-4-23) A court in Hong Kong has jailed activist Joshua Wong for three months for sharing public details of a police officer who was involved in a live-round shooting during the 2019 pro-democracy movement.

Judge Russell Coleman found Wong, 26, guilty of violating a court order that makes sharing police officers' public information a punishable offense, the *Hong Kong Free Press* reported on April 17. Wong was accused of sharing a post on Aug. 14, 2020, that contained a link to a popular, multi-category forum website, LIHKG, which had the photographs of the police officer, his wife, and his two daughters.

Indian nun moves court against speech insulting pope

(17-4-23) A Catholic nun has petitioned seeking action against a man making statements against the pope and nuns circulating on social media.

Sister Manjula Tuscano, a criminal Gujarat High Court in western India on April 13 seeking to register a the unidentified man seen making defamatory statements in the local Tuscano decided to approach the High



a court in India derogatory in a video clip

lawyer, moved the through her attorney criminal case against derogatory and Gujarati language. Sr Court after her

attempts to register a police complaint with the signatures of some 100 other nuns proved futile.

The nun alleged that the offensive speech makes sexually explicit references to the pope and nuns and calls on a crowd to not tolerate Christian priests and nuns in their midst. The speaker, in Gujarati, says the pope is the husband of thousands of nuns the world over because, during their initiation ceremony, the nuns need to accept him so. Therefore, the pope is committing adultery, he adds. The stage and background from where the defamatory statements are made hint at an event of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) or World Hindu Council, which is often accused of attacking Christians in India.

Sr Tuscano, a member of the Missionary Dominican Sisters of the Rosary, told UCA News on April 17, that the petition was filed on April 13. But she refused to disclose the details.

Earlier on March 21, Archbishop Thomas Ignatius Macwan of Gandhinagar wrote to Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel to take "immediate and stringent" action against the speaker, who is yet to be identified.

Chinese engineer accused of blasphemy in Pakistan

(17-4-23) The Chinese man allegedly commented about the slow pace of work during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan

A Chinese supervisor at a dam construction project in Pakistan is under police protection after workers accused him of blasphemy against Islam, officials said Monday. Blasphemy is a sensitive issue in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where even rumors of sacrilegious remarks can incite lynch mobs and deadly violence.

Officials said the engineer at the Dasu hydropower project in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was accused of blasphemy after he highlighted the "slow pace of work" during the holy month of Ramadan when Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. "The laborers said they were fasting but denied that work had slowed down, which led to an exchange of heated words" with the supervisor, a police official said on condition of anonymity.

A written complaint filed with the police identified him only as a heavy transport supervisor by the name of "Mr Tian", and said that his remarks on 15 April "sparked tensions."

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Pope offers best wishes to French hosts preparing for 2024 Olympics

(18-4-23) Pope Francis has send a message to the French organizers of the 33rd Olympic Games, which will be held in Paris in July and August of next year.

The Pope expressed his hope that the Olympics would be "an occasion for profound and fruitful encounter between people from all walks of life, belonging to different peoples, cultures, and religions." The games, he added, should "offer the opportunity, through sport, to bear witness to an authentic expression of fraternity, which the world greatly needs."

Oceania synod document notes 'tensions' between wealthier, poorer countries

(18-4-23) The Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania has published its document for the continental stage of the synod on synodality.

Participants from Australia and New Zealand were quoted as calling for changes in Church teaching, while Eastern Catholics and participants from Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands called for fidelity to Church teaching.

Dutch euthanasia law extended to primary-school children

(18-4-23) The permissive euthanasia law in the Netherlands will be extended to allow children in primary schools to select assisted suicide, Health Minister Ernst Kuipers has announced.

Children above the age of 5 will be allowed to arrange lethal injections if suicide is deemed “the only viable option to end the child’s hopeless and unbearable suffering.”

The only *viable* option?

Tunisian archbishop laments plight of African refugees there

(18-4-23) A Tunisian bishop has spoken out about the intolerable conditions facing migrants from sub-Saharan Africa who take refuge in his country.

“The authorities and police have imposed much harsher controls, and many have tried to escape this terrible situation,” said Archbishop Ilario Antoniazzi of Tunis. After police broke up a refugee camp in the city, many migrants took to the Mediterranean in flimsy boats, and at least 33 were drowned when their craft capsized.

“While it’s true the Mediterranean has become one large cemetery, we should remember the Sahara Desert is also a vast ancient cemetery;” the archbishop said; “those trying to return home this way often die without trace.”



Hong Kong bishop visits Beijing on historic trip

(AP 18-4-23) Hong Kong’s Catholic bishop arrived in Beijing on 17 April, marking the first visit to the Chinese capital by the city’s bishop in nearly three decades, despite signs of Sino-Vatican strains.

The five-day trip by Jesuit Bishop Stephen Chow began about two weeks after Vatican News, the news portal of the Holy See, reported that China had unilaterally appointed a new bishop to Shanghai.

Bishop Chow, who was named by Pope Francis as the city’s bishop in

2021, earlier said that the visit underscores the mission of the Hong Kong Diocese to be a bridge church and promote exchanges between the two sides. He was invited to visit the Chinese capital by his counterpart there.

Glasgow City Council member calls for review of Catholic school curriculum on sexuality

(18-4-23) Fiona Higgins, a member of the City Council in Glasgow, Scotland’s largest city, called for a review of a Catholic school where she formerly taught.

“The ‘Called to Love’ curriculum which teaches Catholic values, much of which are very commendable, but still includes chapters on how marriage should be between a man and a woman and how homosexuality is a sin,” said Higgins. “I know this caused upset to a number of my pupils. I didn’t teach that chapter but pupils tend to go for a look through the books when they know it is there.

“The curriculum, she said, is “opposed to the TIE [LGBT inclusion] values and the values we say we have in Glasgow City Council. It is worth reviewing that.”

Catholic Patriarchs discuss impending ‘total collapse’ of Lebanon

(18-4-23) The heads of the Maronite Catholic Church and the Syriac Catholic Church “discussed the current situation and overlapping crises in Lebanon and their effects on the Lebanese people in general and Christians in particular,” according to the report, as well as “the issue of the [Lebanese]

presidential vacuum in more depth and the need to quickly elect a president for the republic to save the country from total collapse.”

\$929M in donations received to restore Notre-Dame de Paris

(18-4-23) The Paris cathedral, engulfed in flames in 2019, is scheduled to reopen on December 8, 2024, with its spire reinstalled by the end of 2023.

Sudan - Collapse of health structures: three hospitals in the capital out of service

(18-4-23) After four days of fighting in Sudan, the population of Khartoum is trapped in the midst of shelling and shootings between the Sudanese army (SAF) and the rapid intervention militias (RSF), without electricity or water. The situation of health facilities and hospitals is equally serious. In particular, three hospitals in Khartoum are out of service. Added to these is the El Fasher hospital, in North Darfur, where, according to a statement from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) 47 wounded have arrived in the last hours and 14 others have died. Doctors also said medical supplies, including drugs and blood bags, are running out. A total of 183 people have been injured and 25 have died in hospital so far.

"The evacuation of the sick took place in dangerous conditions and with makeshift means", deplores a note from the doctors' union, which adds: "Up to midnight yesterday, April 17, 180 civilians were killed and 1,800 civilians and soldiers were injured". The union complains that hospitals have been hit by bombs and bullets due to the fighting taking place in the surrounding area.

Pakistan - During the month of Ramadan, interreligious iftars are an opportunity for interreligious dialogue

(18-4-23) During Ramadan, the holy month of the Islamic religion which is underway and will end on April 21, the practice of iftar (the dinner that breaks the daily fast of the Muslim faithful) is an opportunity for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and believers of other religions to meet, share and be friends.

As Fides learns, during Ramadan many Catholic institutions in Pakistan organize and invite Muslim believers to iftar, which thus becomes a fruitful occasion for knowledge, dialogue, human relations and coexistence, having a meal together.

At the Lahore Peace Centre, Father James Channan, a Dominican priest and director of the Centre, organized an iftar attended by over a hundred Muslim believers, including religious leaders, doctors and nurses, women and children, with the idea and the spirit of promoting and living the interreligious dialogue to which the Peace Center is dedicated. During the dinner, many mutual messages of appreciation, respect, esteem and willingness to build brotherhood were expressed by Muslim and Christian believers.



Neo-Christian Church attacked in Pakistan capital

(18-4-23) Police stepped up security around a neo-Christian church in Pakistan's capital Islamabad following a mob attack on Sunday.

The Voice of Jesus Church in Khokhar town was pelted with bricks by a mob of around 40 armed men who are also suspected to have fired bullets during the evening prayer on April 16. The gates and windows of the church were damaged. The area houses nine churches and fear has gripped the local Christians.

Pastor Younas Masih of the Voice of Jesus Church told UCA News that the attack followed the harassment of his daughter and son by a group of hooligans as they were returning home after school.



Court forces Indian archdiocese to part with endogamy

(18-4-23) The endogamous Knanaya Catholics in the southern Indian state of Kerala have marked the end of their centuries-old practice of not marrying outside the close-knit community when one of their parishes allowed a parishioner to marry a woman outside their archdiocese.

On April 15, a priest in the Kottayam Archdiocese allowed parishioner Justin John to have his engagement with Vijimol Shaji of Tellicherry Archdiocese without John having to lose his

membership in the community. The 31-year-old John from St. Anne's Parish in the northern Kasargod district had his engagement ceremony at St. Francis Xavier's Church in Kottody village on April 17. The Kottayam Archdiocese, established for the Knanaya Catholic community within the Eastern rite Syro-Malabar Church, practised strict endogamy by expelling its members if they married outside the diocesan community.

The permission John received is "a major victory for all those who were discriminated," said Biju Uthup, a retired aeronautical scientist, who pioneered the struggle against his community's endogamy practice. It was struck down by a civil court in Kerala on April 30, 2021, after a protracted legal battle by Biju Uthup and others.

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More martyrs today than ever before, Pope reminds audience

(19-4-23) At his weekly public audience on April 19, Pope Francis spoke about the witness of martyrs, and reminded his listeners: "There are more martyrs today than in the first times" of the Church. Here below is the summary of the Pope's talk:

In our continuing catechesis on apostolic zeal, we now turn to the example of the martyrs, those men and women of every age, nation and tongue who have given their lives in testimony to the Gospel. In an outstanding way, the martyrs bore witness to the love that we celebrate in every Mass: the love that led Christ to lay down his life for us and that we in turn are called to imitate (cf. *1 Jn* 3:16). While all Christians must be prepared to testify to their faith in the face of persecution, martyrdom represents, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, "the highest gift and supreme proof of love" (*Lumen Gentium*, 42). Martyrs for the faith in our own time are even more numerous than in the early days of the Church. We can think, for example, of the two groups of Missionaries of Charity who assisted the elderly and disabled in Yemen, and were brutally killed during the ongoing conflict in that country. May the example of the martyrs continue to inspire our efforts to bear witness to the Gospel as we await the coming of God's kingdom of universal reconciliation, justice and peace.

Exiled Nicaraguan bishop: Ortega shows desperation

(19-4-23) Bishop Silvio Baez, who was exiled from Nicaragua by the government of Daniel Ortega, says that Ortega's attacks on the Church are "a sign of weakness, a sign of desperation." Bishop Baez said that Ortega "knows that he is alone, inside and outside the country."

Papal gift for King Charles' coronation: fragments of True Cross

(19-4-23) Pope Francis has given two fragments of the True Cross to King Charles, as a gift for his coronation. The two fragments have been embedded in the Cross of Wales, which will be used in the coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey on May 6.

Australian legislative inquiry calls for crackdown on Catholic hospital over 'limited reproductive health care'

(19-4-23) A legislative committee inquiry in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has called on the territory's government to crack down on a Catholic hospital over its "limited reproductive healthcare."

The inquiry called on the hospital to “offer the full suite of reproductive healthcare,” according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. “At a minimum,” the hospital should be compelled to refer patients elsewhere for abortion.

Pope Francis encourages journalists to cover the abuse scandal with ‘openness and integrity’

(19-4-23) Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Holy See’s Secretary of State, has sent a message in the Pope’s name to a conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the *Boston Globe’s* reporting on the abuse scandal.

The conference was organized by the association of journalists accredited to the Vatican, along with the Pontifical Gregorian University’s Institute of Anthropology, which is led by Father Hans Zollner, SJ. Pope Francis “hopes that your discussions and shared experiences involving journalists, survivors and experts will help to shed further light on the scourge of abuse and to promote a more effective cooperation within the Church and society in general, in order to eradicate this profound evil,” Cardinal Parolin wrote in his message to Father Zollner, according to SIR, the Italian bishops’ news agency. The Pontiff also encouraged the journalists to “continue your work with openness and integrity in the service of the truth” and expressed “gratitude for the continuous efforts made to promote transparency, restore dignity and hope to survivors of abuse, and guarantee the well-being of all God’s children.”

Papal tribute to Missionaries of Charity killed in Yemen

(19-4-23) During his Wednesday public audience on April 19, Pope Francis paid tribute to the Missionaries of Charity who have served in Yemen—“a land that has been wounded for many years by a terrible, forgotten war”—despite the threats.

Three members of the community were “killed by a fanatic” in July 1998, the Pope recalled, and another four— one of them an Indian (ed) - were killed while doing charitable work in March 2016. Yet “even today they are still present in Yemen, where they offer assistance to the sick elderly and people with disabilities.”

Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil, a Salesian priest from India who had been staying with the sisters since his church was attacked and burned last September, was abducted from the chapel and kept in captivity for many months.



Ukrainian Orthodox leader calls for legislation against rival Ukrainian Orthodox body

(19-4-23) Metropolitan Epiphanius I of Ukraine, the head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), has called for legislative action against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC —Moscow Patriarchate).

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, is in “slave-like submission” to Vladimir Putin’s regime, said Metropolitan Epiphanius, and the Russian Orthodox Church has been “systematically involved in the preparation and implementation of aggression against Ukraine.”

“On the surface, the religious organization calling itself the UOC distances itself from its patriarch and the Russian church, but in reality, it remains subject to them,” he added. “The only way to correct this situation is through legislative prohibition for any religious organizations in Ukraine to have subordination to Russian religious centers.”

Priest smashes idols in Togo

(19-4-23) “When my brother Fr. Peter Ryan, SJ, visited me at the mission parish in Togo, West Africa, he wasn’t expecting to be smashing idols with a sledgehammer and burning the remains,” writes Father William Ryan, a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington who ministers in Togo.

“Tumultuous shouts of joy from our faithful” accompanied the destruction of the idols.

Togo, a West African nation of 8.5 million, is 48% Christian (30% Catholic) and 19% Muslim, with 33% adhering to ethnic religions.

Sudan - Deserted streets, closed businesses, only the sound of bombs

(19-4-23) "We are all locked in our homes and have been advised not to go out. Bullets and bombs come from everywhere. Yesterday evening, Tuesday April 18, a truce was planned from 6 in the afternoon until 6 in the morning today and instead it was not respected. There was shelling throughout the night and this morning. For the moment it seems that they have calmed down, but we know that this is going to take a long time and that it will not end anytime soon. The two generals have no intention of losing their posts." These are words that have just reached Agenzia Fides from local sources who, for security reasons, have requested anonymity. The men and women religious are dispersed in the different communities and, depending on their proximity to the besieged presidential palace or the airport, they are all in very high-risk areas.

"We can only pray, pray a lot so that they reach an agreement. Let us pray for this people so that the Lord will protect these people who are the ones who suffer the most. Unfortunately, we can't help anyone and this is the real tragedy. Especially in the suburbs of Khartoum they are hungry and cannot buy anything to eat. All businesses are closed. There is nobody in the street, only the sound of bombs".



Philippines - Do not ruin the paradise of bio-diversity: appeal of the Bishops of Palawan to President Marcos

(19-4-23) It is necessary to protect the island of Palawan, a "paradise of biodiversity", a national natural heritage, which risks being irreparably ruined by mining operations: for this reason, the Catholic Bishops of the island of Palawan, in the west-central Philippines, made a heartfelt appeal to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr to immediately stop mining on the island. The text signed by Bishop Socrates Mesiona of the Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Princesa, and by Bishop Broderick Pabillo

of the Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay - which encompass the territory of Palawan - calls on the President to 'permanently stop' the mining activity licensed to the Ipilan Nickel Corporation (INC), which operates in watersheds and protected forest areas, citing Pope Francis' encyclical letter "Laudato Si" as a source of inspiration for the "care of our common home".

The Bishops' appeal is contained in a joint pastoral statement, issued following the public protests organised in recent months by the local population: the last demonstration, on 14 April, saw the intervention of police forces who dispersed the demonstrators, arresting some of them. The protesters were farmers, fishermen and Palawan natives who, since last February, have built and manned a barricade to prevent the mining company's trucks from transporting nickel and other materials.

Paraguay - Bishops before the elections on April 30: "a clean government begins with clean elections"

(19-4-23) In view of the general elections on April 30, the Episcopal Conference of Paraguay published a message on April 18 in which it appeals "to the conscience of each voter, especially Christians", and this is why it indicates 10 topics for reflection.

First, they call on everyone "to be responsible for their vote, which represents their commitment to the democratic system", then the appeal to fulfill their duty and right to vote "freely and consciously". The message therefore recommends not buying votes, as "it is an illegal, criminal practice and offends the dignity of the human person", "a clean government begins with clean elections". On the same subject, the Bishops ask Paraguayans "not to associate themselves with any form of electoral fraud", since a corrupt democracy feeds on traps, machinations, manipulations, forgery and the unscrupulous greed for power.

The message therefore invites people to choose those who are known and respected by everyone for

their own path and righteousness in life (personal, family, professional and political), and who have shown commitment to the good of the community.

Morocco - Freeing slaves, yesterday and today: the Trinitarian Family returns to the routes of its first vocation

(19-4-23) For two days the parish of St. Francis of Assisi in Fèz welcomed the visit of 170 pilgrims from the Trinitarian Family who came to retrace the route of the ancient 'redeemers' who, from 1200 onwards and for several centuries, came to rescue Christian slaves held captive by Muslims.

"Our church was almost full - parish priest Fr. Matteo Revelli, a priest of the Society for African Missions (SMA), writes to Fides. The participants came from the most diverse countries of the world, and brought their multilingual liturgy along with the variety of their traditional religious costumes". The meeting in Fez was held from Sunday, April 16 for three days, and in addition to the pilgrims there were also the Apostolic Vicar of Northern Arabia Trinitarian Bishop Aldo Berardi and Father Luigi Buccarello, Minister General of the Order.

Father Pedro Aliaga, member of the Commission that prepared this event, explained that the Fathers wanted to retrace one of the routes of the ancient Trinitarian fathers who went to Morocco to redeem Christian slaves subjected to Muslim masters. "Fez is one of the cities where the Trinitarians went, over the centuries, to free Christian slaves - says Father Aliaga, who is the Provincial Superior of the Trinitarian Province of the Holy Spirit in Spain. Historical documents attest that the Trinitarians had hospitals and reception centres in Fez to help Christian prisoners. Their presence was very discontinuous because they came to rescue slaves and left to take them back to their respective homes".

It was Pope Innocent III who gave John de Matha, founder of the Trinitarians, the Apostolic Letter Inter Opera Misericordiae, dated March 8, 1199, addressed to Miramamolín, King of Morocco. The priest carried out the first redemption from slavery in the same city. The Trinitarian Family is made up of religious men and women from different institutes and lay people who share the same charism and mission.

Indian Catholic school seeks protection following threats

(19-4-23) A Catholic school in central India has sought police protection after a pro-Hindu group threatened to attack it over allegations of organ trade and religious conversions.

A 30-member delegation of teachers from the Nirmal Jyoti Senior Secondary School in Sagar district in Madhya Pradesh met civil and police officials seeking protection from the student wing of the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Their move follows threats from the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (All India Students' Forum), which accused the school of conducting organ trade and religious conversion.

Sister Grace Tharayil, the school principal, told UCA News on April 19 that allegations of organ trade began after the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights conducted a surprise raid on April 6 and seized a human fetus from the science laboratory, which caught the attention of the media. She said the fetus was more than 20 years old and used for academic purposes in the early days.

The school, started in 1987 by the sisters of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel, has some 2,100 students on its rolls. The school staff accused the police of inaction that led to violence by ABVP activists who forced their way into the school premises on April 17. "They [pro-Hindud activists] threatened to come back if the school is not closed within a week after accusing the management of indulging in organ trafficking and religious conversion," Gautam Niranján, a sports teacher in the school, told UCA News on April 19. The activists also held some students, their parents, and teachers as hostages until the police came and released them, Niranján added. The school management met



local legislator Mahesh Rai from the BJP, which rules the state, and sought his help to reign in the violent fringe groups.

Federal and provincial child rights protection panels have conducted surprise raids on Christian schools, hostels and orphanages in Madhya Pradesh, accusing them of indulging in religious conversion.



Korean Catholics conduct street Mass as part of climate march

(19-4-23) Catholic clergy, religious, and laypeople in South Korea joined a nationwide rally and held a street Mass seeking justice for those suffering because of climate change in the country and the world.

The climate march, organized by 350 civil society organizations including Catholic climate groups, attracted about 4,000 people from across the East Asian nation on April 14.

The rally called "Climate Justice Strike" was held in Sejong City, a self-governing city and de facto administrative capital.

About 300 Catholics were among the participants led by the Catholic Climate Action group.

A significant number of participants were local residents, farmers and fisher folks who had lived in farming and fishing villages whose environment has been destroyed by climate change, also primary and subcontract workers who would lose their jobs due to the closure of power plants, and the disabled, migrants, and the poor who were excluded from the climate crisis response process.

Myanmar Church leaders hail halt to rare earth mining

(19-4-23) Church leaders have welcomed the halting of rare earth mining in a conflict-torn northern state in Myanmar following months-long protests.

Bishop Raymond Sumlut Gam of Banmaw diocese termed it "a success" after strong opposition forced companies to stop rare earth mining, which activists say threatens wildlife and the environment, in N'Bar Par and Dingsing Par villages in Mansi township in Kachin state, bordering China.

"Local communities, Baptists and Catholics are very happy about the halt in mining as companies and local leaders listened to the voice of the community," Bishop Gam told UCA News.

Filipino farmers demand end to rice hoarding, profiteering

(19-4-23) A national farmers' group in the Philippines has called on the government to remain vigilant against the hoarding of and profiteering from rice as climatologists warned about a prolonged dry season that can negatively impact crop harvest.

The state-run Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration warned that the El Nino phenomenon will persist until September.

El Nino is a weather condition that increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall as well as dry spells and droughts and negatively impacts the production of crops.

The Federation of Free Farmers expressed concerns that the dry season may not only be the reason for the skyrocketing of rice prices in the coming months but unscrupulous rice traders engaged in hoarding.

20-4-23

Another decisive Vatican 'no' for German reformers: lay participation in archbishop's election

(20-4-23) In September, the Archdiocese of Paderborn formed a lay group to participate, along with the cathedral chapter, in the election of the next archbishop. (The see has been vacant since October.)

The Archdiocese of Paderborn announced that "the answer from Rome makes it clear that an

extension of pontifical secrecy, and thus participation in the election of the archbishop, is not compatible with the provisions of the Prussian Concordat and endangers the legality of the election of bishops." The archdiocese did not reveal which Vatican office said "no" to lay participation in the election of the archbishop.

Washington state legislatures split on confessional seal

(20-4-23) The lower house of the Washington state legislature has approved a bill that would require clergy to report evidence of child abuse, regardless of the confessional seal.

The upper chamber of the legislature has passed a similar measure, but left intact the clergy-penitent privilege. The two houses will now negotiate a compromise bill.

Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane said on April 19: "I want to assure you that your shepherds, bishop and priests, are committed to keeping the seal of confession – even to the point of going to jail."

Environmental, social problems are linked, Pope says

(20-4-23) Meeting on April 20 with a group of interfaith leaders from Manchester, England, Pope Francis remarked that their "united witness is particularly eloquent, since the history of your city is closely linked to the industrial revolution, with its legacy of immense technical and economic progress, together with an admittedly negative impact on the human and natural environment."

Today, the Pope continued, it is important "We need, in a word, to acknowledge that the environmental and social crisis of our time are not two separate crises but one."

Suffering can be an encounter with God, Pope tells Biblical Commission

(20-4-23) In an April 20 address to members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, who are in Rome for their plenary meeting, Pope Francis spoke about the treatment of suffering in the Scriptures, which is neither "banal and utopian" nor "fatalistic."

The Bible, the Pope said, offers an understanding of suffering as "an opportunity for growth and discernment of what really matters in life, to the point of an encounter with God."

Vatican revives apprenticeships at St. Peter's basilica

(20-4-23) On April 19, the Vatican launched a training program for craftsmen at St. Peter's basilica, reviving an ancient tradition of matching young apprentices with skilled workers.

An inaugural class of 20 students in the program will work with carpenters, stonemasons, and other specialists caring for the basilica.



China - Proclaiming the Gospel through art: the "Via pulchritudinis" of the Chinese Catholic communities

(20-4-23) On April 22, the 300th anniversary of the founding of the "Church of the West" will be celebrated in the parish of Xitang with the performance of a concert of sacred music. The Xitang church, dedicated to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, was founded by the Italian Lazarist missionary Teodorico Pedrini, a musician sent to China by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. The musical event, entitled "The Night of the Baroque", is also a tribute to the memory of the founding musician, and marks the full resumption of traditional artistic performances, promoted by the Catholic community in China, after three years of blockade due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Xitang Parish and many other Chinese Catholic communities often organize artistic performances as an opportunity to manifest the attractive power of faith through the beauty of artistic languages. A form of testimony that has been carried out, for example, since 2013 with the traditional benefit concert organized every year by Xinde to raise funds for the mission.

Peru - Joint Guidelines for Indigenous Pastoral Care in the Apostolic Vicariates of the Peruvian Amazon

(20-4-23) "To strengthen and articulate the Indigenous Pastoral Care of the vicariates of the Peruvian Amazon, through joint pastoral guidelines, according to social, cultural, ecological and ecclesial reflection, in order to encourage and articulate pastoral processes towards a Church with an Amazonian face": this is the general objective of the "Guidelines for the Indigenous Pastoral Care of the Apostolic Vicariates of the Peruvian Amazon" which has just been published.

As the note from REPAM Peru sent to Fides informs, the Indigenous Pastoral Commission of the Vicariates of the Jungle of Peru, inspired by the path taken by the missionaries and by the Amazonian Church, as well as by the proposals of the Synod for the Amazon, decided in 2020, to trace new indications for pastoral work. After reflection and dialogue with indigenous missionaries and pastoral workers, this document was drawn up, in which indigenous pastoral care provides various guidelines to guide joint actions always in dialogue and listening to people, realities, in the context of their territories.



Indian Christians, Muslims voice anger over boycott call

(20-4-23) Minority Christians and Muslims in a central Indian state have called for tough action against a group of right-wing activists who have urged the Hindu majority to boycott shops and establishments owned by them.

"We want exemplary action taken against all those who have called for a boycott of Christian and Muslim business establishments," said Jitendra Faular Singh, secretary of the Inter-Denominational Church Fellowship, which represents 18 Christian groups in the

tribal-dominated Bastar region in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh, which goes to polls this year.

"We have submitted petitions to the commissioner and the inspector general of the Bastar division," Singh told UCA News on April 19, nine days after pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders and its affiliates such as the World Hindu Council (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) and the Bajrang Dal (party of Hanuman, the monkey god) openly took a public pledge on April 10 in Jagdalpur, the divisional headquarters of the Bastar region, to call for an economic embargo against Christian and Muslim shops and business establishments. "The officials have agreed to look into our demand," Singh said.

The Anjuman Islamiya Committee, a Muslim group, in another petition to the commissioner, said, "The boycott call has deeply pained the Muslim community that lives in peace with other communities." He sought action against those behind it.

In the boycott call, the pro-Hindu leaders told shops and establishments owned by Hindus to put up signboards to indicate their Hindu identity. It is not yet clear whether the police have initiated any action against them.

Ramadan mob attack in Indonesia sparks outcry

(20-4-23) Rights groups strongly condemned a Muslim mob attack on two women in Indonesia for allegedly eating in a cafe during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and criticized police for not arresting the suspected attackers.

A total of 89 organizations and 122 eminent citizens including Catholic youth groups signed a joint statement on April 19 to slam the incident saying that "persecuting women in the name of religious morality is an act that tramples humanity."

"In fact, no religion teaches every human being to hurt others. This action occurred because of a shallow and misogynistic religious understanding, which views women as a source of disgrace and slander," the statement read.

The statement came days after a video circulated online showed two women aged 23 and 19 being assaulted by a mob in a cafe in Pesisir Selatan district of West Sumatra province on April 8.

The video was allegedly posted by the perpetrators. It showed two victims being intimidated, kicked, dragged, and thrown into the sea while being verbally abused and threatened with burning. The mob also stripped and sexually abused them.

21-4-23

Vatican blames 'failure in communication' for Anglican service in pope's church in Rome

(21-4-23) About 50 Anglican clergymen, who are not in communion with the Catholic Church, took part in religious services at the papal basilica in Rome on April 18. The Vatican later released a statement of regret, attributing the incident to a failure in communication.

The clergymen, who were accompanied by Bishop Jonathan Baker of the Church of England, are part of the Anglican Communion, which broke away from the Catholic Church in 1534 amid King Henry VIII's frustration that he could not receive an annulment for his marriage. The Catholic Church does not consider Anglican holy orders valid and does not recognize Anglican orders as valid, which means they cannot validly celebrate Mass.

The Anglican service was celebrated at the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran in Rome, the official seat of the bishop of Rome, the pope. In a statement issued 20 April, Bishop Guerino Di Tora, who serves as the vicar of the archpriest of the Lateran Basilica, said the incident was the result of a "failure in communication" and that he "expresses deep regret for what happened."

Pope Francis met Baker and the other clergymen on 19 April morning, but it's unclear how or why they were given authorization to conduct a religious service at the archbasilica.

The Anglican clergy who took part in the service are Anglo-Catholic. The group is in communion with the Anglican Church and not in communion with the Catholic Church.

Following visitation, leader of Australian ordinariate resigns

(21-4-23) Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Msgr. Carl Reid, 72, as the ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross, effective July 1. The Pontiff also named Bishop Anthony Randazzo of Broken Bay (Australia), who took part in a recent visitation of the ordinariate, as the ordinariate's apostolic administrator.

Established in 2012 for the corporate reception of Anglicans into the Catholic Church, the ordinariate has 17 congregations in Australia, Japan, and Guam where the Catholic liturgy is celebrated in a manner that draws on the Anglican tradition.

Msgr. Reid, a former bishop of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada, was received into the Catholic Church in 2012 and ordained to the priesthood the following year. In 2019, Pope Francis named Msgr. Reid the ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross, one of three such ordinariates established in the wake of Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*.

Last July, an apostolic visitation of the ordinariate, took place led by Bishop Steven Lopes, who leads the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter (United States and Canada). No reason was given for the visitation.

Coptic Orthodox head to offer liturgical celebration at St. John Lateran

(21-4-23) The Vatican has announced that Pope Tawadros II, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Roman basilica of St. John Lateran in May.

In the case of Pope Tawadros, the Dicastery for Christian Unity said that the liturgy had been scheduled "following appropriate consultation." The Catholic Church recognizes the validity of the sacraments celebrated by the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Pope Tawadros will meet Pope Francis during his visit to Rome, which will take place May 9-14. On the last day of that visit he will celebrate the liturgy in St. John Lateran, but not on the basilica's main altar.

Vatican cannot surrender internal messages, lawyer tells London court

(21-4-23) A canon lawyer representing the Vatican has told a British court that messages exchanged by top Vatican officials are covered by the pontifical secret and cannot be disclosed.

The Vatican has resisted a demand for the disclosure of messages exchanged by email and social media between Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Secretary of State, and his deputy, Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, regarding a troubled London real-estate deal. That investment has become the subject for a landmark financial-misconduct trial, now being heard by a Vatican tribunal.

"The violation of the pontifical secret is deemed a grave sin," explained Father Carlos Fernando Diaz Paniagua. His testimony came in a lawsuit brought by Raffaele Mincione, one of the defendants in the Vatican case, in an English court. Mincione charges that the Vatican defamed him in the case.



Theme of Vatican message to Buddhists: ‘Healing Wounded Humanity and the Earth through *Karuna* and *Agape*’

(21-4-23) The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue has released its annual message to Buddhists on the occasion of Vesak, the Buddhist festival that celebrates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Gautama Buddha.

The theme of the 2023 message, dated April 16 and released on April 21, is “Healing Wounded Humanity and the Earth through *Karuna* and *Agape*.” The former is the Buddhist virtue of compassion; the latter, the Christian theological virtue of

charity.

Pope praises Papal Foundation, warns against division

(21-4-23) Meeting on April 21 with American members of the Papal Foundation, Pope Francis thanked them for their support of the Holy See, while warning against “the influence of ideologies and movements” that cause harmful divisions within the Church.

The Pope remarked that the financial support provided by American donors is especially important at a time when “the immense harm resulting from the failure to protect the most vulnerable from various forms of abuse, financial scandals caused by a lack of oversight and transparency also damage the good name of the Church and can call into question the credibility of the faith itself.”

Catholic charity leaders urge ‘climate emergency’ status for Philippines

(21-4-23) Leaders of Caritas Philippines have called upon President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. of the Philippines to declare a “climate emergency” in the country.

Asia - Synodal and ecumenical journey in Central Asia

(21-4-23) "We shared our impressions and the legacy that Pope Francis left us after visiting this land, during his trip to Kazakhstan in September 2022, through a sincere account of this apostolic journey that left a trace of deep joy and hope. In addition, we have dedicated a lot of space to the synodal journey, which the faithful of Central Asia carry out in communion with the Church: we feel the strength to walk together, in communion and in fraternity", explains to Agenzia Fides Holy Trinity Bishop José Luis Mumbiela Sierra in Almaty and President of the Episcopal Conference of Central Asia, as the Plenary Assembly of the Conference ends on April 21, in the Kazakh city of Karaganda, after four days of work.

Central Africa - A mine explodes as a mission car passes by in Niem: 4 dead, including two children; The Italian missionary unharmed

(21-4-23) On Sunday, April 16, a mine exploded near the car of the Catholic mission of Niem, between the villages of Ndongue Douane and Sokorta, 115 km from Bouar, in the Central African Republic. The provisional toll: 4 dead, including an adult, a boy and 2 children, and some injured.

In the car was Father Arialdo Urbani, an 83-year-old Italian Betharramite missionary. The missionary, who has been working in the village of Niem, in the northwest of the country, since 1986, is doing well.

"This is the second time that the missionary has stumbled upon a mine. It happened only two years ago, also that time a few kilometers from Niem. Also on that occasion, Father Arialdo was unharmed, while a third person, who was in the missionary's jeep, died as a result of the impact", reported the Fathers of Betharram (from the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Bétharram).

According to local authorities, the mine that hit the Niem mission car was placed by rebels from the Coalition des patriotes pour le Changement (CPC), a formation born in December 2020 from the union of six armed groups, under the aegis of former President François Bozizé.

Sudan - The risk of bombs on the first day of Eid al-Fitr, the celebration of the end of Ramadan

(21-4-23) The country has population of the capital first day of Eid el Fitr, the feast the sound of shelling and anti-morning of April 21, a 72-hour into effect for the holiday, but each of the warring sides responsible for violations. In ceased completely, but only times. According to unofficial estimates, the air raids of the army and the use of heavy artillery by the militiamen have caused thousands of deaths among the soldiers and the militiamen. However, clashes are also raging in the long-unstable Darfur region, exacerbating an already acute humanitarian and security crisis.



been at war for a week. The Khartoum woke up on the of the end of Ramadan, to aircraft artillery. At 6 a.m. this truce was supposed to go it didn't and, once again, accuses the other of being Khartoum, the fighting never diminished in intensity at

Mexico - Let us not be discouraged, let us not minimize the signs of hope, the risen Christ walks with us

(21-4-23) "Although it is impossible to ignore the multiple scenarios, in which there seem to be signs of death everywhere, we cannot fall into pessimistic discouragements that could infect us with fears and limit our hope". This is the appeal launched by the Bishops of Mexico, gathered for their Plenary Assembly. In their message, they list the difficult realities that Mexicans face: violence, criminality, violation of rights, lies, forced migrations, growing poverty and social and ideological polarization. Faced with all this, the Bishops reaffirm their commitment "so that peace replaces violence, rivalry replaces reconciliation and selfishness replaces charity, so that unity prevails over division, truth over lies, justice over impunity and life over death".

The bishops invite not to minimize but to value the signs of hope present in the country, such as "the will to work, the efforts of families to move forward, the growth of so many children and adolescents, everyone's effort to overcome the devastation of the sanitary emergency". They therefore invite us "to fight with courage and determination", convinced that "the Good Shepherd, who offered his life on the cross to save his sheep, but who lives risen and glorious, always guides and accompanies us".

Tribal Christians denied work, wages in central Indian state

(21-4-23) Tribal Christians in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh are allegedly being denied livelihood opportunities in a district that witnessed violence and social boycotts against them in December last year.

Nine Christian families from Garanji village on April 17 filed a complaint with the top revenue officer in Narayanpur district saying they were being denied employment as manual labourers because of their faith. In their written complaint, the families have named Gopal Dugga, head of the village council, for depriving them of work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) Act 2005, a law that guarantees Indian citizens the right to work and aims at enhancing

the livelihood security of poor people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year.

Dugga and other influential villagers were targeting them for being Christians, the families said, and added they will be taking legal action against all those discriminating against them.



Christians to vote for change in southern Indian state

(21-4-23) Christians in the poll-bound southern Indian state of Karnataka are looking to usher in change as they say they have been left despondent living under ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

“The BJP has alienated Christians with its discriminatory policies and open hatred towards us,” T Vellankanni Paul Raj, a Catholic leader based in the state capital Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore), told UCA News on April 20.

Christians form 1.87 percent of Karnataka’s 61 million people and the community has faced increasing harassment for years. But attacks against Christians saw a notable surge since the BJP assumed power by unseating a Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) coalition government in July 2019.

A state anti-conversion law that came into effect in May 2022 led to a further uptick in violence against Christians and their institutions like schools and hospitals, he said. Discontent among Christians was aggravated further when Munirathna Naidu, the state minister for horticulture, at a public meeting in March called on supporters to beat Christians for converting people and promised to protect the culprits from the law. The minister repeated the call in a television interview on March 31. Christian leaders accuse the BJP government of not restraining or taking any action against its ministers and members of Hindu nationalist mobs involved in attacking them.

The Karnataka police registered a case against Naidu on April 6 only after an Election Commission official took cognizance and filed a complaint against him for promoting hate and enmity among people.

Christian leaders like J K Kantharaj, public relations officer of the Archdiocese of Bangalore, felt the state assembly election was an opportunity for the minority communities to assert their democratic rights. Raj further said that if Christians and other minority communities, especially Muslims who make up close to 13 percent of the electorate, exercise their franchise judiciously it can help bring a change in government. Muslims are already offended by the head-scarf issue for school/college going girls. Most recently, a four percent quota in education and jobs for Muslims has been scrapped but allocated to Hindu communities. The casting of votes to elect 224 lawmakers is scheduled on May 10 and counting will be held on May 13.

68 acquitted over deadly 2002 Indian riots

(21-4-23) An Indian court acquitted 68 people, including a former minister, on Thursday over the deaths of 11 Muslims in religious riots in Gujarat in 2002 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was state chief minister.

The violence in the western state killed at least 1,000 people, most of them Muslims, in an orgy of bloodshed after 59 Hindu pilgrims died in a train fire. Hindu nationalist Modi, who went on to become prime minister of India in 2014, was accused of turning a blind eye and was subjected to a US travel ban for a time. He was cleared over the violence in 2012.

The trial, which ended 20 April with the acquittal of a former state minister and two senior members of hardline Hindu groups, centered on the deaths of 11 Muslims and lasted 14 years. The accused and their supporters chanted Hindu slogans after they were cleared of the charges of murder, attempted murder, and rioting, and several broke down in tears outside the court in Ahmedabad.

The ex-minister, Maya Kodnani, was previously sentenced to life imprisonment over another incident in the riots, when 97 people were killed, but she was later acquitted. The trial was the last to conclude

out of a clutch of cases launched after India's top court ordered new investigations. In total, 188 people have been convicted and 313 acquitted. Eleven people jailed over the murder of 14 Muslims were freed last August.

22-4-23

Pope: Lay ministers must serve and never become self-referential

(22-4-23) Laypeople in the Church can and must carry out many instituted ministries, supplementary services, assignments and offices, which, however, should "never become self-referential", but always tend "to transform society" by bringing Christian values into the world.

Pope Francis made this remark on Saturday 22 April in his address to the members of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life as they concluded their Plenary Assembly on the theme "The laity and ministeriality in the synodal Church".

Sudan - The regional risks of the conflict in Sudan

(22-4-23) The conflict between the two military factions in Sudan risks having repercussions on neighbouring countries, partly because both contenders have connections with neighboring states and external sponsors.

The Sudanese Armed Forces (FAS) commanded by General Abdel Fattah Al-Bourhane have strong ties with their Egyptian counterparts, as evidenced by the fact that some Cairo soldiers, who were in Sudan for joint exercises, were temporarily detained by the militiamen of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Al-Bourhane's rival, General Mohammed Hamdan Daglo (or Dagalo), known as "Hemetti".

The proximity between the Sudanese regular armed forces and those of Egypt is part of the pressure campaign conducted by Cairo against Ethiopia because of its control of the flow of the Nile waters, compromised according to Egypt, by the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), is the largest hydroelectric plant ever built in Africa. It is therefore understandable that Addis Ababa favors Daglo rather than Al-Bourhane.

Sri Lanka - Commemoration ceremony for the victims of the 2019 attacks

(22-4-23) A 40 km human chain to remember the victims of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks that hit two Catholic churches and a Protestant one in Sri Lanka.

The commemoration ceremony and the requiem Mass took place at St. Anthony's shrine, Kochchikade, where one of the bomb blast took place. At 8.45 in the morning (Exact time of the bomb explosion) all the Sri Lankans observed 2 minutes Silence while the bells of the churches and other religious places rang. Soon after, a human chain almost 40 kilometers long was formed on the road from the shrine of Kochchikade to the shrine of St. Sebastian, Katuwapitiya, where the other explosion took place.



China - Day for Vocations: masses, prayers and many initiatives to ask for "new workers for the Lord's vineyard"

(22-4-23) "Show the beauty of vocations and promote them": is the appeal of Joseph Li Shan Bishop of the Diocese of Beijing addressed to priests, nuns, seminarians and all baptized Catholics on the occasion in view of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which this year falls on Sunday, April 30. As usual, Bishop Li Shan's message for the Day of Vocations bears the date of the day on which the Feast of Divine Mercy was celebrated (this year, Sunday, April 16). The Bishop of Beijing also urged priests to place the call to priestly and religious life at the centre of their Sunday homilies, encouraging parents to offer their sons and daughters to the Lord, and all young people to discern and welcome

their vocation. "The family," the bishop wrote, "is the home of faith, and the cradle of vocation. Parents are the best teachers to transmit the Lord's love and teaching".

On Sunday, April 30, as is customary, the dioceses will also send priests and seminarians from the diocesan seminary to the parishes to give witness to their priestly vocation before the people of God.

23-4-23

Pope at Regina Coeli: Let your guard down, open up to Jesus

(23-4-23) Addressing the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for his Regina Coeli on the third Sunday of Easter, Pope Francis recalled that the day's Gospel reading narrates the encounter of the Risen Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus. Although the disciples do not recognize Jesus when they encounter Him on their road home from Jerusalem, the Lord comforts them by helping them reinterpret facts in a different way, in the light of the Word of God.

We "can find ourselves lost in the face of these events, alone and uncertain, with many questions and worries", the Pope said, but, again like the disciples, we are invited to spend time with Jesus, so that He will remain with us.

With a "brief examination of conscience" every evening, by reliving our day with Jesus, and bringing to Him all the hopes, fears, emotions, choices, and people that cross our minds throughout the day, we will "learn gradually to look at things with different eyes, with His [eyes] and not only our own". However, Pope Francis continued, in order to do this "we must allow ourselves be wounded by His truth, and let our heart vibrate at the breath of His Word".

At Regina Coeli, Pope appeals for an end to violence in Sudan

(23-4-23) In view of the gravity of the situation in Sudan, Pope Francis on Sunday invited everyone to pray "for our Sudanese brothers and sisters." Hundreds of people have reportedly died in fighting in recent days, with thousands more injured.

Violence erupted earlier this month as Sudan's regular army forces battled the paramilitary "Rapid Support Forces" in a struggle for power in the beleaguered nation. In his remarks at the Regina Coeli, Pope Francis appealed for an immediate end to violence "and a return to the path of dialogue."

The Pope also looked ahead to this week's Apostolic Journey to Hungary, which serves as a complement to his visit to the country in 2021 for the International Eucharistic Congress.

The Holy Father mentioned several other issues close to his heart at the Regina Coeli, including Earth Day, observed throughout the world on Saturday. "I hope that the commitment to care for creation will always be united with an effective solidarity for the poorest," the Pope said.

The Pope also recalled the beatification in Paris on Saturday of Henri Planchat, Ladislav Radigue, and companions, whom he described as "pastors animated by apostolic zeal," who were "united in their witness to the faith to the point of martyrdom." The new Blessed were killed out of "hatred for the faith" during the so-called Paris "commune" in 1871.