

CATHOLIC WORLD LAST WEEK

(CWLW)

20-26 Mar 2023

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Cardinals demand Vatican action against German bishops

(20-3-23) Cardinals Gerhard Müller and Raymond Burke called for Vatican disciplinary action against the German bishops, in interviews with Raymond Arroyo on ETWN's "The World Over" broadcast. Reacting to the German bishops' announcement that they would proceed with blessings for same-sex unions despite the Vatican's clear disapproval, Cardinal Müller said: "There must be a trial and they must be sentenced and they must be removed from their office if they are not converting themselves and they are not accepting the Catholic doctrine."

Cardinal Burke agreed: "Whether it's a departure, heretical teaching and denial of one of the doctrines of the faith, or apostasy in the sense of simply walking away from Christ and from his teaching in the Church to embrace some other form of religion, these are crimes." He added that "the Code of Canon Law provides the appropriate sanctions."

Cardinal Müller remarked that it is "very sad that a majority of [German] bishops voted explicitly against the revealed doctrine, and the revealed faith of the Catholic Church and of all our Christian teaching."



Pope hears confessions, launching this year's '24 Hours for the Lord'

(20-3-23) On March 17, Pope Francis presided at a penitential service at Santa Maria delle Grazie a Via Trionfale, a church in Rome just outside of Vatican City, as part of the 10th annual 24 Hours for the Lord initiative.

In his homily, Pope Francis reflected on the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pontiff described the Sacrament of

Reconciliation as "a festal encounter that heals the heart and leaves us with inner peace. Not a human tribunal to approach with dread, but a divine embrace in which to find consolation."

Scripture offers examples of good and bad politics, Pope tells Italian young people

(20-3-23) On March 18, Pope Francis received young people who are part of the Italian bishops' Progetto Policoro.

The Old Testament examples of Ahab and Joseph, "one negative, the other positive, help us understand what kind of spirituality can fuel politics," the Pope said. "Your concern should not be electoral consensus or personal success, but involving people, generating entrepreneurship, making dreams flourish, making people feel the beauty of belonging to a community. Participation is the balm on the wounds of democracy."

Papal praise for humanitarian corridors, which 'break down the walls of indifference'

(20-3-23) The Sant'Egidio Community, together with the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy and the Waldensians, reached an agreement with the Italian government in 2016 to bring refugees from Syria and other nations to Italy.

On March 18, Pope Francis addressed refugees—including more recent Ukrainian refugees—who have benefited from these humanitarian corridors, along with those who have assisted them. "Humanitarian corridors build bridges that many children, women, men, and older persons fleeing from unstable and gravely dangerous situations cross in order to arrive safely, legally and with dignity, in their host countries," the Pope said to those gathered in Paul VI Audience Hall. "These corridors

cross borders and, more importantly, break down the walls of indifference that have shattered the hopes of so many people who have waited for years in painful and unbearable situations.”

Vatican envoy leaves Nicaragua

(20-3-23) Msgr. Marcel Mbaye Diouf, who had been the Vatican’s top representative in Nicaragua, left the country on March 17, after the Ortega regime broke off diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Msgr. Diouf travelled to Costa Rica. The Vatican embassy in Managua has been temporarily handed over to the care of the Italian government’s representative there.

Latin Mass suppressed because theology changed: Cardinal Roche

(20-3-23) Cardinal Arthur Roche, the prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship, told a BBC audience that the Vatican moved to restrict access to the traditional Latin Mass because “the theology of the Church has changed.”

Cardinal Roche said that whereas the traditional Mass emphasized the role of the priest as making the Eucharistic sacrifice, today the Church teaches that all the baptized participate in the offering.

Pope approved payment for kidnapped nun’s release, trial witness says

(20-3-23) Pope Francis approved a payment for the release of a kidnapped nun, Archbishop Edgar Pena Parra testified during the Vatican’s financial trial. But serious questions remain about where the payment went.

Archbishop Pena Parra, the deputy Secretary of State, said that €575,000 (\$616,000) was wired to a firm headed by Cecilia Marogna, a security consultant, to be used to facilitate the release of Sister Gloria Cecilia Narvaez, who had been seized by an Al Qaida group. Cardinal Angelo Becciu, who had preceded Archbishop Pena Parra in his post at the Secretariat of State, had earlier made the same claim that Pope Francis approved the payment.

However, Vatican prosecutors say that a double payment was made, with another €575,000 going to Marogna’s account. Both Marogna and Cardinal Becciu are charged with misappropriation of funds.

Communist agents poisoned famed Polish priest

(20-3-23) Polish officials have confirmed that Father Franciszek Blachnicki, a famous priest of the Communist era who is a candidate for beatification, was poisoned by government agents.

Father Blachnicki, an Auschwitz survivor and convert to Catholicism, died in 1987 in West Germany. His body was recently exhumed, and toxicology tests confirmed reports that he died of poisoning. He was the founder of the Light-Life movement, which gained 2 million followers under his leadership.



Top Chinese religious-affairs official is dismissed

(20-3-23) Cui Maohu, who has been the top religious-affairs officer of the Chinese government, has been removed from his powerful post, charged with corruption.

Synod of Bishops’ preparatory commission holds 1st meeting

(20-3-23) Cardinal Mario Grech, the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, recently established a preparatory commission for the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will convene in October 2023 and again in October 2024.

The preparatory commission held its first meeting from March 13 to 16. Members were “told they will read and review all the reports from the continental stage of the synod reflection, assist in preparing the synod working document and help during the synod itself,” according to the report.

Church in Ireland aims to boost priestly vocations with new programme

(20-3-23) The bishops of Ireland have announced a Year of Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood. The year's theme is "Take the Risk for Christ."

Spanish monastery admits girls to choir for first time in 700-year history

(20-3-23) The monastery, Santa Maria de Montserrat Abbey, has established a mixed choir in addition to its boys' choir.

Mozambique - "They remained in their place, close to the persecuted people, until their bloodshed". The story of the Jesuit martyrs of Chapotera

(20-3-23) In view of the thirty-first "Day of Missionary Martyrs" on March 24, promoted by the Pontifical Mission Societies, Fides presents some profiles of missionary martyrs for whom the Cause of Canonization is underway.



On November 20, 2021, the Shrine of Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Zobuè, in the Diocese of Tete, Mozambique, hosted a historic event for the local Church: the opening session of the Beatification and Canonization Process of two Servants of God, Jesuit Fathers João de Deus Kamtedza, Mozambican, and Sílvio Alves Moreira, Portuguese, known as the "Martyrs of Chapotera". They were kidnapped and killed on October 30, 1985, in the

context of the civil war that devastated Mozambique, which had become the scene of atrocities and violence committed by RENAMO guerrillas and by those who supported the Marxist-Leninist FRELIMO regime. "Fathers João de Deus Kamtedza and Sílvio Alves Moreira devoted themselves totally to the good of the people, enjoying the esteem of Christians and non-Christians", emphasises the Bishop Diamantino Guapo Antunes of Tete, a member of the Consolata Missionaries (IMC). Chapotera, the place linked to the two Jesuit martyrs, is a village about 6 km from the mission of Lifidzi, in the north of the diocese of Tete. The nationalization of education and health care decided by the Mozambican government on July 24, 1975, a month after independence, led the missionaries to think of an alternative to the type of mission they had dedicated themselves to until then. Evicted from their home, leaving behind the mission infrastructure they had built (schools, laboratories, hospital, etc.), they set up a new residence near the village of Chapotera, where the Jesuits settled in 1978. Father João de Deus Kamtedza arrived in Chapotera on July 22, 1983 and Father Sílvio in 1985. Here, on the night of October 30, 1985, after being awakened by a group of armed people, they were forced to leave the house, only to be brutally murdered.

It was only on 4 November that Father António dos Reis, Superior of Vila Ulóngwe, managed to get permission from the authorities to go to Chapotera to see what had happened. Thanks to military escort, the bishop could collect the bodies. The priests were buried in the village cemetery at about 7 in the evening, using the car headlights to illuminate the darkness.

"Father João de Deus (a Mozambican born in 1930) - says Bishop Diamantino Guapo Antunes - was a man who radiated joy for his simplicity and spontaneity, and got along with everyone. He loved Mozambique and its people. Appreciated by all, he proclaimed the Gospel to all with respect and love. His apostolic zeal took him, even at the risk of his life, to isolated and difficult places. He tried to animate and encourage everyone. Together with his people he suffered fear in that atmosphere of instability, unleashed by arbitrary acts, injustices and violations of human dignity. Father Sílvio" - continues the Bishop of Tete - was an active man, always ready to serve others in need. He was upright, sincere and frank, sometimes harsh, but without offending anyone. He was a brave man, aware of danger, but bold, like one who fears nothing. Virtues nourished by faith and trust. He was intelligent and lucid, very clear in communication. He used to bring examples from community life to illustrate and exhort".

"Father Sílvio was born in Portugal in 1941. He came to Mozambique in 1958 for his period of 'teaching' as a young Jesuit.

In Mozambique, Father João always worked in Angónia, while Father Sílvio worked as a teacher in the diocesan Seminary of Zóbue (Tete), in the city of Tete and in Maputo. In 1984, the two Jesuits

were both in Chapotera, and from there they began their missionary activity throughout the territory of the former mission of Lifidzi, fully committed to the work of building the Kingdom of God, which often requires not only proclamation, but also renunciation and denunciation. For this very reason they were killed on 30 October 1985. They knew about the unjust and oppressive structure and began denouncing them. When they could leave, they felt they had to choose to stay. And so they did. They remained in place, close to their persecuted people, until their bloodshed".

China - Two nuns from China's first indigenous female religious congregation take 'perpetual vows'

(20-3-23) Two sisters of the Congregation of Saint Joseph of the Archdiocese of Beijing made their final vows today, March 20, on the occasion of the liturgical feast dedicated to the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Patron of the Congregation and the Mission in China.

After 10 years of religious life, parish pastoral experiences and formation in China and South Korea, the two sisters belonging to the first indigenous female religious congregation in China pronounced their perpetual vows in the presence of the Archbishop Joseph Li Shan of Beijing. About thirty priests concelebrated with the Archbishop. It was also the first liturgy of profession of vows after three years of closure due to the pandemic.

Bolivia - In the midst of uncertainties and unresolved problems, "the Lord comes as the light we so need in our lives"

(20-3-23) "Today the Lord presents himself as the Light of the world, I think of the situation we are living, of the uncertainty, especially in our country, this whole week has been marked by uncertainty, especially for the economy. How are we doing? We don't know, we are told that the economy is doing well, but in the streets, we see another reality". These are the words spoken by Archbishop René Leigue of Santa Cruz, during yesterday's Sunday Mass, March 19.

The Archbishop cited the protest of teachers and the problems of health care institutions, and "in the midst of all this, the Lord presents himself as the light of the world.

Indian archbishop's overture to PM Modi's party draws flak

(20-3-23) A Catholic archbishop has courted controversy after he pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party parliamentary polls if it hikes the benefiting Catholic farmers.

Syro-Malabar Archbishop Joseph the promise when Prime Minister aiming for a third consecutive



based in southern Kerala state publicly promised to support the (BJP) in the coming prices of rubber

Pamplany of Tellicherry made Narendra Modi's party, which is term, is keen on wooing the

Christian community in the southern state. The archbishop's call at a meeting of rubber plantation farmers, a core community of the Kerala-based Eastern Indian Church, on March 18 has irked many Christian leaders who now want him to clarify his stand.

"It is pathetic," reacted Father Cedric Prakash, a Jesuit rights activist based in the western state of Gujarat, which has been ruled by the BJP for nearly three decades and is among the states that have enacted a sweeping anti-conversion law. "First of all, bishops and priests should refrain from gathering votes for any political party," Father Prakash told UCA News on March 20. He said pro-Hindu groups associated with the BJP continue to attack Christians and Muslims, undermining the secular fabric of the constitution. Still, if the prelate wants people to vote for the BJP "he should clarify in a written statement," the Jesuit said.

China frees Uyghur Christian pastor after 15 years in jail

(20-3-23) Chinese authorities have released a Uyghur Christian pastor who spent 15 years in prison for “inciting separatism” and “leaking state secrets to overseas organizations,” charges termed as “baseless” by rights groups, says a report.

Alimujiang Yimiti, 49, a Protestant house church pastor was reunited with his family after being released from prison in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang region, China Aid reported on March 15. Yimiti was a Muslim before he converted to Christianity in 1995. He became a pastor for Uyghur Christians who belonged to a Protestant house church in the city of Kashgar in Xinjiang. He also ran a business, Xinjiang Jiaerhao Foodstuff Company.

Indian bishops get back power on properties

(20-3-23) India’s Supreme Court has restored the powers of Catholic bishops in Kerala to transfer diocesan properties and quashed a state court's order that restricted them to dealing only with spiritual matters.

“The March 17 Supreme Court order setting aside the high court observations is a matter of great relief to bishops and the entire Christian community in the state [Kerala],” said Father Jacob G Palakkappilly, spokesperson of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council, a regional Indian bishops' conference.

Kerala High Court in August 2021 held that Catholic bishops, notwithstanding their canonical powers, had no powers to alienate landed assets of their dioceses because their “powers are confined to religious and spiritual matters.” Two dioceses-- Thamarassery and Bathery-- as part of Eastern rite Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches respectively challenged the High Court's order in the Supreme Court, resulting in the current judgment.

Displaced people forced to return home in Myanmar

(20-3-23) Displaced people in conflict-torn Myanmar have started returning home despite security concerns as the junta stepped up its plan to close down their camps.

Hundreds of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have packed their belongings and are gradually leaving for their places of origin in the predominantly Christian Kachin state where they'd taken refuge since renewed fighting in 2011.

Nearly 25 camps in Myitkyina, the capital of the northern region, are to be closed as the military authorities reportedly ordered the IDPs to leave by March-end, according to local sources.



21-3-23

Archbishop admits spying on other Vatican officials

(21-3-23) Archbishop Edgar Pena Parra, the *sostituto* or deputy secretary of state, has admitted that he authorized electronic surveillance of the director of the Vatican bank, without legal authorization.

“I did it, and, if necessary, I would do it again,” the archbishop told a Vatican tribunal, in revealing testimony in the landmark financial-misconduct case.

Archbishop Pena Parra—who is not a defendant in the case—said that he ordered the surveillance because he wanted information about the “anomalous attitude” of directors of the Institute for Religious Works (IOR), who had refused an application from the Secretariat of State for a loan to support a controversial London real-estate deal. Archbishop Pena Parra also allowed that he “maybe” asked a subordinate to arrange for a wiretap on the phone of Gianfranco Mammi, who was then director of the IOR.

Because the surveillance took place both inside Vatican City and on Italian territory, the archbishop could be exposed to prosecution in both jurisdictions for illegal electronic surveillance.

Ukrainian Orthodox bishops stress patriotism, seek meeting Zelensky

Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) waited for two hours outside the office of President Volodymyr Zelensky on March 20, hoping for an opportunity to speak to him about “what the situation really is” with their Church, which has distanced itself from Moscow since the Russian invasion. Zelensky declined to meet the Orthodox prelates. His office said that a meeting had not been on his schedule. The bishops remained on the street outside his office until an air-raid siren forced them to move; they were obviously hoping to generate publicity about their effort to meet the Ukrainian leader. “We think that the president is not receiving true information about the UOC,” the bishops announced. In a statement that they had prepared to submit to Zelensky, they stressed that the UOC “has always taught her flock to love their Motherland, be worthy citizens of their state, and fulfill their public duties worthily.” They also reminded Zelensky that the UOC had denounced the Russian invasion. The UOC, traditionally affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church, declared its independence from Moscow last May in the wake of the invasion, which the Moscow patriarchate supported. However, the Zelensky government has restricted the activities of the UOC—most recently by moving to oust Orthodox religious from the historic Kiev Lavra monastery—on the grounds that the UOC is undermining Ukrainian national unity.

Since the beginning of the war in 2022, more than 700 Orthodox parishes have switched their allegiance from the UOC to the rival Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), which won recognition from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in 2019 as an autocephalous (self-ruling) Orthodox patriarchate. The Moscow patriarchate has denounced the formation of the OCU as a violation of its canonical territory.

San Marino’s leaders meet Pontiff

(21-3-23) On March 20, Pope Francis received Maria Luisa Berti and Manuel Ciavatta, the Captains Regent of the Republic of San Marino. The Southern European nation of 35,000 is 91% Catholic and is governed by two heads of state.



Papal message will affirm right NOT to migrate

(21-3-23) The theme for the Pope’s message for this year’s World Day of Migrants and Refugees will be: “Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay,” the Vatican has announced.

In announcing the theme for the message, the Vatican remarked that it emphasizes “a right that has not yet been codified at the international level: the right not to have to migrate or, in other words, the right to be able to remain in one’s own land.”

The 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees will be marked this year on September 24.

“The Church never abandoned its people,” former nuncio on 20th anniversary of Iraq war

(21-3-23) Cardinal Fernando Filoni was apostolic nuncio to Iraq during the American invasion in 2003; he refused to leave Baghdad as the bombs fell. In this interview, he reflects on the Iraq War and its legacy.

Historic French church vandalized with Satanic and anarchist graffiti

(21-3-23) The Église du Sacré-Coeur de Bordeaux was completed in 1884. The Archdiocese of Bordeaux said it “shares the strong emotions of the Catholic faithful and residents shocked by this act” of vandalism.

Vatican ‘foreign minister’ visits Albania

(21-3-23) Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the Holy See’s Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations, has completed a three-day visit to Albania.

The archbishop met Olta Xhacka, the nation’s Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, as well as

President Bajram Begam, who emphasized the important role that the Holy See plays in fostering peace in the western Balkan region.

The Southeastern European nation of 3.1 million is 59% Muslim, 19% Orthodox, and 18% Catholic. Pope Francis made an apostolic journey there in 2014.

Bishop ordained for Northern Arabia

(21-3-23) In a sign of hope for Christians on the Arabian Peninsula, Father Aldo Berardi, OSST, was ordained the second bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia on March 18. The see had been vacant since the death of his predecessor in 2020.

The ordination took place at the new Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia, the peninsula's largest church, which was built on land donated by Bahrain's king. Pope Francis visited the cathedral during his apostolic journey to Bahrain in November.

As Vicar Apostolic of Northern Arabia, Bishop Berardi will minister to Catholics in Bahrain (one parish), Kuwait (four parishes), Qatar (one parish), and Saudi Arabia (no religious freedom for Christians). Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, Prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, travelled from Rome to preside at the ordination.

Philippines - The Sacrament of Confession 24 hours a day

(21-3-23) It will be a place always open, where the mercy of God is ready to welcome the faithful 24 hours a day: this is the new chapel of Divine Mercy, whose construction has been launched for Lent 2023 - with the laying of the first stone - in the Archdiocese of Manila by Cardinal Jose Advincula, Archbishop of the city. The chapel, which is expected to be completed in a few months, is located in the complex of the Minor Seminary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Makati, in the neighborhood which is the political and financial heart of the city.

Niger - Release of two Western hostages kidnapped in the Sahel

(21-3-23) "The two hostages were recovered safe and sound by the Nigerien authorities before being handed over to the French and American authorities", said the Minister of Interior of Niger Hamadou Souley from Niamey airport.

After years of mobilization to obtain his release, the news has spread that Olivier Dubois, kidnapped in Mali in April 2021, has been released in Niger. The French journalist was detained for 711 days by an armed group affiliated to Al-Qaeda in the Sahel.

According to Nigerien security sources, the other hostage Jeffery Woodke was working in an NGO in Abalak, Niger, with nomadic populations, at the time of his abduction on October 14, 2016 at the hands of jihadist groups who took him to Mali.

The phenomenon of kidnappings is a widespread scourge in the Sahel area, the same one that saw the missionary Father Pier Luigi Maccalli for almost two years, from September 17, 2018 to December 8, 2020.

Malaysian body backs Muslim visits to other worship sites

(21-3-21) A major interfaith council in Muslim-majority Malaysia has backed a state-run youth program involving visits to worship sites of various faiths and dismissed allegations it covertly promotes proselytizing of Muslims.

In a statement, Jagir Singh, president of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Taoism said that visits to different houses of worship must be encouraged to promote understanding, respect, and harmony, *the Malay Mail* reported on March 18.

Singh urged the government and Islamic authorities to refrain from imposing a possible ban on Muslims from visiting worship places of other faith amid allegations of proselytization from opposition politicians and Muslim hardliners. "The unity walks to places of worship are to see and understand the



different cultures. There is no propagation of any religion involved,” Singh said. “It is necessary for all races to work together in a spirit of goodwill, mutual respect to enhance harmony and unity in the country,” he added.

Singh said that instead of imposing a blanket ban on Muslims from visiting non-Muslim worship sites, the government and Islamic authorities should clearly state that “there should not be any propagation of other faiths to Muslims.”

Spy drops defamation suit against Indonesian priest

(21-3-23) An Indonesian intelligence official has withdrawn a defamation case against an activist Catholic priest but the priest refused to withdraw the human trafficking allegations he made against the official.

Bambang Panji Priyanggodo, deputy head of the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency for Riau Islands Province, bordering Singapore and Malaysia, withdrew the libel suit on March 18 against Father Chrisanctus Paschalis Saturnus, chairman of the Migrant and Overseas Pastoral Peace Justice Commission of Pangkalpinang Diocese, who accused the official of backing perpetrators of human trafficking. Ade Darmawan, the official’s lawyer, claimed that Priyanggodo withdrew the case after praying and receiving “instructions to forgive” the priest.

Father Saturnus had written to advocacy organizations, informing them of the smuggling of workers through ports close to the borders of Malaysia and Singapore.

Korean nuns sell cakes to support children in Syria, Turkey



(21-3-23) Salesian nuns in the South Korean capital Seoul have started selling cakes on the street as part of a fundraising campaign for children in earthquake-hit Turkey and Syria. The Salesian Education and Spirituality Center at Singil-dong of Seoul launched the sales of *taiyaki*, a Japanese fish-shaped pastry with red bean filling, at the beginning of March. The nuns sell *taiyaki* twice a week and it is to be continued throughout the month. Salesian nuns in the South Korean capital Seoul have started selling cakes on the street as part of a fundraising campaign for children in earthquake-hit Turkey and Syria.

22-3-23

Renew consecration to the Immaculate Heart, Pope recommends

(22-3-23) Pope Francis has encouraged a renewal of the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on March 25, the feast of the Annunciation, every year.

At his Wednesday audience on March 22, the Pope recalled the feast day last year, “when in union with all the bishops of the world, the Church and humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine, were consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” He suggested an annual renewal of the consecration by “every believer and community, especially prayer groups.”

Evangelization requires witness, not just instruction, Pope says

(22-3-23) Continuing his series of weekly talks on evangelization, Pope Francis told his March 22 public audience that “evangelization is more than just simple doctrinal and moral transmission.” It is, he said, “first and foremost the witness of the personal encounter with Jesus Christ.” Here are the Pope’s words:

In our continuing catechesis on missionary zeal, we now consider the teaching of Saint Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, on evangelization in the modern world. Pope Paul insisted that evangelization is primarily a personal witness to the Gospel and its saving truth. For this reason,

he stressed the importance, in all the baptized, of a living faith in the triune God, manifested in a life of holiness fully consistent with the message we proclaim. Holiness of life, grounded in the gift of the Holy Spirit received in baptism, is the source of our zeal to share with others the treasure of new life and hope that is ours. Pope Paul went on to say that the Church not only evangelizes, but is herself evangelized, that is, constantly called to conversion and interior renewal in the Spirit. A Church that evangelizes is entirely turned to God, the source of our salvation, and, at the same time, entirely engaged in a creative dialogue with the world, cooperating with the Lord's gracious plan for the unity and peace of our human family.

Pope notes World Water Day

(22-3-23) At the conclusion of his regular weekly audience on March 22, Pope Francis called attention to World Water Day, and offered a prayer for the success of the UN's Water Conference, taking place in New York this week. "Water cannot be wasted and abused or a cause for war, but must be preserved for our benefit and that of future generations," the Pope said.



Pope Benedict ordered Archbishop Gänswein to destroy his personal correspondence

(22-3-23) Archbishop Georg Gänswein, the late Pope's personal secretary and executor of his will, says that he complied with the order. "A pity? I thought so too," he said, "but he gave this direction and there was no way out." Archbishop Gänswein also said that he was searching for three cousins of the late Pontiff; the cousins may be eligible for an inheritance.

Argentine archdiocese condemns destruction of blasphemous art exhibit

(22-3-23) After a group of outraged Christians destroyed a blasphemous art exhibit at the National University of Cuyo, the Archdiocese of Mendoza issued a statement denouncing "this act of physical violence," and expressing sympathy for "the artists who saw the fruit of their work and effort damaged."

However, the archdiocese also remarked that the exhibit—which featured obscene representations of Jesus and the Virgin Mary—"seriously offends" religious believers. "We call again for harmony and peace that is lost in extremes," the archdiocesan statement said.

Future Pope John Paul II wrote 'rule' for married couples

(22-3-23) The founders of the Wojtyla Community & Institute have discovered a "rule" that Cardinal Karol Wojtyla wrote for married couples in 1968 or 1969; it is now available in an English translation.

Clarity emerges on Cardinal Tagle's role at the Vatican

(22-3-23) In 2019, Pope Francis appointed Philippine Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle as Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. With the 2022 Curial reform, which went into effect in June, Pope Francis assumed the title of Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization. It was assumed that Cardinal Tagle was now the Pro-Prefect of Dicastery's Section for the First Evangelization and New Particular Churches—yet the Vatican press office did not refer to him as such until this year.

Philippines - Message from the "Silsilah" movement for Ramadan: rediscovering spiritual values together

(22-3-23) On the large island of Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, home to about 6 million Muslims, the Islamic-Christian dialogue movement "Silsilah" (which means "chain"), initiated by the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIMA), promotes experiences of dialogue and closeness with those who profess Islam in a territory where tensions and violence are still the order of the day.

In a message published by "Silsilah" for the start of Ramadan, it is recalled that "in a society that is losing its spiritual values, Ramadan reminds us all that fasting and prayer are important. We must inspire each other, Christians and Muslims, goodwill and love". In addition, in 2023 there is a crucial peculiarity: "This year, Ramadan coincides with Christian Lent: for both communities, each with its specificity, this means giving time and space to penance and prayer, which form the heart of man to the love of God and to mercy towards his neighbour. This is the basis for living harmonious coexistence between our communities".

In addition, Muslims are invited during Ramadan to pay special attention to giving alms to orphans, the needy, travelers and beggars. "This is a strong invitation that all of us, Muslims and Christians, must imitate, seeking and living fraternal charity", says the text.

Brazil - New attack against indigenous peoples in the state of Maranhão

(22-3-23) On Sunday, March 19, Baixão dos Rochas community, in municipality about 240 kilometers Maranhão, was attacked by the Bishops' Conference, about searched the houses before setting people and children, were forced to group of elderly people and a child were held hostage. Animals were killed and the food warehouse was looted.



around 4 a.m., the Traditional São Benedito do Rio Preto, a from São Luís, in the state of According to information released fifteen heavily armed men them on fire. Families, with elderly leave their land during the night. A

The 57 families had lived communally on these lands for more than 80 years, practicing family farming and mining. On March 21, at dawn, shots were heard in the area and equipment was set on fire.

Niger - "We have joy in our hearts despite the violence" write the catechists from the Niger-Burkina Faso border area

(22-3-23) "We have come to tell you that we have joy in our hearts despite the prevailing security situation in the area; we always have faith in Jesus Christ", write the catechists from Makalondi, Bomoanga, Kankani and Torodi, areas between Niger and Burkina Faso that have been hard hit by attacks by jihadist groups.

"We have relatives arrested, killed or kidnapped during moments of prayer, but Jesus gives us words that comfort us", continues the message sent to Fides. "We live with fear in our stomachs, but we move forward together with Christ who gives us his word that consoles us every day. Despite the situation, our faith is increasing, our churches are full every Sunday for prayer.

Whatever the situation, we always continue to pray in the chapel as in families according to the realities of each environment.

We continue to announce the good news, with the faith that Jesus himself left us without getting discouraged despite the situation we live in every day".

Peru - Several religious congregations are mobilizing to intervene in favour of the populations affected by Cyclone Yaku

(22-3-23) Collapsed houses, severe flooding, flooding of several rivers, landslides and numerous problems in urban areas are some of the consequences of the passage of Cyclone Yaku in Peru between March 16 and 17. This type of phenomenon is not new in the country, but neither the political authorities nor the population were sufficiently prepared to counter the effects of the cyclone.

According to official sources, as of March 18, 2023, 61 deaths have been registered, 12,200 people were affected and 1,326 houses were destroyed.

Among the initiatives to support the populations of the two poor suburbs of Lima - Jicamarca (San Juan de Lurigancho) and the plateaus of Chaclacayo, affected by landslides that destroyed houses and schools, and in the cities of the northwest of Trujillo and Tumbes - Camillian missionaries are

preparing to support 400 families by distributing non-perishable food for a month. Purchasing non-perishable foodstuffs, strategically coordinating with partners in affected areas to make delivery efficient, supporting and supervising the delivery of foodstuffs to beneficiaries, are some of the initiatives in which religious bodies will be involved. The activities will be carried out in collaboration with the religious communities.

Chinese parents ordered to denounce religion

(22-3-23) Chinese authorities have asked parents of children in kindergartens to sign a pledge denouncing religious beliefs, a directive that violates the right to religious freedom guaranteed in the communist nation's constitution, says a rights group.

Kindergartens in Longwan district in Wenzhou city of the Zhejiang province in eastern China issued directives to the guardians of students to sign a "Pledge Form of Commitment for Family not to hold a religious belief," China Aid reported on March 20.

'State can regulate fees' in minority colleges in India

(22-3-23) In a verdict that will have far-reaching implications for minority Christian-run higher educational institutions in India, the country's top court has ordered that while a minority educational institution is free to devise its own fee structure, the state has the power to regulate it.

The Supreme Court ruling came while hearing a petition that challenged the authority of a committee set up by the central Indian Madhya Pradesh state to regulate fees and admissions in minority-run higher education institutions in the state.

In its March 17 order, the Supreme Court said the minority institutions of higher education "should not claim complete immunity" in admissions and fee structures and "seek exemption from any interference" from the government. The state established the committee in 2007 to fix the fees and supervise the admission process in the state's private higher education institutions following complaints that these institutions were charging exorbitant fees.

The Church "accepts the verdict with mixed feelings," said Father Maria Stephen, the Church spokesman in Madhya Pradesh.



Missionaries called to prioritize migration, climate change

(22-3-23) Catholic missionaries across the globe need to prioritize migration and refugee issues, climate change and the coexistence of various cultures in their missionary works, says the head of the Columban missionaries.

These three things are important for missionary work in today's world, said Father Timothy Mulroy, superior general of the Missionary Society of St. Columban, popularly known as the Columbans.

"Today, the world is facing the situation of migrant and refugee issues, climate change, and the coexistence of various cultures. God invites us to carry out missionary work in these fields," he said. The 58-year-old Ireland-born missionary made the comments on the sidelines of the congregation's 'International Leadership Conference' in South Korea being held from March 19-31.

The priest noted that God calls on the faithful of this era to accept diversity as a gift and live with it.

Sri Lanka prez warns hard times to follow IMF bailout

(22-3-23) Sri Lanka's president warned on 22 March of more economic pain to come for the crisis-hit nation, with strict austerity measures needed to restore its ruined finances after an IMF bailout deal. The International Monetary Fund approved its long-delayed rescue package on Monday 20 March after China, the South Asian island's biggest bilateral lender, offered debt relief assurances.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe lauded the deal in a speech to parliament as a milestone in Sri Lanka's recovery from last year's unprecedented economic crisis.

But he also told lawmakers that the bailout was only the first step in more difficult structural reforms. "The IMF loan is not an end in itself, this is the beginning of a long and more difficult journey,"

Wickremesinghe said. "We have to traverse it with care and courage. The only objective is to rebuild the economy."

On Wednesday he said more taxes were on the cards to meet the IMF's demand that Sri Lanka halves its spending on foreign debt servicing from the 9 percent of GDP recorded last year.

The IMF also requires Sri Lanka to set up tough anti-corruption laws and sell off cash-bleeding state companies, including beleaguered carrier Sri Lankan Airlines.

23-3-23

Munich prosecutors drop case of alleged 'cover up' against Benedict XVI

(23-3-23) Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as Archbishop of Munich from 1977 to 1982, had been under investigation for "aiding and abetting" clerical sexual abuse. Prosecutors also decided not to proceed with their case against his successor, Cardinal Friedrich Wetter.

Holy See: Racism still plagues our societies

(23-3-23) Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, apostolic nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, delivered an address to the UN General Assembly on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Vatican cardinal: 'It is not mercy to lie about sin'

(23-3-23) Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, the Major Penitentiary of the Apostolic Penitentiary since 2013, delivered an 11-page lecture to participants in the Penitentiary's 33rd annual course on the internal forum.

Devoting his lecture to the gift of indulgences, the 78-year-old cardinal said that indulgences manifest God's mercy and contribute to the sanctification of the faithful. He highlighted in the value of partial indulgences, which help the faithful to turn their hearts to the Beloved several times per day, and encouraged participants to preach about indulgences as a means to open the hearts of a secularized generation to "the greatness of the mystery of redemption and, with it, of that of sanctification."

Cardinal Piacenza, who once served as Secretary (2007-10) and Prefect (2010-13) of the Congregation for the Clergy, also warned that "it is not mercy to lie about sin."

"Only a misunderstood mercy, devoid of Christian realism, can abdicate the very serious task of judge and physician that Christ entrusts to the Apostles and their successors," and which "Christ entrusts to every confessor," he said.

Cardinal Piacenza said that the Lord longs "to destroy every sin with the fire of His Mercy." Thus, "the individual priest has the serious duty to admonish the sinner about the gravity of his condition and, if he were not do it, he himself would answer before God."



Catholic priests missing in Russian-occupied Ukraine

(23-3-23) Two priests of the Ukrainian Catholic Church have been missing since November 2020, when they were taken into custody by Russian troops who occupied the Zaporizhzhia region where they were serving.

Russian officials have declined to answer questions about the current whereabouts of Fathers Ivan Levytsky and Bohdan Heleta; their diocesan superiors are not certain whether or not they are still alive. Similarly, Russian officials have refused to provide information about Father Platon Danyshchuk, a priest of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, who was taken into custody in the occupied Kherson region in late January.

Greek Orthodox Church calls for 'international protection of holy sites' after Jerusalem attack

(23-3-23) Two Israeli settlers assaulted clerics and worshippers at the Church of the Sepulchre of Saint Mary in East Jerusalem.

Over 70 Christians killed in DR Congo in 2 weeks

(23-3-23) In the war-torn eastern section of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (map), Islamist rebels killed 72 Christians in a two-week period, according to the report.

Pope Francis made an apostolic journey to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan earlier this year, but stayed in the nation's capital, where he met the war's victims.

Central African Republic - Father Norberto, a Carmelite missionary injured by a mine, had already escaped three road ambushes

(23-3-23) Father Norberto Pozzi, born in 1952, an Italian Discalced Carmelite missionary, injured in the north-west of Central Africa by a landmine on February 10, was the victim of road ambushes by bandits three times. This was reported to Fides by Father Federico Trincherio, confrere of the injured missionary, who works in the Carmel of Bangui.

"In the first ambush, the bullets lodged in the headrest of the seat, in another the bullets reached the gearbox and, in yet another, he was robbed and risked being kidnapped", says Father Frederico. This time it was a land mine that struck. As Father Federico indicates, in 2022, 19 people, mainly children, were killed in Central Africa because of mines.

Haiti - The priest of the Clerics of St. Viator who had been kidnapped at Croix des Bouquets has been released

(23-3-23) Father Jean-Yves Medidor, priest of the Clerics of St. Viator, parish priest of Christ-Roi le Meilleur in Port-au-Prince has been released. The news was announced by Father Nestor Fils Aime, CSV, Provincial Superior of Canada and Father Dudley Pierre, CSV, Superior of the Viatorians in Haiti.

"We learned that our brother was released last night," Father Nestor Fils Aime, CSV, Provincial Superior of Canada and Father Dudley Pierre, CSV, Superior of the Viatorians in Haiti, said. "We thank all those who accompanied and supported us with their prayers during these twelve days of hell. We will continue to pray for all those who are being held hostage and awaiting the day of their release."

Father Medidor was kidnapped on March 10, 2023 in Croix des Bouquets, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince.



Indian police file 'cheating' case against Jabalpur bishop.

(23-3-23) Police in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh have registered a criminal case of cheating against Bishop Gerald Almeida of Jabalpur, a charge that a diocesan official dismissed as "totally false."

The arrest comes close on the heels of the falling apart of a purported sexual assault case against a Catholic school principal in the Jabalpur

Diocesan Education Society Higher Secondary School in Junwani, a village in the state's Dindori district.

Church officials said both cases show that the Church is being targeted by local authorities.

"We have charged the bishop with cheating, other crimes for abuses, neglect among other things," said Dhiraj Raj, an inspector at Samnapur police station in Dindori district where the case was registered.

The case was registered on March 22 based on a complaint by an official from the education department under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2021, he told UCA News on March 24. Raj refused to reveal any further details and said the police will probe the claims against the bishop.

"It is a fabricated case. We will fight it legally and prove the innocence of our bishop," Father Abraham Thazhathedath, vicar general of the diocese told UCA News.

Indian Church leaders seek action against speech insulting pope, priests and nuns

(23-3-23) Church leaders in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state have demanded strict legal action in a case of hate speech circulating on social media insulting the pope and Catholic nuns. Archbishop Thomas Ignatius Macwan of Gandhinagar in western Gujarat state on March 21 wrote to Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel to take "immediate and stringent" action against a speaker, who is yet to be identified, and organizers of the event where defamatory statements were made against the supreme leader of the Catholic Church.

A video of the event has been circulating on social media for the past few days and contains provocative statements against local Christians and a Catholic pilgrimage center called Unteshwari Mata Mandir in Kadi village.

"We do not know the name of the speaker. But from the podium and background of the stage, it is clear that he was speaking at a Vishwa Hindu Parishad [World Hindu Council] function in Kadi, Mehsana district, north-western Gujarat," said Father Telesphoro Fernandes, secretary of Gujarat Education Board of Catholic Institutions.

The speech in the local Gujarati language makes sexually explicit references to the pope and nuns and calls on the crowd to not tolerate Christian priests and nuns in their midst.

He said the pope is the husband of thousands of nuns the world over because nuns during their initiation ceremony need to accept him so. Therefore, the pope is committing adultery, he said.

The speaker further called to drive away the "dagalawala" (priests in cassocks) from the area.

Archbishop Macwan's letter, released to the local media, said the video clip contains "obnoxious, shameful and hurtful statements against the pope." The speaker, the archbishop said, "has abused His Holiness with demeaning, uncouth and crass words. He has hurt the sentiments of 1.4 billion Catholics all over the world." He further stated that the speaker also "cast aspersion on the integrity of the Catholic nuns and priests who have been doing a yeoman's service to humanity irrespective of caste, creed or religion." The archbishop said there is a possibility of support from local political leaders for the event. "This is done systematically, consciously and deliberately with the tacit support of local political bosses and their ideologues," he said in the letter.

3 dead, 6 hurt as Myanmar military bombs village

(23-3-23) Three civilians were killed and six others wounded after Myanmar's military stepped up attacks on several villages in the predominantly Christian Kayah state.

The army's jet fighters bombed Wan Pala village in Bawlake township on March 23, according to the Karenni Human Rights Group, which tracks violence in the civil war-stricken southeast Asian nation. "There was no fighting taking place in the area when the deadly aerial bombing happened," the group tweeted on March 24.

But the predominantly Christian Kayah State has seen the deployment of more troops after fighting between the military and rebel groups intensified in recent days.

The fresh round of human casualties and the attacks have prompted thousands of people, mostly Christians, to flee their homes and take shelter in churches, convents and jungles.



24-3-23

Pope Francis sketches vision for future of moral theology

(24-3-23) On March 23, Pope Francis received participants in a conference organized by the Alphonsian Academy (Alphonsianum), two months after he raised the institute of moral theology to the dignity of a pontifical institute.

Delivering his address in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, the Pope thanked the Alphonsianum—named after St. Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Redemptorist order and doctor of

the Church—for the “formative service that you offer to the Church in the field of moral theology” as its 75th anniversary approaches.

“The Second Vatican Council affirms that moral theology, nourished by Sacred Scripture, must help the faithful to understand the greatness of their vocation to bring Christ’s charity to the world,” the Pope began. “Every theological-moral proposal ultimately has this foundation: it is the love of God that is our guide, the guide of our personal choices and our existential journey. Consequently, moral theologians, missionaries and confessors are called to enter into a living relationship with the People of God, taking on especially the cry of the least, to understand their real difficulties, to look at existence from their point of view and to offer them answers that reflect the light of the Father’s eternal love.”

Confession is ‘encounter of love’ that fights evil, Pope tells priests

(24-3-23) On March 23, Pope Francis received participants in the Apostolic Penitentiary’s 33rd annual course on the internal forum.

“The Church’s evangelizing mission passes in large part through the rediscovery of the gift of confession, also in view of the approaching jubilee of 2025,” the Pope said, as he called on priests to schedule ample time to hear confessions.

World Council of Churches leader, Pope Francis propose ‘summit’ on Ukraine

(24-3-23) 350 Protestant and Orthodox communities are members of the World Council of Churches (WCC), which is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland; on March 23, Pope Francis received Rev. Jerry Pillay, the South African Presbyterian pastor who serves as its general secretary. Pillay said after the meeting that Pope Francis backed a WCC proposal for a summit between Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Church leaders. It is not known whether the Orthodox leaders will agree to the meeting.



Vatican message for Ramadan focuses on fight against extremism

(24-3-23) In an annual message to the world’s Muslims, timed for the month of Ramadan, the Dicastery for Inter-Religious Dialogue concentrates on the need to combat “extremism, radicalism, polemics, disputes, and religiously motivated violence.”

“The threats are fueled by a culture of hate,” the Vatican statement says. “We need, then, to find the most appropriate ways of countering and

overcoming such a culture, instead, enhancing love and friendship, in particular between Muslims and Christians, due to the bonds that unite us.”

God is near, Pope reassures kin of victims of Polish mine accident

(24-3-23) Meeting on March 24 the relatives of Polish miners who were killed in an accident last April, Pope Francis told them that questioning God can be a form of prayer.

The Pontiff remarked that the silence of God “sometimes gives us anger,” and in that case, “anger too is prayer.” “In the darkness, the Lord is near,” the Pope assured the family members. “We do not know how, but He is near to us.”

In Spain, seminary enrollments hit a new low

(24-3-23) The number of men training for the priesthood in Spain has dropped below 1,000, for the first time since records of seminary enrollment were kept at the national level.

The number of men entering seminary training also hit a low this year, at 172—as did the number of ordinations to the priesthood, at 97.

There are 974 candidates for diocesan priesthood in Spain today.

Burkina Faso - 100 years of the parish of Pabré, a sign of grace and hope in a country plagued by insecurity

(24-3-23) "All believers must unite for a world more worthy of God, a world where everyone is happy", urged Cardinal Philippe Ouédraogo, Archbishop of Ouagadougou, in his homily delivered during of the Jubilee Mass in the parish of Pabré, a town located 20 km from the capital of Burkina Faso. Cardinal Ouédraogo invited the Christian faithful to tolerance and a change of mentality to build a better world. "Brothers and sisters, every human being is imperfect. Let us work to be good servants of God. Let us always have faith".

In 1923, 100 years ago, Bishop Joanny Thévenoud, the first bishop of Burkina Faso, founded the parish of Pabré, followed by the sisters' novitiate in 1924 and then of the minor seminary in 1925. When the parish was founded, there were 47 families, 49 young people, 8 girls and 66 children. Since its foundation, the number of baptized has increased from year to year. Many Burkinabe intellectuals have graduated from this prestigious institution.

The parish's jubilee is an important sign of hope for the community of believers throughout Burkina Faso, a country that is experiencing a difficult situation due to the violence caused by jihadist groups that are devastating large areas of the country.

China - Free medical care and scholarships for children from poor families: Charity Lent led by Chinese Catholic communities

(24-3-23) The local Catholic communities are accompanying the Lenten journey with works of charity and corporal and spiritual mercy aimed at taking care of the emergencies and needs that affect the daily life of the Chinese people.

In Beijing, for example, in the parish of the Immaculate Conception, the Group of Volunteers, two years after its foundation, has helped financially support the studies of 41 university students from families who, for financial reasons, could not guarantee their sons and daughters a high-level education. During Lent 2023, the Volunteer Group received 58 scholarship applications from priests and nuns working in economically disadvantaged areas.

In Shanghai, the Association of Catholic Intellectuals collected donations to provide free medical examinations for people with intellectual disabilities.

In Zhejiang Province, the Provincial Catholic Charitable Health Counseling Service Team went to Fenghua Parish, Ningbo Diocese, to provide medical services to Catholics and the local population.



Brazil - In the state of Piauí, 80% of the population suffers from lack of food

(24-3-23) 80% of the inhabitants of Piauí, a Brazilian state located in the northeast of the country, in the arid region of Sertão, suffer from hunger. According to the report of the "Rede Brasileira de Pesquisa em Soberania e Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional", RBPSSAN, 33 million Brazilians survive in a situation of food insecurity.

According to information published by the Episcopal Conference, statistics reveal that approximately one million people in Piauí do not have regular access to food and do not even know if they are going to eat. The national survey on food insecurity in Brazil revealed that only 20% of the inhabitants of Piauí are guaranteed to have at least three meals a day and are therefore immune to this sad reality. 34.3% face "severe" food insecurity, 20% "moderate" food insecurity and 25.8% "mild" food insecurity.

Chinese bishop wants Catholics to abandon 'underground' Church

(24-3-23) A Chinese bishop, recognized by both state and the Vatican, says all Catholic clergy in China should register with the government to end the division among them as state-sanctioned and underground churches.

"What hurts and torments us the most are the situations of disunity and heartbreak between brothers," said Bishop Joseph Han Zhi-hai of Lanzhou in the province of Gansu in north-central China.

Bishop Han made the remarks in a letter he sent to the Vatican Fides agency, on the 20th anniversary of his ordination as the bishop. Fides published the letter on March 20.

The bishop was ordained with a Vatican mandate in 2003, but in 2017, he sought and obtained recognition from the Chinese political apparatus. The recognition came a year before the 2018 China-Vatican secretive deal was signed, reportedly agreeing on terms for both parties to jointly appoint bishops in the communist nation.

The 57-year-old Bishop Han regretted some bishops did not like being recognized by the state.

Fewer young Korean Catholics attend Sunday Mass

(24-3-23) The number of young Catholics at Sunday mass in South Korea dropped by 17 percent compared to years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, says a survey.

The survey by the Korean Catholic Research Institute of the Catholic Bishops' Conference found that 36.1 percent of Catholic youth in their twenties join Sunday mass in 2023 compared to 53.2 percent before the pandemic, Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation (CPBC) reported on March 23. The online survey was conducted from Jan. 10-16 among 1,063 Catholics over the age of 19.

25-3-23



Uganda - Laid the first foundations of the health centre in Yoro for thousands of refugees

(25-3-23) "We finally have the foundations of the new health center in Yoro in which we are involved in assisting refugees in this northwestern part of the country", reports to Fides Sister Laura Gemignani, a Comboni missionary who, together with her sisters, follows the battered population arriving from neighboring countries, including South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"Currently we are three sisters, but we hope that others will join us because the situation here is really complicated", says the missionary on how the initiative was carried out.

"After three drilling attempts, we finally have water and that gives us great hope. It is risky to start at this moment with a world crisis that has no precedent and start a mission. It is a difficult battle but with the Lord's help we are confident we can do it".

Sister Laura explains that the mission should mainly deal with health care, which is "the first request made by the local population together with the refugees and also the local authorities. And through health care, reach out to women and children, who are the most vulnerable people, and carry out medical, training and trauma recovery programs with them, because they have gone through indescribable experiences by fleeing South Sudan. Many of these women were attacked and raped by a gentleman from Uganda, who did criminal things that cannot be told".

"This work must be enlightened by the hope that comes from the Cross because it is the only thing that our Founder, Daniele Comboni, left us as an inheritance."

Yoro, in northwestern Uganda, is located near the refugee camp known as 'Rhino kamp', which hosts 130,000 displaced people, 80 percent of whom are women and children.

Lebanon - Annunciation, national holiday. Lebanese Christians and Muslims together invoke Mary in the country besieged by the crisis

(25-3-23) In a Lebanon shaken by a devastating economic crisis and yet another paralysis of the political system, on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, Christians and Muslims are once again invoking the Virgin Mary together, to ask that the Mother of Jesus help the Lebanese people heal from their wounds and safeguard national social and religious coexistence.

In Lebanon, the Marian solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord has been proclaimed a national holiday since 2010. On March 25, a public event was organized to celebrate the feast at the Maronite Archdiocese of Antélias, in Kornet Chehwan. The prayer and sharing meeting, organized with the collaboration of the Focolare Movement, was attended by Christians and Muslims, and was sponsored by Antoine Farès Bounajem, Maronite Archbishop of Antelias.

The choice of date to have Christians and Muslims celebrate Mary fell on the feast of the Annunciation, also because the Annunciation of the Angel to Mary is narrated both in the Gospel and in the Koran. Mary is the only woman mentioned by name in the Koran 34 times (while Mary's name appears in the Gospels 19 times).

Taiwan - Sisters on a Lenten "pilgrimage/retreat". To give thanks for Creation and remember their founder

(25-3-23) The Taiwanese community of the Missionary Sisters of the Congregation of the Sacred Side and of Our Lady of Sorrows has chosen to live and propose to all a Lenten pilgrimage among the nature surrounding the city of Xinzhu, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth in Heaven of the Servant of God Eustachio Montemurro, founding priest of the Congregation. A journey made together with lay men and women who share the Ignatian spirituality with the community of religious. A day also spent contemplating the beauty of Creation. The pilgrims told the weekly of the Archdiocese of Taipei about the experience of reconciliation and inner healing experienced thanks to the pilgrimage. At the end of the day, before the blessing imparted by the priests, the nuns prepared a sort of "wheel of fortune", from which everyone drew an act of penance and mortification to be performed during the days leading up to the Easter solemnities, to also show in this way the desire to be reconciled with God, with oneself, with others and with the earth. The pilgrimage, although short, was lived by all as an experience of purification of the heart during Lent.