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Other News

STATISTICS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 2019

On the occasion of World Mission Day, which this year celebrates its 93rd anniversary on Sunday 20 October within the context of the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019, announced by Pope Francis to mark the 100th anniversary of Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, Fides News Service offers some statistics chosen to give a panorama of the missionary Church all over the world. They are taken from the latest edition of the "Church's Book of Statistics" published (updated to 31 December 2017) regarding members of the Church, church structures, healthcare, welfare and education. Please note that variations, increase or decrease, emerging from our own comparison with last year's figures, are marked with "+" or "–" in brackets.

World population

On 31 December 2017 the world population was 7,408,374,000 with an increase of 56,085,000 compared to the previous year. Population growth, almost half compared to the previous year, was recorded on every continent, including Europe, in its third year of growth after the decrease in previous years: increases were recorded above all in Africa (+ 33.572.000) and in Asia (+ 11.975.000), followed by America (+ 8.738.000), Europe (+ 1.059.000) and Oceania (+ 741.000).

Catholics

On the same date, 31 December 2017, Catholics in the world numbered 1,313,278,000 with an overall increase of 14,219,000, almost the same as the previous year. The increase affects all continents, including Europe (+ 259.000), after a decrease for three consecutive years. Increases were recorded above all in Africa (+ 5,605,000) and in America (+ 6,083,000) followed by Asia (+ 2,080,000) and Oceania (+ 191,000).

The world percentage of Catholics increased by 0.06 %, settling at 17.73%. By continent: increases were recorded in America (+ 0.05) and Asia (+ 0,03), decrease in Africa (- 0,07), Europe (- 0,02) and Oceania (- 0,01).

Persons and Catholics per priest

This year the number of persons per priest in the world increased by 132, an average of 14.468. The distribution by continent: increase in Africa (+ 49), America (+ 69), Europe (+ 75) and Oceania (+ 337). The only decrease, also this year, was in Asia (- 887).

The number of Catholics per priest in the world increased by 38, an average of 3,168. There are increases in America (+ 48), Europe (+ 29) and Oceania (+ 87). As in the previous year, a decrease was recorded in Asia (- 15), as well as in Africa (- 9).

Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions is 1 more than the previous year, at 3,017 with new circumscriptions created in Asia (+2), while in America the number decreased by one (-1) The number in the other continents remained unchanged.

Mission stations with a resident priest number 2,659 (+ 519). A decrease was recorded for the second consecutive year, in Africa (- 47), along with Europe (- 44) while an increase was recorded in America (+ 460), Asia (+ 133) and Oceania (+ 17).

Mission Stations without a resident priest decreased in all continents, by 4,696. The distribution by continent: in Africa (- 1,448), in America (- 1,333), in Asia (- 1,899), in Europe (- 13), and Oceania (- 3).

Bishops

The total number of bishops in the world increased this year, to 5,389. Both diocesan and religious bishops increased in numbers. Diocesan bishops number 4,116 (+ 26), while religious bishops number 1,273 (+10).

The increase in diocesan bishops is recorded in all continents, with a slight decrease only in Africa (- 1): America (+ 18), Asia (+ 1), Europe (+ 5) and Oceania (+ 3). The number of religious bishops increased in Africa (+ 7) and America (+ 5), while a decrease was recorded in Asia (- 2) and the number remained unchanged in Europe and Oceania.

Priests

The total number of priests in the world also decreased this year, to 414,582 (- 387). The continents which recorded a decrease were again Europe (- 2.946) and Oceania (- 97). Increases were recorded in Africa (+ 1.192), America (+ 40) and Asia (+ 1.424) unvaried.

Diocesan priests decreased by 21, reaching a total of 281,810 with decreases again in Europe (- 2.048) and

Oceania (- 36). Increases were recorded in Africa (+ 959), America (+ 404) and Asia (+ 700).

The number of religious priests decreased by 366 to a total of 132,772. Increases were recorded, as in recent years, in Africa (+ 233) and in Asia (+ 724), whereas numbers dropped in America (- 364), Europe (- 898) and Oceania (- 61).

Permanent Deacons

Permanent deacons increased worldwide by 582 to 46,894. The highest increase was recorded again in America (+ 408) followed by Europe (+ 142), Asia (+ 28) and Oceania (+ 11). The only decrease this year was noted in Africa (- 7).

There are 46, 192 permanent diocesan deacons in the world, an overall increase of 583. They increased in number on every continent apart from Africa (- 3): America (+434), Asia (+5), Europe (+140) and Oceania (+7).

Religious permanent deacons number 702, with a decrease by one compared to the previous year. There were decreases in Africa (- 4) and America (- 26), and increases in Asia (+23), Europe (+2) and Oceania (+4).

Men and women religious

The number of non-religious priests decreased for the fifth consecutive year by 1, 090 to 51.535. A decrease was recorded in all continents apart from Africa (+ 48): America (- 403), Asia (-127), Europe (-525) and Oceania (-83).

This year too there is an overall decrease in the number of women religious, by 10,535 to 648,910. An increase was recorded in Africa (+1,489) and Asia (+1,118), decrease in America (- 4,893), Europe (- 7,960) and Oceania (-289).

Members of secular institutes, male and female

Members of male secular institutes number 585 with a decrease of (-33) for the second consecutive year, in all continents except Oceania, which remains unvaried this year too: Africa (- 8), America (- 6), Asia (- 7) and Europe (- 12).

The members of female secular institutes decreased in number this year, by 343 to a total of 22,057 members. An increase was recorded in Africa (+37) and in Asia (+58), while a decrease was recorded in America (- 51), Europe (- 385) and Oceania (-2).

Lay missionaries and catechists

The number of lay missionaries in the world is 355,800, with an overall increase of 1,057, in particular in Europe (+836), America (+691), Asia (+454) and Oceania (+23). A decrease was recorded only in Africa (- 947).

The number of catechists worldwide increased by 34,032, reaching a total of 3,120,321. The only decrease was recorded in Europe (- 2.897). An increase was recorded in Africa (+ 11.405), America (+ 22.532), Asia (+2.699) and Oceania (+293).

Major seminarians

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious also decreased this year. Worldwide there are 832, reaching a total of 115,328. Increases occurred in Africa (+786) and Oceania (+ 21), while a decrease was recorded in America (- 853), Asia (- 385) and in Europe (- 401). Major diocesan seminarians number 70,706 (- 411 compared to the previous year) and religious major seminarians 44,622 (- 421). The number of diocesan seminarians increased in Africa (+505) and

Oceania (+17), whereas it decreased in America (- 376), Asia (- 202) and Europe (- 355). The number of religious seminarians increased in Africa (+281) and Oceania (+4), while it decreased in America (- 477), Asia (- 183), and Europe (- 46).

Minor seminarians

The number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious this year decreased for the second consecutive year by 835 to 100.781. There was an overall decrease on all continents except Asia (+82) and Oceania, which remained unchanged: Africa (- 403), America (- 347), Europe (-167).

Minor diocesan seminarians number 78,336 (- 33) and religious seminarians number 22,445 (- 802). The number of diocesan minor seminarians increased in Asia (+ 367) and Oceania (+7). There was a decrease in Africa (- 18), America (- 269), Europe (- 120),

Religious minor seminarians decreased in number in Africa (-385), America (- 78), Asia (- 285), Europe (- 47) and Oceania (- 7).

Catholic schools and Education

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 71.305 kindergartens with 7,303,839 pupils;

101,527 primary schools with 34,558,527 pupils; and 48,560 secondary schools with 20,320,592 pupils. The Church also cares for 2,345,799 high school pupils, and 2,945,295 university students.

Catholic charity and healthcare centres

Charity and healthcare centres managed by the Church worldwide include: 5,269 hospitals, most of them in America (1,399) and Africa (1,367); 16,068 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (5,907); America (4.330) and Asia (2.919); 646 care homes for people with leprosy, mainly in Asia

(362) and Africa (229); 15,735 homes for the elderly, the chronically ill or the disabled, mainly in Europe (8,475)

and America (3,596); 9,813 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3,473); 10,492 creches, mainly in America (3,153) and in Asia (2,900); 13,065 marriage counselling centres, mainly in Europe (5,676) and America (4,798); 3,169 social rehabilitation centres and 31,182 institutions of other types.

Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

There are 1,115 ecclesiastical circumscriptions dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (Cep). Most of these are in Africa (511) and in Asia (484), followed by America (74) and Oceania (46).