

# **FIDES News Service - October 24, 2010**

**Special Feature for Mission Sunday 2010**

## **CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS**

**WORLD POPULATION – CATHOLICS**

**PERSONS /CATHOLICS PER PRIEST**

**ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS – MISSION STATIONS**

**BISHOPS**

**PRIESTS**

**PERMANENT DEACONS**

**RELIGIOUS MEN AND WOMEN, MEMBERS OF SECULAR INSTITUTES**

**LAY MISSIONARIES, CATECHISTS**

**MAJOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS**

**MINOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS**

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND PUPILS**

**CATHOLIC INSTITUTES FOR HEALTHCARE, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE,  
CHARITY WORK**

**CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS DEPENDENT ON THE  
CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELISATION OF PEOPLES**

**OVERALL WORLD PICTURE**

---

**Dossier available at the Fides website : [www.fides.org](http://www.fides.org).**

**CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS**

**Vatican City (Fides Service)** – As every year in the month of October, in view of World Mission Sunday, this year celebrated on Sunday, October 24, Fides News Service offers, with the help of a few statistics, a panorama of Catholic missionary activity all over the world. Tables regarding members of the Church, church structures in the fields of pastoral care, healthcare, education and assistance are taken from the latest edition of the Church's Book of Statistics (updated 31 December 2008). Please note that variations, *increase* or *decrease*, emerging from our own comparison with last year's figures, are marked increase + or decrease –. in brackets

## World population

On 31 December 2008 the world population was **6,698,353,000** with an *increase* of **81,256,000** persons compared with the previous year. Population *growth* was registered on every continent including Europe, as it was noted in the previous year: Africa (+ 29,674,000); America (+ 5,687,000); Asia (+ 42,914,000); Oceania (+ 670,000); Europe (+ 2,311,000).

## Catholics

On the same date Catholics in the world numbered **1,165,714,000** with an overall *increase* of 19,058,000 more than the previous year, in every continent as follows: Africa (+ 8,025,000); America (+ 7,579,000); Asia (+ 3,152,000); Europe (+ 193,000); Oceania (+ 109,000).

The world percentage of Catholics *increased* by 0.07 %, settling at 17.40%; by continent: increases were registered in Africa (+ 0.29); America (+ 0.44); Asia (+ 0.05), while decrease was shown in Europe (- 0.1) and Oceania (0.2)

## Persons and Catholics per priest

This year the number of **persons** per priest in the world *increased* by 136 units, (average **13,015**). The distribution by continent: *increase* in Africa (+ 105), Europe (+ 43), and Oceania (+ 28), and decrease in America (- 18) and Asia (- 402).

The number of **Catholics** per priest in the world *increased* by 39 units (average **2,849**). There are *increases* on every continent except Oceania: Africa (+ 98); America (+ 37); Asia (+ 10); Europe (+ 14); Oceania (- 8).

## Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations

The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions *increased* by **9** to **2,945** with new circumscriptions created in: Africa +2; America +4; Asia +1; Europe +2. Mission stations **with a resident priest number 1,665** (649 more than in the previous year) and are increasing on all the continents except Oceania.

Mission Stations **without a resident priest** *increased* in number by 847 units, to **125,489**. Increases were registered in Africa (+ 747), Asia (+ 539), Europe (+ 45), while in America (- 463) and Oceania (- 21) they decreased.

## Bishops

The number of bishops in the world *increased* by 56 units, to **5,002**. Every continent, except Oceania -4, registered an increase. The increase in numbers regard both diocesan and religious Bishops: **Diocesan** bishops number **3,786** (57 more than in the previous year); **Religious** Bishops number **1,216** (1 less). The increase in diocesan bishops is registered in: Africa (+ 14), America (+ 32), Asia (+ 8), Europe (+ 7), while the only decrease has been in Oceania (- 4). The number of religious Bishops increased in Europe (+4), whereas the number dropped in Africa (-2) and America (-3), with no variations in Asia and Oceania.

## priests

The total number of priests in the world *increased* by 1,142 units, to **409,166**. The only continents which registered a decrease was again Europe (-1,664), whereas figures grew in Africa (+ 953), America (+ 659), Asia (+ 1,120), and Oceania (+ 74). Diocesan priests *increased* by 1,576 units, reaching a total of **274,007** with *increases* in Africa (+ 821), America (+ 811), Asia (+ 746), and Oceania (+ 67) and a drop in Europe (- 869). The number of Religious priests decreased by 434 units to a total **135,159**. Increases were registered as in recent years in Africa (+ 132) and Asia (+ 374), along with Oceania (+ 7) whereas numbers dropped in America (- 152) and Europe (- 795).

## permanent deacons

Permanent deacons *increased* by 1,261 units to **37,203**. The highest increase was registered again in America (+ 774) and in Europe (+ 481), followed by Africa (+ 9) and Oceania (+ 17), the only decrease

being in Asia (- 20).. Diocesan Permanent deacons number **36,539**, with *increases* on all continents except Asia (- 3) (total *increase* 1,242 units): Africa (+ 5), America (+ 749), Europe (+ 474) and Oceania (+ 17).

Religious permanent deacons number **664**, with an increase of 19 units more than in the previous year, with increases in Africa (+ 4), America (+ 25), and Europe (+ 7), decrease in Asia (- 17) and no variation in Oceania.

### **men and women religious**

The number of Brothers *dropped* by 315 units to **54,641**. Situation: *increase* in Africa (+ 95), America (+ 232), and Asia (+ 69). The only *decreases* were registered in Oceania (- 115) and Europe (- 596). An overall *decrease* in the number of women religious (- 7,746), today **739,068**, was registered by continent as follows: *increase* in Africa (+ 1,845) and Asia (+ 2,170), decrease in America (- 3,452), Europe (- 8,167) and Oceania (- 142).

### **members of secular institutes, male and female**

Members of male secular institutes number **743** with an overall increase of 78 units. On a continental level, the situation is the opposite of what it was last year, when the numbers *increased* only in Europe whereas now they have diminished in Europe (- 33), in Oceania it has remained the same with only one member of a secular institute, and numbers have increased in Africa (+ 35), America (+ 57), and Asia (+ 19).

The members of female secular institutes decreased again this year, by 132 units to a total of **26,646** members. The only increase was seen in Africa (+ 194), while all the other continents saw a decrease: America (- 158), Asia (- 57), Europe (- 426), and Oceania (- 1).

### **lay missionaries and catechists**

The number of lay missionaries in the world is **316,836** units, with an overall increase of 66,372 units. They have increased on all the continents except Oceania (- 50): Africa (+ 911), America (+ 57,955), Asia (+ 7,315), and Europe (+ 241).

Catechists in the world increased by 89,208 units to a total of **3,082,562**. Numbers grew in Africa (+ 7,318), America (+ 82,846), and Europe (+ 10,617), but dropped in Asia (- 11,011) and Oceania (- 562).

### **major seminarians**

The overall number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious, rose again, increasing by 1,105 units to **117,024**. Numbers grew once again this year in Africa (+ 878), Asia (+ 1,380), and Oceania (+ 64), but dropped once again in America (- 267) and Europe (- 950).

Diocesan major seminarians number **71,176** (49 *less* than the previous year) but Religious major seminarians increased to **45,848** (+1,154). Diocesan seminarians increased in Africa (+ 470), Asia (+ 412), and Oceania (+ 75), but decreased in America (- 278), and Europe (- 728).

Religious Seminarians increased in Africa (+ 408), America (+ 11), and Asia (+ 968). Numbers decreased in Europe (- 222) and Oceania (- 11).

### **minor seminarians**

The number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious, increased by 382 units, to **102,360**. Numbers grew in Africa (+ 1,350) and Asia (+ 281) and decreased in America (- 591), Europe (- 578), and Oceania (- 80). Diocesan minor seminarians number **77,987** (+ 842), whereas religious seminarians number **24,373** (- 460). The number of diocesan minor seminarians has decreased in America (- 136), Europe (- 357), and Oceania (- 92), but has increased in Africa (+ 1,102) and Asia (+ 325). Religious minor seminarians decreased in number in America (- 455), Asia (- 44), and Europe (- 221) and are increasing in Africa (+ 248) and Oceania (+ 12).

### **Catholic schools**

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs **67,848** kindergartens with 6,383,910 pupils;

**93,315** primary schools with 30,520,238 pupils; 42,234 secondary schools with 17,758,405 pupils. The Church also cares for 1,968,828 high school pupils, and 3,088,208 university students.

**Catholic charity and healthcare centres**

The Church runs **5,428 hospitals** most of them in America (1,717) and Europe (1,288); **18,025 dispensaries** mainly in America (5,516), Africa (5,375) and Asia (3,547); **529 Care Homes** for people with Leprosy mainly in Asia (285) and Africa (184); **15,985 Homes** for the elderly, or the chronically ill or people with a disability mainly in Europe (8,265) and America (4,143); **9,962 orphanages**, about one third in Asia (3,437); **11,902 creches**; **13,945 marriage counselling centres** mainly in Europe (5,991) and America (5,044); **34,250 social rehabilitation centres** and **10,800 other kinds of institutions**, mostly located in America (4,285), Europe (2,937), and Asia (2,009).

## STATISTICS

*Source: Church's Yearly Book of Statistics latest edition  
elaborated by Fides  
in brackets variations compared with previous year: increase (+) decrease (-)*

### WORLD POPULATION – CATHOLICS

Continent	Population	Catholics	Percentage
Africa	973,417,000 (+ 29,674,000)	172,950,000 (+ 8,025,000)	17.77 % (+ 0.29)
America	913,080,000 (+ 5,687,000)	576,149,000 (+ 7,579,000)	63.10 % (+ 0.44)
Asia	4,067,884,000 (+ 42,914,000)	124,046,000 (+ 3,152,000)	3.05 % (+ 0.05)
Europe	709,109,000 (+ 2,311,000)	283,433,000 (+ 193,000)	39.97 % (- 0.1)
Oceania	34,863,000 (+ 670,000)	9,136,000 (+ 109,000)	26.23 % (- 0.2 )
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,698,353,000 (+ 81,256,000)</b>	<b>1,165,714,000 (+ 19,058,000)</b>	<b>17.40% (+ 0.07)</b>

### PERSONS /CATHOLICS PER PRIEST

Continent	persons per priest	Catholics per priest
Africa	27,335 (+ 105)	4,857 (+ 98)
America	7,451 (- 18)	4,717 (+ 37)
Asia	50,030 (- 402)	2,300 (+ 10)
Europe	3,679 (+ 43)	1,471 (+ 14)
Oceania	7,340 (+ 28)	1,923 (- 8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,015 (+ 136)</b>	<b>2,849 (+ 39)</b>

### ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS– MISSION STATIONS

Continent	Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions	Mission Stations <i>with</i> resident priest	Mission Stations <i>without</i> resident priest
Africa	518 (+ 2)	284 (+ 36)	71,552 (+ 747)
America	1,076 (+ 4)	110 (+ 14)	12,205 (- 463)
Asia	524 (+ 1)	1,066 (+ 488)	41,105 (+ 539)

<b>Europe</b>	748 (+ 2)	147 (+ 112)	109 (+ 45)
<b>Oceania</b>	79 (=)	49 (- 1)	518 (- 21)
<b>total</b>	<b>2,945 (+ 9)</b>	<b>1,665 (+ 649)</b>	<b>125,489 (+ 847)</b>

## BISHOPS

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Total bishops</b>	<b>diocesan bishops</b>	<b>Religious bishops</b>
<b>Africa</b>	669 (+ 12)	488 (+ 14)	181 (- 2)
<b>America</b>	1,876 (+ 29)	1,310 (+ 32)	566 (- 3)
<b>Asia</b>	740 (+ 8)	547 (+ 8)	193 (=)
<b>Europe</b>	1,587 (+ 11)	1,356 (+ 7)	231 (+ 4)
<b>Oceania</b>	130 (- 4)	85 (- 4)	45 (=)
<b>total</b>	<b>5,002 (+ 56)</b>	<b>3,786 (+ 57)</b>	<b>1,216 (- 1)</b>

## PRIESTS

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Total priests</b>	<b>Diocesan priests</b>	<b>Religious priests</b>
<b>Africa</b>	35,611 (+ 953)	23,975 (+ 821)	11,636 (+ 132)
<b>America</b>	122,154 (+ 659)	80,465 (+ 811)	41,689 (- 152)
<b>Asia</b>	53,922 (+ 1,120)	31,737 (+ 746)	22,185 (+ 374)
<b>Europe</b>	192,729 (- 1,664)	135,102 (- 869)	57,627 (- 795)
<b>Oceania</b>	4,750 (+ 74)	2,728 (+ 67)	2,022 (+ 7)
<b>total</b>	<b>409,166 (+ 1,142)</b>	<b>274,007 (+ 1,576)</b>	<b>135,159 (- 434)</b>

## PERMANENT DEACONS

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Total permanent deacons</b>	<b>Diocesan Permanent deacons</b>	<b>Religious Permanent deacons</b>
<b>Africa</b>	412 (+ 9)	386 (+ 5)	26 (+ 4)

<b>America</b>	24,030 (+ 774)	23,749 (+ 749)	281 (+ 25)
<b>Asia</b>	143 (- 20)	115 (- 3)	28 (- 17)
<b>Europe</b>	12,329 (+ 481)	12,003 (+ 474)	326 (+ 7)
<b>Oceania</b>	289 (+ 17)	286 (+ 17)	3 (=)
<b>total</b>	<b>37,203 (+ 1,261 )</b>	<b>36,539 (+ 1,242)</b>	<b>664 (+ 19)</b>

### **BROTHERS AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS**

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Brothers</b>	<b>Women Religious</b>	
<b>Africa</b>	8.016 (+ 95)	63.731 (+ 1.845)	
<b>America</b>	16.987 (+ 232)	203.057 (- 3.452)	
<b>Asia</b>	10.110 (+ 69)	160.862 (+ 2.170)	
<b>Europe</b>	18.097 (- 596)	301.971 (- 8.167)	
<b>Oceania</b>	1.431 (- 115)	9.447 (- 142)	
<b>total</b>	<b>54.641 (- 315)</b>	<b>739.068 (- 7.746)</b>	

### **MEMBERS OF SECULAR INSTITUTES**

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Members of secular institutes Male</b>	<b>Members of secular institutes Female</b>
<b>Africa</b>	76 (+ 35)	731 (+ 194)
<b>America</b>	250 (+ 57)	5,896 (- 158)
<b>Asia</b>	43 (+ 19)	1,669 (- 57)
<b>Europe</b>	373 (- 33)	18,308 (- 426)
<b>Oceania</b>	1 (=)	42 (- 1)
<b>total</b>	<b>743 (+ 78)</b>	<b>26,646 (- 132)</b>

### **LAY MISSIONARIES AND CATECHISTS**

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Lay missionaries</b>	<b>Catechists</b>
<b>Africa</b>	4,501 (+ 911)	407,250 (+ 7,318)
<b>America</b>	287,594 (+ 57,955)	1,806,130 (+ 82,846)
<b>Asia</b>	19,771 (+ 7,315)	301,542 (- 11,011)
<b>Europe</b>	4,663 (+ 241)	552,445 (+ 10,617)
<b>Oceania</b>	307 (- 50)	15,195 (- 562)

<b>total</b>	<b>316,836 (+ 66,372)</b>	<b>3,082,562 (+ 89,208)</b>
--------------	---------------------------	-----------------------------

### MAJOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

<b>Continent</b>	<b>Total Major seminarians</b>	<b>Diocesan Major seminarians</b>	<b>Religious Major seminarians</b>
<b>Africa</b>	25,607 (+ 878)	17,124 (+ 470)	8,483 (+ 408)
<b>America</b>	36,502 (- 267)	24,567 (- 278)	11,935 (+ 11)
<b>Asia</b>	32,677 (+ 1,380)	15,378 (+ 412)	17,299 (+ 968)
<b>Europe</b>	21,193 (- 950)	13,399 (- 728)	7,794 (- 222)
<b>Oceania</b>	1,045 (+ 64)	708 (+ 75)	337 (- 11)
<b>total</b>	<b>117,024 (+ 1,105)</b>	<b>71,176 (- 49)</b>	<b>45,848 (+ 1,154)</b>

### MINOR SEMINARIANS – DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS

<b>Continent</b>	<b>total minor seminarians</b>	<b>diocesan minor seminarians</b>	<b>religious minor seminarians</b>
<b>Africa</b>	50,162 (+ 1,350)	44,155 (+ 1,102)	6,007 (+ 248)
<b>America</b>	15,391 (- 591)	10,837 (- 136)	4,554 (- 455)
<b>Asia</b>	24,319 (+ 281)	15,442 (+ 325)	8,877 (- 44)
<b>Europe</b>	12,235 (- 578)	7,341 (- 357)	4,894 (- 221)
<b>Oceania</b>	253 (- 80)	212 (- 92)	41 (+ 12)
<b>Total</b>	<b>102,360 (+ 382)</b>	<b>77,987 (+ 842)</b>	<b>24,373 (- 460)</b>

### SCHOOLS AND PUPILS

	<b>INFANT schools</b>	<b>children</b>	<b>PRIMA RY schools</b>	<b>pupils</b>	<b>SECONDAR Y schools</b>	<b>PUPILS</b>	<b>High school pupils</b>	<b>UNIVERSIT Y Pupils</b>
<b>Africa</b>	12,689	1,308,053	34,162	14,525,493	10,536	3,753,688	68,782	88,822
<b>America</b>	15,764	1,564,089	22,906	7,280,689	10,753	4,734,636	589,785	2,102,749



<b>Asia</b>	14,172	1,643,926	16,236	5,056,201	9,903	5,002,075	1,046,031	544,526
<b>Europe</b>	23,611	1,763,780	17,109	3,014,405	10,345	3,867,747	253,812	341,482
<b>Oceania</b>	1,612	104,062	2,902	643,450	697	400,259	10,418	10,629
<b>total</b>	<b>67,848</b>	<b>6,383,910</b>	<b>93,315</b>	<b>30,520,238</b>	<b>42,234</b>	<b>17,758,405</b>	<b>1,968,828</b>	<b>3,088,208</b>

## HOSPITALS/CLINICS, CHARITY WORK, WELFARE

Continent	hospitals	Dispensaries	Leprosy centres	Homes for the elderly, chronically ill, disabled	orphanages	Nursery schools	Marriage Counselling centres,	other institutes	total
<b>Africa</b>	1,137	5,375	184	834	1,285	2,038	1,673	2,882	<b>1,364</b>
<b>America</b>	1,717	5,516	45	4,143	2,679	3,867	5,044	14,374	<b>4,285</b>
<b>Asia</b>	1,130	3,547	285	2,234	3,437	3,374	1,000	5,353	<b>2,009</b>
<b>Europe</b>	1,288	3,004	12	8,265	2,448	2,507	5,991	10,979	<b>2,937</b>
<b>Oceania</b>	156	583	3	509	113	116	237	662	<b>205</b>

## ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS DEPENDENT ON THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELISATION OF PEOPLES

**Vatican City (Agenzia Fides)** – The Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples is at the service of the Holy Father the Pope as the “central body for promoting, directing and co-ordinating” the activity of evangelisation of peoples and missionary cooperation throughout the world (cfr, Ad gentes, 29; Pastor bonus, 85),

The Church down through the centuries, in obedience to the command received from Christ, has always proclaimed the Gospel to all peoples. In order to fulfil her missionary duty, in the face of growing demand for evangelisation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Church set up special structures. In 1622 Pope Gregory XV instituted the “Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide”, with the task of “preaching and proclaiming the Gospel and Catholic doctrine in all missions”, giving the Congregation decision making powers to guarantee rapidity and effectiveness. In 1627 Pope Urban VIII founded the Urban College of Propaganda Fide for the formation of secular clergy for the mission and the Tipografia Poliglotta (Printing Press) to print

documents and books in many different languages.

With the apostolic constitution *Pastor bonus*, Pope John Paul II confirmed the general principle of jurisdiction laid down by the Second Vatican Council (cfr. *Ad gentes*, 29), which states: “The Congregation has the task of directing and co-ordinating activity for the evangelisation of peoples and for missionary cooperation” (85),

The main duties of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples include: ensure fair distribution of missionaries; formation for local secular clergy and catechists; involve Religious Institutes, Mission Societies, and local Churches in the task of evangelising mission territories.

**Latest details (12 October 2010) of Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions under the care of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples (CEP) :**

### **The CEP is responsible for a total number of 1,098 Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions**

<b>Continent</b>	<b>AD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>VA</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>OM</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Africa</b>	87	379	-	17	8	1	-	3	495
<b>America</b>	7	31	-	45	-	2	-	-	85
<b>Asia</b>	76	335	1	16	35	3	4	2	472
<b>Oceania</b>	11	31	-	-	1	2	-	1	46
<b>TOTAL</b>	181	776	1	78	44	8	4	6	1098

KEY: archdiocese (AD), diocese (D), territorial abbacy (AT), apostolic vicariate (VA), apostolic prefecture (PA), apostolic administration (AA), Mission sui juris (M), military Ordinariate (OM)

---

*Special Feature prepared by S.L. - Fides News Service 19 October 2010*