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**CATHOLIC CHURCH
STATISTICS**

2024

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CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS 2024

By Stefano Lodigiani & Fabio Beretta

Vatican City (Fides News Agency) – As every year, in view of World Mission Sunday, which this year celebrates its 98th anniversary on Sunday, October 20, 2024, on the theme “Go and invite everyone to the banquet”, Fides News Agency offers some statistics chosen to give a panorama of the Church in the world in the last year.

All the data in this dossier, and the subsequent processing of graphs and tables are taken from the latest edition of the «Church’s Book of Statistics» published this year (updated to December 31, 2022) regarding members of the Catholic Church, church structures, healthcare, welfare and education.

Please note that variations are indicated in brackets, increase (+) or decrease (-) compared to the previous year (31 December 2021), according to the comparison made by Fides News Agency.

Finally, the picture of ecclesiastical circumscriptions dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for the First Evangelization and the New Particular Churches is reported.

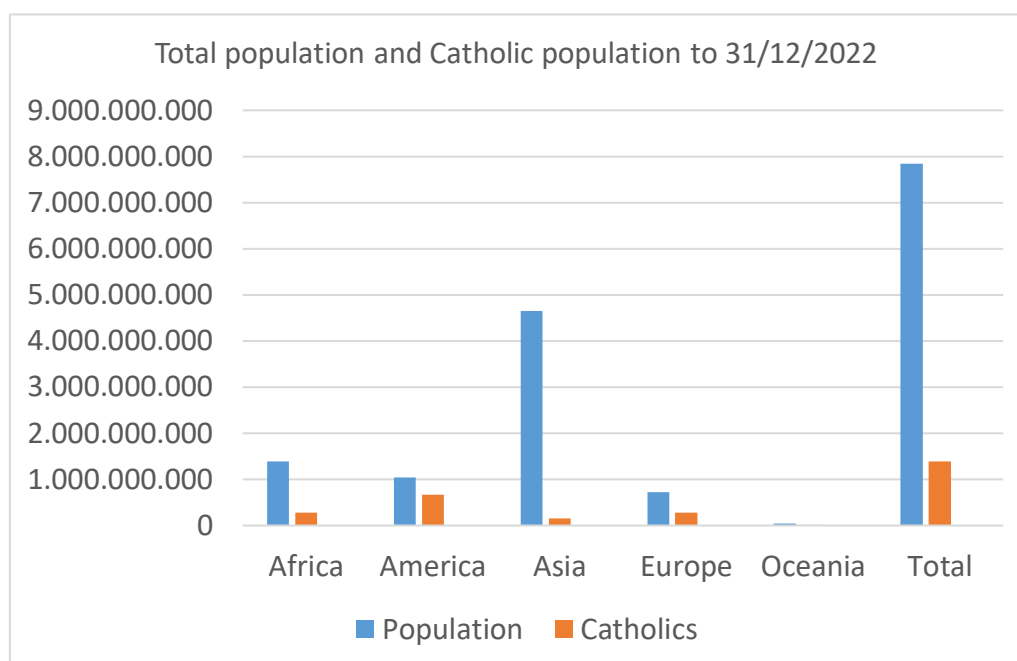
World Population

To December 31, 2022 the world population was **7.838.944.000**, with an increase of 53.175.000 units compared to the previous year. The positive trend is confirmed for all continents, except Europe.

As has been the case for a while, the most significant increase is once again in Asia (+29.139.000). Followed by Africa (+15.861.000), America (+8.275.000) and Oceania (+417.000). A decrease was registered in Europe of 517.000 units (more accentuated compared to the previous year, when the decrease was 224.000 units).

Catholics and percentage

On the same date, December 31, 2022, Catholics in the world numbered **1.389.573.000** units with an overall increase of 13.721.000 Catholics compared to the previous year. Even in this case, the increase affects four of the five continents. Only in Europe there is a decrease in the number of Catholics: - 474.000. As in previous years, increases were registered above all in Africa (+7.271.000) and in America (+5.912.000). Followed by Asia (+889.000) and Oceania (+123.000). The world percentage of Catholics increased slightly (+0,03) compared to the previous year, reaching **17,7%**. The Continents register slight variations.



Persons and Catholics per priest

This year the number of persons per priest in the world increased slightly by 126 units, reaching **15.682** (last year 15.556). There are increases in Oceania (+241), America (+81) and Europe (+45), while there are decreases in Asia (-296) and Africa (-527). There is also an increase in the number of Catholics per priest: **3.408** (+35 units compared to last year). Increases were registered in America (+58), Europe (+28) and Oceania (+66); decreases were registered in the number of Catholics per priest in Asia (-21) and Africa (-24).

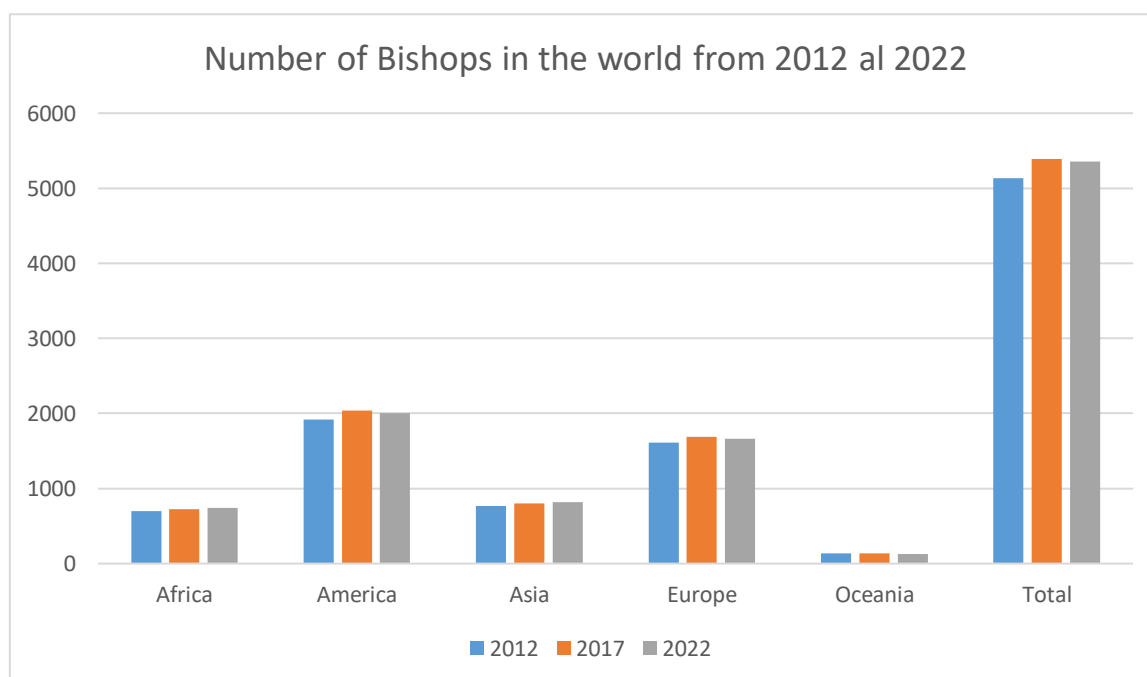
Ecclesiastical circumscriptions and mission stations

Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions mean Patriarchal, Metropolitan, Archiepiscopal and Episcopal Sees, Territorial Prelatures and Territorial Abbeys, Exarchates and Ordinariates, Military Ordinariates, Apostolic Vicariates, Apostolic Prefectures, Apostolic Administrations, Missions *sui iuris* and Patriarchal Exarchates. The number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions increased by 6 units compared to the previous year, to **3.036**. New circumscriptions were created in Africa (+6) and in America (+2). The number in Europe (761) and in Oceania (81) remain unvaried, while there is a decrease in Asia (-2).

There are **126.549 mission stations** in the world (previous year 134.098). **Mission Stations** with a resident priest number **2.534** (-707). A decrease was registered in all continents except Africa (+6) and Europe (+5), which register a slight increase. In America, the number has more than halved (-662, the previous year the number was 1168); followed by Asia (-56). The number in Oceania (88) remains unvaried. **Mission stations without a resident priest** decreased compared to the previous year (-6841 units), reaching **124.015**. A decrease is registered in all continents except Oceania, where it remains stable at 842. A significant decrease of mission stations was registered in Asia (-3.963), followed by America (-2.071), Africa (-796) and Europe (-12).

Bishops

The total number of Bishops in the world increased by 13 units compared to the previous year, reaching **5.353**. The number of diocesan Bishops increased (+19) and Religious Bishops decreased (-6). Diocesan Bishops number **2.682**, while that of Religious Bishops is **2.671**. Diocesan Bishops increase in Asia (+10), in Africa (+8) and in Oceania (+2) while decrease in America (-9) and Europe (-6). Religious Bishops decrease in America (-9), Europe (-4) and also in Oceania (-1) while increase in Africa (+7) and Asia (+1).

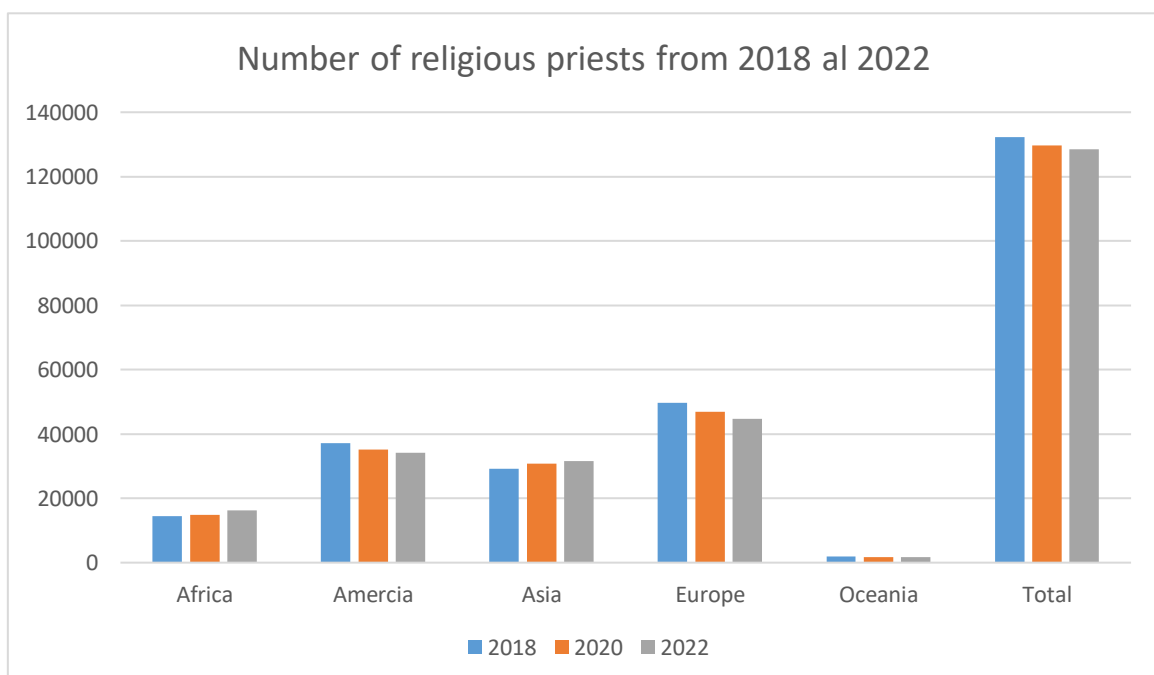
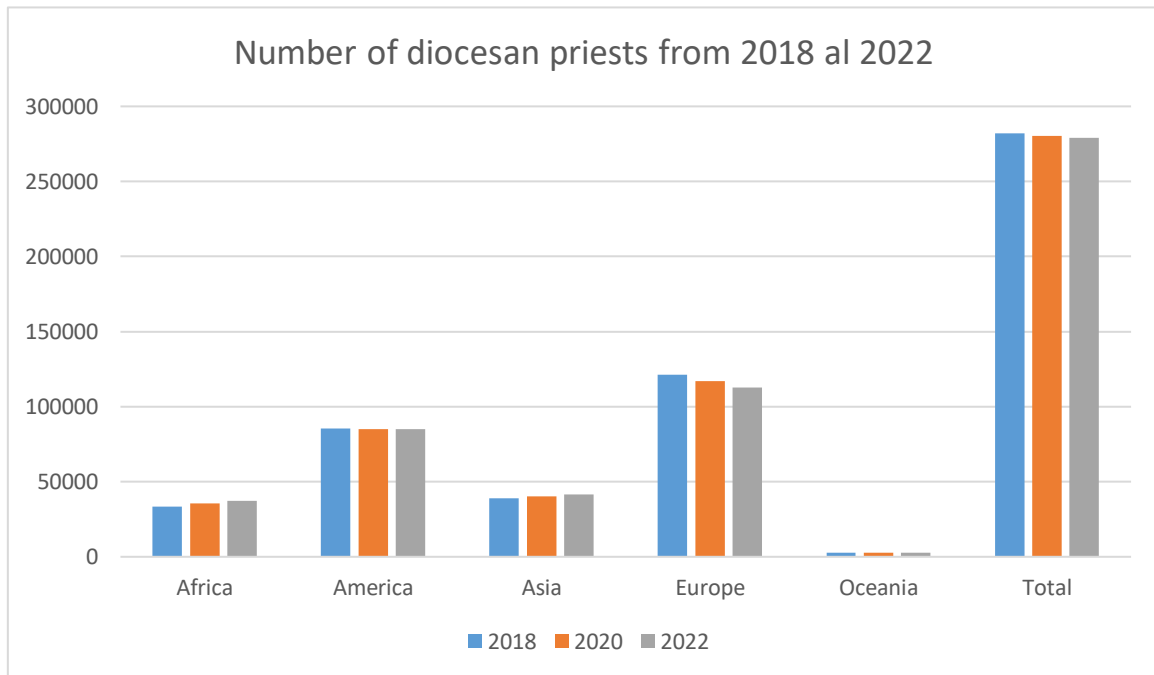


Priests

For the past five years, available statistics show that the total number of priests in the world continues to decline, reaching **407.730** (-142 in the last year). Once again, it is Europe that shows a consistent decrease (-2745), followed by America (-164). Like last year, significant increase were registered in Africa (+1.676) and in Asia (+1.160). Oceania, after last year's increase, registers a decrease (-69).

Compared to last year, **diocesan priests** in the world decreased by 439 units, reaching **279.171**. The number of diocesan priests increased in Africa (+814), in Asia (+547) and in America (+137). Decrease in Oceania (-13) and above all in Europe (-1924).

Unlike diocesan priests, **religious priests** have increased in the last year, reaching **128.559** (+297). There is an increase in Africa (+862) and in Asia (+613). Decrease in Oceania (-56), America (-301) and Europa (-821).



Permanent deacons

Permanent deacons in the world continue to increase (+974), reaching **50.159**. The increase was registered in Africa (+1), Asia (+15) and Europe (+267). A decrease was registered in America (-308) and in Oceania (-1).

Permanent diocesan deacons in the world are **49.535**, with an overall increase of 960 units. In Africa the number remains unvaried 457 compared to the previous year, while there is an increase in America (+697), in Europe (+255) and in Asia (+9). A slight increase was registered only in Oceania (-1).

Religious permanent deacons number **615**, with an increase of 14 units compared to the previous year. An increase was registered in Africa (+1), in Asia (+6) and in Europe (+12). And a decrease in America (-5), in Oceania the number remains unvaried as last year (5).

Men and women religious

The number of non-religious priests decreased by 360 units compared to the previous year, reaching **49.414**. A decrease was registered in Africa (-229), in Europe (-382) and in Oceania (-27) while an increase was registered in America (+27) and in Asia (+251).

Even this year there is an overall decrease in the number of women religious, reaching **599.228** (-9.730). An increase was registered, once again, in Africa (+1.358) and in Asia (+74), while a decrease was registered in Europe (-7.012), America (-1.358) and Oceania (-225).

Secular Institutes

Members of male institutes number **610** (+17). A decrease in America (-9) and in Europe (-1), but an increase in Africa (+18) and Asia (+9) while the situation remains unvaried in Oceania (1).

Members of female institutes also decreased this year: -733 units, a total of **18.955**. An increase was registered only in Asia (+29) while a decrease is registered in all other continents: Europe (-497), Africa (-80), America (-79), Oceania (-48)

Lay missionaries and Catechists

The number of lay missionaries in the world is **413.286**, with a global increase of 2.837 units. An increase was registered in America (+3.401), Africa (+94) and Oceania (+7), while the number decreases in Europe (-467) and Asia (-198).

Catechists in the world decreased by 28.070 units, reaching **2.849.582**. A decrease was registered in Asia (-16.951), America (-16.010), Europe (-14.541) and Oceania (-121). The only exception was Africa where catechists increased in number (+19.553).

Major seminarians

The number of major seminarians, diocesan and religious decreased this year, they are globally **108.481** (they were 109.895 in the previous year). An increase was registered only in Africa (+726) and Oceania (+12), while a decrease was registered in America (-921), in Asia (-375) and in Europe (-859).

Major diocesan seminarians decrease and number **64.908** (-1.645) but religious seminarians increase reaching **43.573** (+231). Major diocesan seminarians increased, like last year, only in Africa (+282) and Oceania (+4), while a decrease was registered in America (-864), in Europe (-650) and in Asia (-417).

Religious major seminarians increased by 231 units: in Africa (+444), Asia (+45) and Oceania (+8), while a decrease was registered in Europe (-209) and America (-57).

Minor seminarians

The total number of minor seminarians, diocesan and religious decreased by **95.161** (-553). An increase was registered only in Africa (+1.065), while a decrease was registered in all other continents: Asia (-978), America (-475), Europe (-153) Oceania (-12).

Minor diocesan seminarians decrease and number **72.462** (-339) and religious seminarians number **22.699** (-214).

The number of diocesan seminarians decrease in all continents except Africa (+929): America (-387), Asia (-692), Europe (-184) and Oceania (-5).

Religious minor seminarians increased in Europe (+31) and Africa (+136), while decrease in Asia (-286), America (-88) and Oceania (-7).

Catholic schools and education

In the field of education, the Catholic Church runs 74.322 kindergartens with 7.622.480 pupils (it should be noted that compared to the previous year, the kindergartens run by the Church have decreased by 46 units, while the pupils have increased by 57,385 units); 102.189 primary schools with 35.729.911 pupils (the previous year there were 100,939 primary schools with 34,699,835 pupils); 50.851 secondary schools with 20.566.902 pupils (in 2021 there were 49,868 institutes of this educational level for a total of 19,485,023 pupils). Furthermore, 2.460.993 pupils study in secondary schools and 3,925,393 in university institutes affiliated with the Catholic Church.

Catholic charity and healthcare centers

Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church are **102.409** and include: 5.420 hospitals and 14.205 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (1.604 hospitals and 5.172 dispensaries) and in America (1.392 hospitals e 3.433 dispensaries); 525 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (260) and Africa (205); 15.476 Homes for the elderly or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8.336); 8.874 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3.013) and Europe (2.363); 10.589 creches; 10.500 marriage counselling centres, mainly in Europe (5.249) and America (2.561); 3.141 social rehabilitation centers, mainly in America (1.391) and 33.677 other kinds of institutes, mainly in America (13.582) and in Europe (15.384).

Ecclesiastical circumscriptions dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches

Ecclesiastical circumscriptions (Metropolitans, Archdioceses, Dioceses, Territorial Abbeys, Apostolic Vicariates, Apostolic Prefectures, Missions *sui iuris*, Territorial Prelatures, Apostolic Administrations and Military Ordinariates) dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization are **1.123** (+2). Most of the ecclesiastical circumscriptions entrusted to the Dicastery based in Piazza di Spagna are in Africa (525) and in Asia (481). Followed by America (71) and Oceania (46).

In the following tables the detail of each Continent

CATHOLIC CHURCH STATISTICS – TABLES 2024

In brackets variations compared to the previous year: increase (+) decrease (-)

World population/Catholics

	Population	Catholics	Percentage
Africa	1.384.373.000 (+15.861.000)	272.423.000 (+7.271.000)	19,7% (+0,32%)
America	1.038.640.000 (+8.275.000)	666.209.000 (+5.912.000)	64,1% (+0,02%)
Asia	4.650.852.000 (+29.139.000)	154.244.000 (+889.000)	3,3% (-0,02%)
Europe	722.315.000 (-517.000)	285.589.000 (-474.000)	39,5% (-0,08%)
Oceania	42.764.000 (+417.000)	11.108.000 (+123.000)	26,0% (+0,06%)
TOTAL	7.838.944.000 (+53.175.000)	1.389.573.000 (+13.721.000)	17,7% (+0,03%)

**Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)*

Persons/Catholics per priest

	Persons per priest	Catholics per priest
Africa	25.799 (-527)	5.077 (-24)
America	8.717 (+81)	5.592 (+58)
Asia	44.080 (-296)	2.111 (-21)
Europe	4.533 (+45)	1.812 (+28)
Oceania	9.636 (+241)	2.503 (+66)
TOTAL	15.682 (+126)	3.408 (+35)

**Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)*

Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions/Mission Stations

	Ecclesiastical Circumscription	Mission Stations with resident priest	Mission Stations without resident priest
Africa	551 (+6)	604 (+6)	72.691 (-796)
America	1.100 (+2)	506 (-662)	17.954 (-2.071)
Asia	543 (-2)	936 (-56)	32.076 (-3963)
Europe	761 (=)	400 (+5)	452 (-12)
Oceania	81 (=)	88 (=)	842 (=)
TOTAL	3.036 (+6)	2.534 (-707)	124.015 (-6.842)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Bishops

	Total Bishops	Diocesan Bishops	Religious Bishops
Africa	740 (+15)	481 (+8)	259 (+7)
America	2.000 (=)	1.008 (-9)	992 (-9)
Asia	817 (+11)	459 (+10)	358 (+1)
Europe	1.666 (-10)	664 (-6)	1.002 (-4)
Oceania	130 (+6)	70 (+2)	60 (-1)
TOTAL	5.353 (+13)	2.682 (+11)	2.671 (-2)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Priests

	Total Priests	Diocesan Priests	Religious Priests
Africa	(+1.676)	37.349 (+814)	16.310 (+862)
America	(-164)	84.959 (+137)	34.186 (-301)
Asia	(+1.160)	41.338 (+547)	31.573 (+613)
Europe	(-2745)	112.828 (-1924)	44.749 (-821)
Oceania	(-69)	2.697 (-13)	1.741 (-56)
TOTAL	407.730 (-142)	279.171 (-439)	128.559 (+297)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Permanent Deacons

	Total Deacons	Diocesan Permanent Deacons	Religious Permanent Deacons
Africa	499 (+1)	457 (=)	42 (+1)
America	33.065 (-308)	32.911 (+697)	154 (-5)
Asia	354 (+15)	248 (+9)	106 (+6)
Europe	15.705 (+267)	15.397 (+255)	306 (+12)
Oceania	527 (-1)	522 (-1)	5 (=)
TOTAL	50.159 (+974)	49.535 (+960)	615 (+14)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Men and Women Religious

	Men Religious	Women Religious
Africa	9.164 (-229)	83.190 (+1.358)
America	12.914 (+27)	141.281 (-1.358)
Asia	12.880 (+251)	175.568 (+74)
Europe	13.485 (-382)	193.178 (-7.012)
Oceania	971 (-27)	6.011 (-225)
TOTAL	49.414 (-360)	599.228 (-9.730)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Members of Secular Institutes

	Members of Secular Institutes Male	Members of Secular Institutes Female
Africa	97 (+18)	1.241 (-80)
America	169 (-9)	4.912 (-79)
Asia	54 (+9)	1.809 (+29)
Europe	289 (-1)	10.986 (-497)
Oceania	1 (=)	7 (-48)
TOTAL	610 (+17)	18.955 (-733)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Lay Missionaries and Catechists

	Lay Missionaries	Catechists
Africa	8.686 (+94)	478.112 (+19.553)
America	351.893 (+3.401)	1.534.293 (-16.010)
Asia	46.154 (-198)	357.917 (-16.951)
Europe	6.415 (-6882)	466.761 (-14.541)
Oceania	136 (+7)	12.499 (-121)
TOTAL	413.286 (+2.837)	2.849.582 (-28.070)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Major Seminarians – Diocesan and Religious

	Major Seminarians	Diocesan Major Seminarians	Religious Major Seminarians
Africa	34.541 (+726)	22.523 (+282)	12.018 (+444)
America	27.738 (-921)	19.144 (-864)	8.594 (-57)
Asia	31.767 (-375)	15.119 (-417)	16.648 (+45)
Europe	13.461 (-859)	7.515 (-650)	5.946 (-209)
Oceania	974 (+12)	607 (+4)	367 (+8)
TOTAL	108.481 (-1.414)	64.908 (-1.645)	43.573 (+231)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Minor Seminarians – Diocesan and Religious

	Minor Seminarians	Diocesan Minor Seminarians	Religious Minor Seminarians
Africa	55.529 (+1.065)	48.044 (+929)	7.484 (+136)
America	9.296 (-475)	6.390 (-387)	2.906 (-88)
Asia	22.548 (-978)	13.081 (-692)	9.467 (-286)
Europe	7.605 (-153)	4.787 (-184)	2.818 (+31)
Oceania	183 (-12)	159 (-5)	24 (-7)
TOTAL	95.161 (-553)	72.462 (-339)	22.699 (-214)

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Catholic Schools and Pupils

	INFANT Schools	INFANT Pupils	PRIMARY Schools	PRIMARY Pupils	SECONDARY Schools	SECONDARY Pupils	HIGH SCHOOL Pupils	UNIVERSIT. Students
Africa	20.675	2.806.110	44.323	20.597.079	17.237	6.761.658	181.257	283.372
America	15.535	1.282.861	21.490	5.690.274	11.909	3.485.463	679.213	2.464.646
Asia	13.519	1.603.902	16.080	5.636.422	11.672	5.961.213	1.308.376	572.668
Europe	23.129	1.839.612	16.065	3.031.190	9.293	3.865.048	283.625	916.957
Oceania	1.464	89.995	4.231	774.946	740	493.520	8.522	37.845
TOTAL	74.322	7.622.480	102.189	35.729.911	50.851	20.566.902	2.460.993	3.925.393

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Hospital/clinics, charity work, welfare

	Hospitals	Dispensaries	Leprosy centers	Homes for the elderly/ chronically ill, disabled	Orphanages	Kindergartens	Marriage counsel centers	Catholic schools	Other institutes
Africa	1.604	5.172	205	666	1.156	2.174	1.465	257	1.181
America	1.392	3.433	39	3.441	2.226	2.695	2.561	1.391	13.582
Asia	1.168	2.524	260	2.679	3.013	2.705	1.039	501	3.071
Europe	1.008	2.515	20	8.336	2.363	2.846	5.249	915	15.384
Oceania	240	563	1	354	116	169	186	77	459
TOTAL	5.420	14.205	525	15.476	8.874	10.589	10.500	3.141	33.677

*Data «Church's Book of Statistics» 2024 (updated to December 31, 2022)

Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions dependent on the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches (updated to the latest change)

	M	AD	D	AT	VA	PA	MSI	PT	AA	OM	TOT
Africa	94	3	403	-	18	3	1	-	-	3	525
America	5	-	22	-	40	1	2	1	-	-	71
Asia	79	1	342	1	17	33	3	-	4	2	482
Oceania	11	-	31	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	46
TOTAL	189	4	797	1	75	38	8	1	4	6	1123

Key

M	<i>Metropolitan Arcidiocese</i>
AD	<i>Arcidiocese</i>
D	<i>Diocese</i>
AT	<i>Territorial Abbeys</i>
VA	<i>Apostolic Vicariates</i>
PA	<i>Apostolic Prefecture</i>
MSI	<i>Missio sui iuris</i>
PT	<i>Territorial Prelature</i>
AA	<i>Apostolic Administration</i>
OM	<i>Military Ordinariate</i>

Fides Agency, 17/10/2024