

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



President János Áder addresses the 52nd Eucharistic Congress

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**52nd Eucharistic Congress events**

**Áder meets Constantinople Ecumenical Patriarch**

**Coronavirus updates**

## TOP STORY

# ÁDER: SEEKING GOD REQUIRES ACTIVE WORK

Seeking and receiving God is a process of active work, President János Áder said in his testimony at the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress on Friday.

The president made a now under way in Budapest, and said that “many think that God will help them by sitting down on a bench next to them or approaching them in the street, asking how He can help”. “But faith cannot be passive,” he added. “We are all given signs, and it is up to us whether they turn out to be just a tale or a parable ... it is up to us whether to take it as fortuity or the work of God’s hand”. “If you abide by God’s laws and use the talents entrusted to you well, if you seek God not as a physical reality but in your heart and soul, and through your deeds, you shall find Him,” the president said. Quoting from Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato si’*, Áder said that “we are in a close communion with all creatures on our way towards God’s eternal light”. In his testimony, the president also commemorated the over 30,000 Hungarian victims of the coronavirus pandemic, making a special mention of some 1,000 children who lost both parents to the epidemic.

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## **ORBÁN: PROTECTION OF CARPATHIAN BASIN HUNGARIANS' CENTURIES- LONG MISSION**

"Hungarians have never lost sight of their mission," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán declared in a speech on Thursday at Budapest's Mathias Corvinus Collegium. Orbán said the 21st century belonged to Asia though Europe was proudly bearing "its spiritual primacy". The United States, meanwhile, was used to global economic and military leadership role, he added. He said the West had bestrode the globe for 400 years with a sense of exceptionalism and a mission which gave it inspiration and self-confidence. But at the start of the 21st century Western civilisation had started to confront serious challenges, he added. A "woke" neo-Marxism, he said, was taking hold in America, while Europe was beset by a Muslim demographic, political and economic tide, creating a new state of affairs in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Austria. The West, said Orbán, was not up to the task of providing adequate political solutions to such problems. "We central Europeans, in short, believe that the West has gradually lost faith in its own mission," he said. It no longer seeks meaning in its own history but instead reinterprets or obliterates certain periods with a sense of shame, while failing to discover alternatives. Recalling Karl

Popper's ideas on the "open society", Orbán insisted that Popper saw any special value or historical mission attached to the nation or political community as open society's enemy. This, he said, was perhaps the most influential and destructive Western kind of thinking after the second world war. The concept of an open society robbed the West of its belief in its own values and historical mission, the prime minister said. Amid the current "Muslim tide" and the rise of Asia, the West is unable to confront its own mission, he added. Orbán argued that central Europeans believed that, without a mission, they were destined to failure. He said that historically, Hungarians had taken on the mission of ensuring the coexistence and prosperity of the peoples living in the Carpathian Basin and to make sure it was not enfolded in the political and cultural framework of the German or Ottoman world. He noted the Tatar invasions, Muslim invasions in the Middle Ages, the Nazi occupation, the Soviet occupation and the anti-Christian nature of the decades of communism. The protection of the Carpathian Basin and Christianity was a mission of national, central European and even European significance, he said.

The prime minister said Christianity was about faith and the ways of life inspired and formed by faith; Christian democracy was about ways of life that had grown out of societies imbued with the Christian faith, he said. Accordingly, central Europe, he said, had a different outlook on life

and its esteem of the nation. Orbán said western European leaders saw differences of opinion over gender, migration and national sovereignty as developmental backwardness. "But they don't get that we're talking about a deep cultural, geopolitical and philosophical difference." Orbán said Hungarians saw their work as a personal profession on which their life depended, "bringing us together towards a common fate", providing "endless self-esteem". Addressing the students, he said the duty of a spiritual people was to understand this mission and to reflect on it and its changing forms in public affairs, he said.

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## **SEMJÉN MEETS CONSTANTINOPLE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH IN BUDAPEST**

Eastern and Western Christianity in Hungary have always recognised and respected each other, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén said at his meeting with Constantinople Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I in Budapest on Friday. According to public news channel M1's coverage of the meeting, the deputy PM in charge of church policy noted that Hungary's King Stephen was venerated by the Orthodox Church in 2000, making him the first shared saint of the East and the West since the Great Schism of 1054. "Hungary will never forget this gift from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I," Semjén

said. Bartholomew underscored the close ties between the Constantinople Patriarchate and the Hungarian state which he said could be traced back to King St. Stephen.

### **SYRIAN ARCHBISHOP RECEIVES HIGH STATE DECORATION**

Mor Nicodemus Daoud Matti Sharaf, Archbishop of Mosul, on Friday received the Order of Merit of Hungary, Middle Cross, from Tristan Azbej, state secretary at the Prime Minister's Office in charge of aid for persecuted Christian communities and the Hungary Helps programme. The order, given on behalf of President János Áder, is in recognition of the archbishop's role in promoting Hungary's reputation in the world, as well as of his contribution to efforts aimed at assisting Christian communities in Syria and Iraq, and of his endeavours towards reconciliation between religious denominations in Iraq.

### **KÖVÉR SENDS CONDOLENCES OVER NORTH MACEDONIA HOSPITAL FIRE**

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér has sent a letter of sympathy to Talat Xhaferi, his North Macedonian counterpart, over a recent fire in the Covid centre of Tetovo which claimed 14 lives. According to the letter seen by MTI on Friday, Kövér said: "We will

have the victims and their families in our prayers at these difficult times and wish a speedy and full recovery to the injured." The fire in Tetovo broke out on Wednesday night.

### **SEMJÉN LAUDS WORK OF MALTESE CHARITY**

Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, at an event held on the sidelines of the International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest, praised the work of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, highlighting its support of persecuted Christians. Persecuted Christians in the East must be aided in their homeland to ensure that Christianity does not disappear from the Holy Land, the deputy PM in charge of church policy told the event held for Middle Eastern church leaders attending the 52nd Eucharistic Congress. Christians who have had to flee their homelands need to be helped in a way that allows them to live a full life here and integrate into Hungarian society, Semjén said. The deputy prime minister highlighted the support of persecuted Hungarians as the charity organisation's second main activity, noting the help it had provided Transylvanian Hungarians during the Romanian Revolution of 1989 and its help in the evacuation of Hungarians from Venezuela. Semjén praised the charity for having taken in many of the Hungarians who had fled to Venezuela after the failed anti-Soviet uprising of 1956. He also lauded the charity service's efforts to aid the

homeless and those struggling with drug or alcohol addictions. Semjén said the Hungarian government supported religious charities in the same way it did state-run aid organisations, adding that half of all social services in Hungary were now church-run.

### **KOVÁCS: MOST SURVEY PARTICIPANTS REJECT MIGRANT QUOTAS**

Almost all respondents to the government's National Consultation public survey have indicated their objection to any form of mandatory distribution of illegal migrants across the European Union, the state secretary for international communication and relations said in a video published on Facebook on Friday. Zoltán Kovács said that out of the over 1.4 million respondents, fully 1,388,227, or 99%, said that they approved of the government's position on rejecting any such plans. "This is a convincing vote against," he said. Fully 98% of the respondents said that illegal migration should be prevented from further aggravating the coronavirus situation, the state secretary said. An equal proportion of respondents said that "Soros organisations" should be prevented from promoting illegal migration, he added. Altogether 98% supported the government's readiness to enter into debates with Brussels and "protect the Hungarian people's position" on other subjects, Kovács said.

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## **SOCIALIST PARLT OFFICIAL QUERIES SECURITY AGENCY ON PEGASUS SPYWARE**

Attila Mesterházy, the Socialist deputy head of parliament's foreign affairs committee, on Friday turned to the director general of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (ÁH) to ask about the use of the Israeli-made Pegasus spyware in Hungary. Mesterházy told an online news conference after his meeting with Szabolcs Bárdos, the office's director general, that he had not been told whether the Hungarian government was using the spyware. Neither was the director general authorised to reveal whether those named in the media had actually been surveilled using Pegasus, he added. The politician said he had been told by Bárdos that no lawmaker had been under surveillance in the recent period. He also cited the ÁH director general as saying that the agency did not select its targets based on their job or position. If the AH wants to surveil someone, it must turn to the Special Service for National Security and obtain permission from a court or the justice minister, Mesterházy cited Bárdos as saying.

Mesterházy said that because surveillance tools like Pegasus were being used by the Special Service for National Security, he had set up a meeting with the head of that

agency for next week. He also said he had requested an appointment with the justice minister a month and a half ago, but had yet to receive a reply. Mesterházy proposed that parliament's national security committee set up an investigative committee to look into the Pegasus case. Last month, data protection authority NAIH said it had launched an official investigation into press reports that the spyware licenced by the Israeli NSO Group had been used to hack the mobile phones of specific targets in multiple countries.

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## **HUNGARY RECORDS 323 NEW CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS, 6 DEATHS**

Six patients died over the past 24 hours of a Covid-related illness, while 323 new coronavirus infections were registered, [koronavirus.gov.hu](http://koronavirus.gov.hu) said on Friday. So far 5,834,961 people have received a first jab, while 5,541,598 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 487,000 Hungarians have already received booster jabs. The number of active infections stands at 6,006, while hospitals are treating 220 Covid patients, 30 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 814,732 infections have been registered, while fatalities have risen to 30,086. Fully 778,640 people have made a recovery. There are 2,868 people in official quarantine, while 6,679,227 tests have been officially carried out.

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## **WWII SOVIET SOLDIERS REBURIED IN BUDAPEST**

Twenty-two Soviet soldiers who died in the second world war were reburied with military honours at the Fiume Street Cemetery on Friday. The remains of the soldiers were discovered in recent years during construction works in Budapest, Kecskemét, Székesfehérvár, Veszprém, and other towns in Hungary. The ceremony was attended by Evgeny Stanislavov, Russia's ambassador to Hungary, who noted in his address that the Soviet Red Army had lost some 140,000 soldiers in battles in Hungary. András József Balogh, the defence ministry's cabinet chief, said that Soviet soldiers who died in Hungary and Hungarians buried in Russia "are no longer enemies". "Giving them the final honours is not an option but a duty," he said, adding that the gesture was also stipulated in a Hungary-Russia intergovernmental agreement.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY ONE OF WORLD'S AUTOMOTIVE CENTRES**

Hungary is home to one of the centres of the global automotive industry, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said on Friday, addressing a jubilee celebration of Audi Hungaria. The sector, he added, was crucial in restarting the national economy. Péter Szijjártó said that the sector had increased its production by 31% in the first half of 2021, and by the end

of the year, for the first time ever, its total value could exceed 10,000 billion forints (EUR 285.1bn). Szijjártó said that 90.5% of the sector's products were sold abroad, Hungary being the world's third largest exporter of petrol engines, the fifth in terms of batteries and sixth of diesel engines. "Audi greatly contributes to the exceptional international competitiveness of Hungary's automotive sector," he said, noting that Hungary was "no longer just a place for making parts or assembly" and that Hungarian engineers contributed to global developments. He added that Audi was planning on expanding developments at its plant in Győr, in north-western Hungary, focusing on electromobility and digitisation. The automotive sector is also expected to contribute to the government's plan to increase Hungary's GDP to 5.5% this year, the minister said. The Audi Hungaria factory in Győr is Audi AG's third largest development

center worldwide, employing over 500 developers.

### **TOURISM AGENCY HAILS DOMESTIC SECTOR'S 'STRONGEST EVER' SUMMER SEASON**

Hungary's domestic tourism sector had its strongest ever summer season this year, the head of the Hungarian Tourism Agency said on Friday. The number of guest nights at commercial accommodations in Hungary came close to 15 million over the summer, up 25% from 2020, Zoltán Guller told a press conference. Commercial lodgings registered almost 5 million guests this summer, 1 million of whom were foreign tourists, Guller said. Travellers spent 360 billion forints (EUR 1.03bn) during the summer, up 25% from last year and up 10% from 2019, he said. Guller said Hungary's tourism sector was now performing better than it had before the pandemic.

### **RETAIL LENDING STOCK RISES 16% IN Q2**

Retail lending increased by 15.8% in the twelve months to the end of June, and was 424 billion higher in the second quarter alone, according to a central bank report released on Friday. Lending increased at the highest rate in the European Union during the period, National Bank of Hungary (NBH) department head Bálint Dancsik said, presenting the NBH'S latest report on lending trends. Adjusted for the impact of a repayment moratorium, the retail loan portfolio still grew by more than 7%, he added. Housing mortgages came to 364 billion forints in Q2, a new record, as borrowers brought home purchases forward amid the rise in home prices, concerns over inflation and higher interest rates. Almost two-thirds of banks said they expect a further pickup in demand for home loans.