

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Tamás Vasvári

Pope Francis waves to the crowd on his way to the closing mass of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest

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TOP STORY

POPE FRANCIS CLOSES INTL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

In his celebration of the closing mass of the International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest, Pope Francis expressed his wish that the Cross be “the bridge between the past and the future” for those gathered for the event.

Before reciting the Angelus prayer at the end of the mass on Heroes’ Square, the pope said the feeling of religion was what gave life to the Hungarian nation. However, the Cross planted in the ground “not only invites us to be well-rooted, but also reaches high and extends its arms to everyone”, he said. “The Cross invites us to be firm in our roots, but we must not be satisfied with this,” the pope said, adding that the faithful should also “draw from the fountain and give drink to those who thirst in our time”. “My wish is that you be grounded and open, rooted and considerate,” Francis said. He said the Mission Cross called on the faithful to preach the Gospel and the message of God’s eternal love. “In today’s world hungry for love, this is the nourishment that all Hungarians crave,” he said. The pope thanked what he described as “the great Hungarian Christian family”, which he said he wanted to “embrace in its rites, its history, its brothers and sisters, both Catholic and those of other confessions: all journeying towards full unity”.

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ORBÁN MEETS POPE FRANCIS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán asked Pope Francis not to let Christian Hungary perish at his meeting with the pontiff in Budapest on Sunday, the PM's press chief said. Pope Francis was in Budapest to celebrate the closing mass of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress. At the meeting at the Museum of Fine Arts, Orbán presented Francis a copy of the letter Hungarian King Béla IV wrote to Pope Innocent IV in the 13th century, Bertalan Havasi said.

Pope Francis also met with President János Áder, Hungarian bishops and the delegations of the Ecumenical Council of Hungarian Churches and Hungarian Jewish organisations at the museum. At his meeting with Orbán and Áder, which was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, Pope Francis was accompanied by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin and Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, the Vatican's foreign minister.

The Vatican said the "cordial" meeting lasted about 40 minutes. Pope Francis and the Hungarian officials discussed the "role of the Church in the country, the commitment to the protection of the environment, and the protection and promotion of the family", it said. Pope Francis presented Áder with a mosaic depicting the "Papal Blessing in St. Peter's Square", the Vatican said.

POPE FRANCIS PRAISES COURAGE OF HUNGARIAN SAINTS IN CLOSING MASS OF INTL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

Pope Francis highlighted the courage of Saint Stephen, Hungary's first Christian King, and Elizabeth of Hungary as examples of meeting Jesus Christ at the closing mass of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest on Sunday. Francis called on the faithful gathered for the mass in Heroes' Square to "allow the meeting with Jesus to transform us in the eucharist the way it transformed the great and courageous saints whom you respect like Saint Stephen and Saint Elizabeth".

"Like them, we should not settle for little," the pontiff said. "We should not settle for a faith that consists only of rituals and repetitions." Francis said that although the Eucharistic Congress marked the end of a journey, it should, more importantly, mark "the beginning of another". He said the meaning of God was not found in the catechism but required "a vital personal response".

The pope said that although the Cross had never been "fashionable", it brought "inner healing". He said the debates and fights around the Cross were a clash of God's logic and the world's logic. God's logic, he said, was "humble love". God's path is "free of all compulsions" and seeks what is good for others, the pontiff said. Meanwhile,

the world's logic, he said, sought appreciation, prerogatives, favourable judgement and success. Pope Francis said the difference was not about who was or wasn't religious, but between the "true God" and "the god of oneself".

The mass was also attended by President János Áder, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, Speaker of Parliament László Kövér, Tamás Sulyok, the head of the Constitutional Court, András Varga, the head of the Kúria, Hungary's supreme court, Justice Minister Judit Varga, Defence Minister Tibor Benkő, state secretary for church and minority relations Miklós Soltész, former president Pál Schmitt, Zoltán Lomnici, head of the Human Dignity Council civil group, and Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony, among others.

On his way to the mass, Francis Pope Francis greeted crowds in Budapest in the open-topped popemobile. Many in the crowd waved Hungarian, Szekler, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese and Vatican flags. Hungarian public media's Rome correspondent said Pope Francis called his trip to Budapest "a visit to the heart of Europe".

Pope Francis's plane departed Budapest for Bratislava on Sunday afternoon. The pontiff arrived at Liszt Ferenc International Airport in the morning where he was greeted with military honours and by church and state delegations. At the airport, Pope Francis was seen off by a church delegation consisting of Michael August Blume, the Apostolic Nuncio to Budapest; Cardinal Péter

Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest; and András Veres, the head of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference; as well as a state delegation comprising Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, Human Resources Minister Miklós Kásler and state secretary for church and minority relations Miklós Soltész.

POPE FRANCIS URGES CHRISTIANS, JEWS TO UNITE AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

Pope Francis urged Christians and Jews to take a united stand against anti-Semitism in Europe at a meeting with the delegations of the Ecumenical Council of Hungarian Churches (MEÖT) and Hungarian Jewish organisations in Budapest on Sunday. The pontiff was in the Hungarian capital to celebrate the closing mass of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress. In his speech, Francis compared the relationship between Christians and Jews to the Chain Bridge linking the Buda and Pest sides of Budapest. He said Jews and Christians no longer wanted to see each other as strangers but as friends. The two communities must fight anti-Semitism together to prevent the "waves of hate" from damaging their relationship, he said. "Only if we become roots of peace and shoots of unity, will we prove credible in the eyes of the world, which look to us with a yearning that can bring hope to blossom," the pope added. "Whenever we were tempted to absorb the other,

we were tearing down instead of building up," he said. Francis noted that Sunday's meeting was taking place between Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, and Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of atonement. He said people and communities should build bridges while respecting everyone's religious freedom instead of living in isolation.

In his greeting to the pope, Reformed Church Bishop József Steinbach, who heads the MEÖT, said Pope Francis's visit to Hungary was a blessing for the country's Christians. Steinbach said God's gift of Jesus Christ to humanity mandated Christians to show love to and look out for each other, respect life and protect God's creation. The bishop asked for heavenly strength and blessing on the life and service of Pope Francis. The MEÖT presented the pope a facsimile of the Vizsoly Bible, the oldest surviving complete Bible translated into Hungarian.

A message from Chief Rabbi of Hungary Róbert Frölich, who was recently hospitalised, was read out by Chief Rabbi Zoltán Radnóti. In his message, Frölich wrote that despite the conflicts of the past, the common religious heritage and sacred traditions of Judaism and Christianity served as a beacon for the future of humanity. Jews and Christians both know what it is like to be persecuted for their faith, the chief rabbi wrote, adding that they had also seen many times in the course of history that those who have God's love and fear in their hearts "see the divine spark in others, respect man

and the image of God, and turn to their fellow man with true love". Over the past decades Jews and Christians have done a lot to "break down the walls that separate them" and to see each other as friends, he added. The Jewish organisations gave Francis a silver Torah pointer.

The MEÖT's delegation included, among others, Zoltán Balog, the head of the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church; Bishop Tamás Fabiny of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary; Bishop Péter Kondor, the deputy head of the MEÖT; János Papp, head of the Hungarian Baptist Church; Albert Pataky, head of the Hungarian Pentecostal Church; Vilmos Fischl, secretary general of the MEÖT; as well as representatives of the Hungarian Methodist, Anglican and Orthodox churches. Hungary's Jewish organisations were represented by András Heisler, the head of Jewish federation Mazsihisz; Chief Rabbi Zoltán Radnóti; and Gergő Guba and Gábor Kálmán of the Reform congregations.

ORBÁN: HUNGARY WILL DEFEND EUROPE'S BORDERS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán issued a pledge to defend Europe's borders on Saturday, the 20th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States. "Hungary will defend Europe's borders. We are working to ensure that what happened 20 years ago in New York will never happen

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again,” Orbán said in a statement released by the prime minister’s press office.

“Two decades after the terrorist attacks in New York, it is still with a heavy heart that we remember the thousands of innocent victims. September 11, 2001, proved that the peace and security of Christian civilization is something we have to fight for every day,” he said. “After these sad events in 2001, Hungary was one of the first countries in Europe to take on a role in the fight against terrorism, and we supported our allies in NATO operations to the best of our ability,” he added. “The 2015 European migration crisis brought terror to Europe as well. And now, what is happening in Afghanistan is again a cause for concern for us all. The security threat level is rising, and instability in the region poses significant risks to Europe,” Orbán said.

**CARDINAL MARINI:
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
‘SHOWS TRUE FACE’
IN BUDAPEST**

Cardinal Piero Marini said the Christian community has “shown its true face”, one of “inclusion and openness”, in Budapest, thanks as well to the presence of Pope Francis, speaking at the closing mass of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress on Sunday. “We have all come here, to gather around the altar, from different cultures and traditions,” Marini, who heads the Pontifical Committee for

International Eucharistic Congresses, said at the mass celebrated on Heroes’ Square. The “dream of a church whose doors are open” has been realised, the cardinal said, making reference to the pope’s apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. The believers, after taking “the bread of life”, return to their homes, their schools, their offices, to heal others and lift them up with words of peace and acts of reconciliation, he added. The cardinal said the Holy Spirit “gives us today again the courage to stand before the world in the way of Jesus”, who at the Last Supper demonstrated that “we must not reign, but serve; we do not belong to the rulers of this world, but are the children of God’s Kingdom”. The salvation that comes from the eucharist, Marini said, becomes a “eucharistic culture”, capable of mobilising men and women of good will to reach out to the poor, work for peace, be stewards of the creation, be generous in ecumenical dialogues and share in difficulties.

**CARDINAL ERDŐ CALLS
FOR UNIFIED TESTIMONY
OF EASTERN, WESTERN
CHRISTIANITY**

The world today has a “desperate need” for a unified testimony of Eastern and Western Christianity, Cardinal Péter Erdő said in a mass celebrated during the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest on Saturday. “Such is the will of Christ who prayed for His followers to be one,” Erdő said in Kossuth Square, in front of the

parliament building. Erdő thanked Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, for attending the congress, and called the Orthodox Church leader’s speech ahead of the mass an act “rich with symbolic meaning”. He noted that Bartholomew I had canonised Saint Stephen in the Orthodox Church in Budapest in 2000, adding that Eastern and Western Christianity were still united at the time of the death of Hungary’s first king in 1038.

At the end of mass, Erdő presented a miniature of the congress’s symbol, a cross containing relics of saints from Hungary and neighbouring countries, to Archbishop of Quito Alfredo José Espinoza Mateus. Ecuador will host the next Eucharistic Congress. Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén; Miklós Soltész, the state secretary for church and minority relations; and Bishop Tamás Fabiny of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, also attended the mass. Participants at the mass filled the rows of chairs placed on Kossuth Square, and many also stood around the cordoned-off area and in the side streets leading to the square. After the mass, tens of thousands walked in a candlelight procession to Heroes’ Square.

**BARTHOLOMEW
I: EUCHARISTIC
SPIRITUALITY HAS POWER
TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY**

Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, said eucharistic spirituality has the power to transform society and to meet the challenges

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of the 21st century in a speech in Budapest on Saturday. In the speech delivered ahead of a celebration of holy mass during the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress, the patriarch said that the church gathers believers in a "community of love" in the liturgy of the eucharist, with no regard to race, gender, age or cultural, social and material status. The liturgy is not a meeting of individual believers but of a community of believers with God, a "social event", he added. He noted that the word eucharist means "thanks" in Greek. "It reminds us that our lives and the entirety of creation are not our property but rather they are a precious gift of God the Creator. The proper response for receiving this gift is gratitude and doxology," he said. "The eucharistic spirit has a tremendous transformative power for society. This way of life is the correct answer to major contemporary challenges, such as ecological problems and the violation of human rights," the patriarch said. "In this sense, the initiatives of our church for the protection of the natural environment and the culture of solidarity were not an occasional reaction to the relative problems today, but they are rooted in the eucharistic experience and theology," he added.

KÖVÉR: HUNGARY BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST, WEST

Hungarians have always considered it their mission to act as a bridge between East and West, House Speaker László Kövér said on Saturday, at a meeting

in the parliament building with church leaders visiting Hungary for the 52nd Eucharistic Congress. Kövér noted the infrequency of the presence of so many "committed representatives of fraternity and understanding" in a place of political debate. "I hope that the peace that radiates from your spirits will remain here for all of us in the coming difficult months, in the run-up to the election campaign," he said. Kövér quoted from a letter of Saint Ladislaus in which the Hungarian king conceded his guilt because the "deeds of earthly dignity" - politics, in today's language - cannot be advanced without small indiscretions. If that was how it was with a ruler venerated as a saint, he said, then perhaps today's generations of politicians may also hope for a bit of understanding from church leaders. Everything that Christians believe in is today imperiled by "dark, Satanic forces", Kövér said. Those forces "endanger our civilisation founded on Christianity, our freedom and human dignity," he added. Kövér extended a special welcome to religious leaders from neighbouring countries, saying their presence was "proof that the Christian faith unites the nations in our region and that we can and should build on that foundation".

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH, DEPUTY PM LAY CORNERSTONE OF ORTHODOX CHURCH

Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, and Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén laid the

cornerstone of an Orthodox church in Budapest on Saturday. The church is being constructed in the courtyard of a building in Múzeum Street, in central Budapest, that was given to the Orthodox Church in 2017. Bartholomew I thanked Hungary's government for the building and for funding the construction. He said a Dialogue Centre being established would serve as a place for "discussion, culture, faith and an exchange of views, welcoming all who come with goodwill". Semjén said Hungary has always been "a bridge between East and West, between eastern and western Christianity".

VARGA: EU FINANCE MINISTERS AGREE SUPPORTIVE FISCAL POLICY STILL NEEDED

European Union finance ministers agree that supportive fiscal policy is still necessary for the economic recovery, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said after an informal ECOFIN meeting in Brdo, Slovenia. In a statement released by his ministry, Varga said the finance ministers concurred that a hasty withdrawal of fiscal support - as happened after the 2008 crisis - could hold back the growth of Europe's economies and even lead to another crisis. The ministers endorsed Hungary's position that economic policy should focus on boosting investments, creating jobs and replacing output lost during the crisis with quality, competitive capacities,

he said. The ministers also discussed how member states can make a return to balanced fiscal policy without impairing growth, he added. "The stand of the Hungarian government has been clear from the start: first the economy must be protected, then it must be re-started, and afterwards a gradual return to reducing the budget deficit can be made," he said.

JUSTICE MINISTER WELCOMES REFERENDUM INITIATIVE ON MIGRATION

Justice Minister Judit Varga has welcomed an announcement of Michel Barnier, the European Union's former Brexit negotiator, that he would initiate a referendum on migration later this month. In a bilingual Facebook post, Varga said "just like Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stated in his speech [at the 16th Strategic Forum] in Bled a week ago, Barnier also declared that Member States should now get back their legal sovereignty on migration issues so that their sovereign decisions cannot be overtaken by the Court of Justice of the European Union or the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg". "More and more people dare to express their disagreement on EU institutions interfering in the sovereign decisions of Member States," Varga said. Hungary has maintained from the "very beginning" that "the resettlement of migrants leads to the cultural self-surrender of Europe", built a border fence to protect the country and asked Hungarian citizens on their

opinion in a domestic referendum, she said. Referring to the EU, Varga said "later, they launched an attack against us in both cases. Today, on the other hand, more and more people think that Hungary has made the right decision. In fact, they would all do the same now. We are keen to see future developments," she added.

ÁDER: CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC 'WARNING TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH CREATED WORLD'

President János Áder addressed a festival on environmental protection in Gödöllő, near Budapest, and called the coronavirus pandemic "a clear warning to live in harmony with the created world rather than to exploit and destroy it". "By disturbing and destroying the natural environment, we curb the habitat of viruses and bacteria, thus running the risk of those organisms leaving their original environment and wreaking havoc elsewhere," Áder told the event. The 7th Nature and Environmental protection festival is running between September 10 and 12, with a focus on "the sensitive planet". It will be accompanied by two nature film festivals, focusing on works from the Carpathian Basin and from all over the world, respectively. The two together have received nearly 2,000 entries. The film festivals are dedicated to legendary nature film maker Sir David Attenborough, who turned 95 this year.

DK MEP CALLS FOR INDEPENDENT HEALTH-CARE MINISTRY

Klára Dobrev, an MEP of the opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) party, pledged wage and staff increases in health care and a stand-alone ministry to oversee the sector, if DK gets elected into power next spring. Dobrev, who is running in the pre-election to become the opposition alliance's prime ministerial candidate, and two health experts of the party held an online press conference after meeting representatives of five health-care organisations in Budapest on Friday. "The coronavirus pandemic highlighted the collapse of Hungarian health care," Dobrev said. The strategically important health-care sector needs a specialised ministry, she added. The opposition parties have pledged to raise health-care spending to the EU average ratio of GDP, she said. She said a large-scale staff increase was the first and most important task, pledging to employ an additional 3,000 new doctors, 500 GPs, and 9,000 new health professionals in the coming years.

GOVT OFFICIAL: SINOPHARM, HUNGARY SIGN MOC ON PREPARING VACCINE PRODUCTION

The Hungarian foreign ministry has signed a memorandum of

cooperation with Sinopharm-CNBG, on creating the infrastructure for manufacturing the Sinopharm vaccine in Hungary within ten months, a state secretary of the ministry said. Tamás Menczer signed the document with Sinopharm-CNBG

VP Jiang Xiuchang and Peng Xiao, CEO of Sinopharm's joint venture in the United Arab Emirates. "With our partners in China and the UAE are constantly researching new mutations of the virus, and work on developing the most effective vaccines, the

cooperation gives access to Hungary to new information and provides an opportunity to react quickly and effectively," Menczer said in a post on Facebook. The vaccine is the only weapon against the virus, Menczer said.