



CASUALTIES OF TERRORISM. Above, a Yazidi couple, who were forced to flee their home because of the Islamic State's advance earlier this year, sit in their temporary home at a refugee camp near Zakhō in December in Duhok, Iraq. Incursions by the terrorist group throughout Iraq and Syria have resulted in the obliteration of the 2,000-year-old Christian culture and the liquidation of the region's minorities, including the Yazidis.

Matt Cardy/Getty Images Below, Nigerian people gather at the site of a bomb explosion in November in Kano, Nigeria. The attack from the Islamic militant organization Boko Haram (which means 'Western education is sinful') tore through the central mosque in Nigeria's second-largest city. Earlier in the year, the group kidnapped more than 200 female Christian school students. AP photo/Muhammed Giginyu



FREEDOM AND HOPE. Upper left, Pope Francis blesses Sudanese Christian Meriam Ibrahim and her daughter, Maya, in his St. Martha residence at the Vatican. Ibrahim refused to recant her Christian faith in the face of a death sentence by a *sharia* court, which was later overturned. She left Europe on July 31 and now resides in the United States. ANSA/L'Osservatore Romano Above, Chinese Catholics pray during a service celebrating the assumption of the Virgin Mary at a government-sanctioned church in Beijing. Prior to his first visit to Asia (South Korea), Pope Francis sent a message of goodwill to Chinese President Xi Jinping. There have been no official relations between China and the Vatican since 1949. Kevin Frayer/Getty Images Lower left, pictures of Ukrainian protesters who were killed during demonstrations in Independence Square, or Maidan Square, are viewed in September in Kiev, Ukraine. As of early December, a truce was holding, and permanent peace talks were ongoing. Spencer Platt/Getty Images

2014 in Review

Papal Voyages Bring Hope, as Christians Flee Persecution in Middle East and Africa



SCOURGE OF WEST AFRICA. Emergency-room doctor and Ebola survivor Philip Ireland congratulates fellow survivors after they were released from the JFK Ebola treatment center in October in Monrovia, Liberia. The World Health Organization reported that more than 4,500 people died in 2014 due to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, with a 70% mortality rate for those infected with the virus. John Moore/Getty Images



MESSAGE OF PEACE. Top, Pope Francis, Rabbi Abraham Skorka (second from left) and the rabbi of the Western Wall, Shmuel Rabinovitz, leave the Western Wall compound after the Holy Father prayed there during his May state visit. Lior Mizrahi/Getty Images Above, jubilant Koreans wave as Pope Francis departs after the Mass for peace and reconciliation at Myeong-dong cathedral on Aug. 18 in Seoul, South Korea. Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images

At left, pilgrims sing, wave flags and take pictures of Pope Francis during his visit to Istanbul, Turkey, on Nov. 29. The Holy Father arrived in Turkey at a sensitive moment for the Muslim nation, as it cares for 1.6 million refugees and faces the continued threat of the Islamic State group, which has been advancing into areas near Turkey's southern border. Gokhan Tan/Getty Images



REMEMBRANCE AND RECONCILIATION. Above right, two boys visit the U.S. military cemetery in Normandy, France. June 6 marked the 70th anniversary of the large-scale military operation that led to the liberation of France from the Nazis. Ilia Yefimovich/Getty Images The 100-year anniversary of World War I was also solemnly commemorated. Above left, Msgr. Keith Newton, the ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, and other members of the ordinariate marked five years since Pope Benedict XVI's document *Anglicanorum Coetibus* offered reconciliation to Anglicans. CNA/David Kerr



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