**Cathedrals on Fire**

1. **Notre-Dame de Paris fire:**

On 15 April 2019, , a structure fire broke out beneath the roof of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral in Paris. The cathedral's altar, two pipe organs, and its three 13th-century rose windows suffered little to no damage. Three emergency workers were injured.

The cathedral's altar, two pipe organs, and its three 13th-century rose windows suffered little to no damage. Three emergency workers were injured. The medieval cathedral of Notre-Dame is one of France's most famous landmarks. The 850-year-old Gothic building's spire and roof have collapsed but the main structure, including the two bell towers has been saved.

Visibly emotional, Mr. Macron said the "worst had been avoided" and vowed to launch an international fundraising scheme to rebuild the cathedral. French president said that the cathedral would be restored by 2024, and launched a fundraising campaign which brought in pledges of over €1 billion as of 22 April 2019.

Officials say it could be linked to the renovation work that began after cracks appeared in the stone, sparking fears the structure could become unstable. Paris prosecutor's office said it had opened an inquiry into "accidental destruction by fire". A firefighter was seriously injured while tackling the blaze.

No other site represents France quite like Notre-Dame. Its main rival as a national symbol, the Eiffel Tower, is little more than a century old. Notre-Dame has stood tall above Paris since the 1200s.

It has given its name to one of the country's literary masterpieces. Victor Hugo's The Hunchback of Notre-Dame is known to the French simply as Notre-Dame de Paris.

The last time the cathedral suffered major damage was during the French Revolution. It survived two world wars largely unscathed.

Watching such an embodiment of the permanence of a nation burn and its spire collapse is profoundly shocking to any human person.

In pictures: Blaze at Notre-Dame

1. **Another Cathedral - the St Peter and St. Paul Cathedral is in flames:**

A fire at the cathedral in the French city of Nantes is believed to have been started deliberately. Three fires were started at the site and an investigation into suspected arson is under way, Prosecutor Pierre Sennes said.

The blaze destroyed stained glass windows and the grand organ at the Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul cathedral, which dates from the 15th Century. It came a year after the devastating fire at Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris.

The fire began in the early morning, with massive flames visible from outside the building. More than 100 firefighters brought it under control after several hours.

But the local fire chief said the fire in Nantes had been contained and was "not a Notre-Dame scenario".

President Emmanuel Macron has reacted, tweeting: "After Notre-Dame, the St Peter and St. Paul Cathedral is in flames. Support to the firefighters who are taking all the risks to save the Gothic jewel."

Mr Sennes said the national police would be involved in the investigation and a fire expert was travelling to Nantes

This is not the first fire at the cathedral. It was damaged by Allied bombing in 1944, during World War Two, and then in 1972 its roof was largely destroyed. It was rebuilt 13 years later with a concrete structure replacing the wooden roof. In 2015 a huge fire destroyed part of the 19th Century basilica of Saint-Donatien in Nantes.

Arson suspected in fire that destroyed historic Nantes cathedral in France A French prosecutor said the fire started in three separate places. They treated it as a criminal act.

Many of the tourists and people there said the fire reminded them of the devastating fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris last year.

**Arrested:**

An investigation had been opened for "arson" after the fire that damaged St. Peter and Paul's Cathedral on Saturday, July 18. One week to the day after the fire in Nantes Cathedral, the African volunteer who was taken into French police custody shortly after the blaze and then released, has now been charged with the crime.

Police arrested the 39-year-old on July 26 after he "admitted during the first interrogation before the investigating judge that he had lit the three fires," said Pierre Sennès, the public prosecutor in Nantes. The man, who migrated to France from Rwanda, was indicted for "damage, deterioration or destruction by fire".

1. **Why Churches are on Fire?**

France, which was often called “the Church’s oldest daughter”, is now a country where cathedrals and churches are catching fire all too regularly. According to Dominican Father Stanisław Tasiemski, the burning churches are a symbol of the more frequent attacks on the Christian faith. “It all points to the fact that we are unfortunately facing an attack on the heart of Europe, on its core.

Faith is what Europe was breathing for centuries and it is an attempt to take away Europe’s soul. The soul, which once bore great fruits for the world”, said Father Tasiemski.

Fires, acts of blasphemy and hooliganism towards the Christian churches and symbols are becoming an ever more common everyday reality in France.

In the wake of the fire last week that gutted Notre Dame, questions are being raised about the state of thousands of other cathedrals, palaces and village spires that have turned France — as well as Italy, Britain and Spain — into open air museums of Western civilization.

If even an iconic building like Notre Dame could not be protected from devastation, if such a potent symbol of France had to scramble for maintenance funds, that lays bare a culture of apathy that can undermine a shared history as well as the multibillion-dollar tourism industry upon which much of Europe depends.

Some say the wake-up call, not just for Europe but the whole world, rang in Paris.

Sneska Quaedvlieg-Mihailovicis, head of the Europa Nostra heritage foundation said, it was “as if Notre Dame decided to set itself on fire to ring the alarm bell, as if she wanted to sacrifice herself for the cause.”

1. **Catholics dropping down in number!**

Catholics, Protestants in Germany leaving their Churches in record numbers More than 270,000 people in each denomination formally abandon organized religion.

The daughter of a Protestant father and a Catholic mother who converted to Protestantism, Lara was raised in the faith. But she was never very observant. “I see in the Christian religion a set of values, and the divine presence is reassuring to me. Even so, I don't feel the need to honor it with religious services," she says.

This is why the 30-year-old Berlin woman wants to leave the Church soon by being removed from the administrative registers. Like her, an increasing number of Germans are turning their backs on the institution. According to statistics published on June 26 by the German Bishops' Conference (DBK) and the Evangelical Church...

‘Europe was once home to most of the world's Catholics, but that is no longer the case. In 1910, 65% of all Catholics lived on the continent. But a century later, in 2010, the share of the world's Catholics living in Europe dropped to 24%.

Over the 2010-2050 period, Christians will remain the largest religious group with 30.7% of the world's population. However, Islam will grow faster and become 29.7% of the world's population. ... “In the United States, Christians will decline from more than three-quarters of the population in 2010 to two-thirds in 2050.”

The decline of Christianity is an ongoing trend in West and North Europe. Developed countries with modern, secular educational facilities in the post-World War II era have shifted towards post-Christian, secular, globalized, multicultural and multi-faith societies.

Infant baptism has declined in many nations, with thousands of churches closing or merging due to lack of attendees. There is also evidence of decline in North America (especially in Canada) and in Australia. Despite the decline, Christianity remains the dominant religion in the Western world, where 70% of the population is Christian.

In addition, according to a 2012 Pew Research Center survey, within the next four decades, Christianity will remain the world's largest religion. This is due to the birthrate of Christians and due to Christian evangelism (Christians have 2.7 children per woman, which is above the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman).

Europe’s march towards a post-Christian society has been starkly illustrated by research showing a majority of young people in a dozen countries do not follow a religion.

The survey of 16- to 29-year-olds found the Czech Republic is the least religious country in Europe, with 91% of that age group saying they have no religious affiliation. Between 70% and 80% of young adults in Estonia, Sweden and the Netherlands also categorize themselves as non-religious.

The most religious country is Poland, where 17% of young adults define themselves as non-religious, followed by Lithuania with 25%.