

Daily media briefing

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Mon, 11 Sep 2023

[Vatican orders investigation into Catholic clerics linked to abuse, Swiss Bishops' Conference says](#)

The Vatican has ordered an investigation into high-ranking Catholic clerics in Switzerland in connection with sexual abuse, the Swiss Bishops' Conference said on Sunday.

Associated Press

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[Father arrested over death threats after French school sends daughter home for wearing banned abaya](#)

The father of a girl who was turned away from a French state school for wearing the banned abaya has been arrested for allegedly making death threats to its headmaster.

The Telegraph*

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[Australia: Catholic Archbishop rejects claims he is being 'dishonest' at inquiry into institutional child sexual abuse](#)

The difficulties survivors of child sexual abuse face when attempting to pursue justice is a reality of complexities of the church, the Catholic Archbishop of Perth has said.

ABC News

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Syrian Druze protesters condemn Assad at mass rally

About 2,000 anti-government protesters have rallied in southern Syria and torn down a portrait of President Bashar al-Assad in a city square. It was the latest protest to grip the city of Suweida, a region mainly populated by the minority Druze sect

BBC

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Inside Modi's India: Hindu nationalism has deepened the faultlines

Beyond the swagger of the G20 summit, the Indian prime minister's populist touch has a dark side.

The Times*

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Fri, 8 Sep 2023

Safeguarding concerns about Mike Pilavachi substantiated, review concludes

The founder of Soul Survivor, Canon Mike Pilavachi, exhibited "coercive and controlling behaviour" that led to inappropriate relationships, the physical wrestling of youths, and the massaging of young male interns, the Church of England's safeguarding investigation has concluded.

Church Times*

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Muslim Abaya dress ban: French alert over 'hostile Turkish propaganda'

Security services have alerted the government to an increase in anti-French rhetoric on social and traditional media, much of it originating from Turkey, after schools began prohibiting teenage pupils from wearing Muslim robes.

The Times*

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Drop antisemitic descriptions from Spanish lexicon, urge Jewish groups

More than 20 Jewish groups from Spanish-speaking countries and beyond have written to Spain's leading linguistic authority asking it to remove antisemitic definitions from its dictionary that describe a judío (Jew) as "a greedy or money-lending person" and the related term judiada as a synonym for "dirty trick".

The Guardian

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Outrage over Palestinian President's antisemitic speech on Jews and Holocaust

German and Israeli officials have condemned Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for comments he made about Jews and the Nazi Holocaust in a speech.

BBC

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Former Sri Lankan president denies that suicide bombings were staged to enable his election

Former Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Thursday denied allegations in a British television program that Islamic State-inspired extremists were used to carry out suicide bomb attacks in 2019 to create insecurity in the country and help him win election later that year.

Associated Press

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South Korean cult Grace Road Church members arrested in Fiji

Four suspected high-ranking members of a South Korean doomsday cult have been arrested in Fiji.

BBC

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Mali jihadists kill at least 64 people amid growing Islamist threat

Attacks by suspected jihadists on an army base and a passenger boat on the Niger river in northern Mali killed 64 people, a Malian official has said.

The Guardian

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New Orleans priest who admitted to sexually abusing minors faces criminal charges

A retired Catholic priest from New Orleans who years ago secretly admitted to church leaders that he sexually molested or harassed numerous children is now facing criminal charges.

The Guardian

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Mexico supreme court decriminalizes abortion across country

Mexico's supreme court has unanimously ruled that state laws prohibiting abortion are unconstitutional and violate women's rights, in the latest in a series of victories for reproductive rights activists across Latin America.

The Guardian

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China intensifies crackdown on places of worship

A further crackdown on places of worship came into force in China on 1 September, requiring all "religious venues" to give active support to the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and implement President Xi Jinping's policy of Sinicisation.

Church Times*

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Thu, 7 Sep 2023

Edinburgh removes religious reps' voting rights – NSS quoted

The City of Edinburgh Council has voted to end voting privileges for unelected religious appointees on its cabinet and education committees.

Local Gov

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'Serious questions' after Bridgend schools partnered with evangelical US church after suicides

There are questions around how a number of schools in south Wales were able to continue a partnership with an American evangelical Christian church for ten years - despite complaints about its messaging.

ITV

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Praying GP given GMC warning but can continue to practise

A Christian GP based in Kent has been given a new formal warning by the GMC in relation to praying in a consultation following complaints raised in part by the National Secular Society.

Pulse Today

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Soul Survivor's Mike Pilavachi 'used spiritual authority to control victims', report finds

Mike Pilavachi, the vicar who founded the Soul Survivor Christian youth festivals, "used his spiritual authority to control" victims, the Church of England has concluded, as a KC-led review is launched.

The Telegraph*

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Bethany Chapel graveyard road faces police investigation

Concerns about a road built through a graveyard are being investigated by police. Families of people buried at Bethany Chapel, in Hodley, Powys, claim headstones had been moved and some have even gone missing.

BBC

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California is first US state to pass ban on caste discrimination

California's legislature has become the first in the US to approve a bill banning caste discrimination. Legislators said the measure would protect people of South Asian descent who allege unfair treatment.

BBC

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Ukrainian Catholic bishops rebuke pope over his Russia comments

Ukraine's Eastern Rite Catholic bishops bluntly told Pope Francis at a meeting on Wednesday that some of his comments about Russia had caused great pain and were being used by Moscow to justify a "a murderous ideology".

Reuters

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Putin accused of 'deep-rooted antisemitism' after 'ethnic Jew' jibe at Zelensky

President Vladimir Putin has been accused of "deep-rooted antisemitism" after accusing western countries of installing an "ethnic Jew" as Ukraine's president to "cover up" what its "glorification of Nazism."

Jewish News

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Pastor survives deadly shooting after removing Islamic writings from church wall in Pakistan

The attempted murder of a pastor in Faisalabad, Pakistan has highlighted the vulnerability of religious minorities in the region.

Premier Christian News

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Disabled Christian murdered over unpaid loan in Pakistan

A disabled Christian farm worker who was abducted by Muslim landlords in Pakistan has died, after being subjected to extreme violence.

Premier Christian News

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Wed, 6 Sep 2023

Catholic officers 'asking if they should bring firearms to mass' after PSNI leak

Catholic officers in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) have been asking if they should bring their personal firearms to mass, such is their concern in the wake of a disastrous data breach, MPs have been told.

The Guardian

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French state schools turn away dozens of girls wearing Muslim abaya dress

The French education minister has said that nearly 300 pupils arrived at school on Monday wearing the abaya, the long Muslim robe which was banned in schools last week.

BBC

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Modi's BJP party accused of destroying thousands of Muslim homes in India

India's ruling Hindu Nationalist party is turning the bulldozer into a political symbol and, say opponents, a means of control.

Channel 4

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President of India: Government's G20 invite from 'Bharat' sparks row

A row has broken out in India after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government used the term "Bharat" in an official invite for the G20 Summit being sent on behalf of the president.

BBC

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US: Pro-birth conference's links to far-right eugenicists revealed

"A high-end hotel in the liberal Texan enclave of Austin is playing host to a conference whose theme is boosting global birth rates, but which will in fact feature racist and eugenicist internet personalities and far-right media figures."

The Guardian

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Canada truck attack: Man pleads not guilty to murdering Muslim family in Ontario

A Canadian man accused of murdering four members of a Muslim family with his vehicle in London, Ontario, has pleaded not guilty.

BBC

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Australia: Women were told their babies would not survive, Catholic public hospitals refused to provide abortions

There are 15 Catholic public hospitals in Australia that are bound by a religious code of ethics prohibiting abortions, birth control and IVF. These hospitals – of which at least five offer maternity and gynaecology services – are able to deny women basic reproductive healthcare despite receiving public funding.

The Guardian

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Opus Dei: shadowy cult or well-meaning Catholic devotees?

According to its critics, Opus Dei is a secretive and conservative religious order of well-placed people who exert a shadowy influence from within Spain's political and financial elite.

The Times*

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Tue, 5 Sep 2023

Praying Margate doctor overstepped the boundaries, tribunal hears

A Christian doctor has been told by a medical tribunal that he "overstepped the boundaries" when he prayed with a patient.

BBC

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'The Church of England's death knell is ringing'

'Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' This would be a good line for the leaders of the Church of England to wake up to today. This week three different studies make clear how loudly the death knell is ringing for the Church'

The Telegraph*

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Controversial 'cult' accused in graveyard 'desecration' row

A man who describes a church he left as a "cult" says he is not surprised it is involved in a row after building an access road across a graveyard.

Nation Cymru

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Ireland: 'Priests were angry at me for speaking out over abuse' – Archbishop

The former Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin has revealed how he invoked the ire of other priests after speaking out over child sex abuse in the Catholic Church.

The Irish News

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French schools trial uniforms to tackle poor behaviour

French pupils at some state schools will be required to wear uniforms in an effort to tackle poor discipline, declining performance and tension over Muslim dress.

The Times*

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Pope Francis has a weakness for autocracies: the Kremlin appreciates it

"...Francis does seem to have a tendresse for autocracies (which anti-Catholics would doubtless see as unsurprising, given the way popes are accorded unquestioned authority). In 2018 he agreed to give the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) the right to nominate Catholic bishops, a policy never agreed by any of his predecessors, and described to me by a distraught Catholic priest as "an act of perfidy, stupidity and betrayal"

The Times*

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The Taliban's punishing war on women continues

"Day by day, the walls close in". "Suffocated". "Without hope". These are just some of the descriptions by Afghan women of the relentless announcement of restrictions imposed on their lives and rights since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021.

The National

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Mon, 4 Sep 2023

'Blasphemy law is no answer to bigotry in the wake of Denmark's Qur'an burnings'

"A proposed ban on abuse of religious objects only helps to silence critics and dissenters", writes Kenan Malik

The Guardian

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Church of England parishes close at record rate

The Church of England has been "dealt a death knell" as parishes close at a record rate, an investigation has revealed. Almost 300 have disappeared in the past five years alone, analysis of church data reveals, the fastest rate since records began in 1960.

The Telegraph*

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Christians in Wales protest Pakistan violence as they fear for family

Christians living in Wales are protesting against ongoing violence in Paksitan as they fear for the safety of their loved ones overseas.

Premier Christian News

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Clashes erupt in Sweden's third largest city after another Quran burning and at least 3 are detained

Clashes erupted in an immigrant neighborhood in Sweden's third largest city after an anti-Muslim protester set fire to the Quran, police said Monday.

Associated Press

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France's public schools will enforce a dress code banning abayas

French students won't get past the door if they show up for school wearing long robes, said Emmanuel Macron.

Associated Press

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Finnish evangelical duo wait as appeal court considers 'hate crime' acquittal appeal

Two evangelical Christians in Finland may not know until the end of November whether the country's court of appeals will sustain their 18-month-old acquittal on hate-crime charges.

The Washington Times*

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Germany: Bavarian deputy leader keeps job after antisemitism claims

The deputy premier of the German state of Bavaria, Hubert Aiwanger, will stay in his post following controversy concerning an antisemitic pamphlet written in the 1980s.

BBC

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US: NJ battles Christian group blocking beach on Sundays

New Jersey officials are in a stand-off with a local religious group that controls the resort town of Ocean Grove, which says thou shalt not go to the beach before noon on the Lord's day.

New York Post

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US: Missouri asks Supreme Court to consider jury disqualification over Christian beliefs

Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey asked the Supreme Court this week to hear a case over disqualifying jurors based on their Christian beliefs, saying the Constitution doesn't support religious discrimination.

The Washington Times

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Mob attacks on Christian churches and homes in Pakistan set off by false implication, police say

Last month's mob attacks on churches and homes of Christians in eastern Pakistan erupted after three Christians threw the pages of Islam's holy book outside the house of two others to falsely implicate them in a blasphemy case due to a personal dispute, police said Monday.

Associated Press

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