



Catholics attend a procession during the National Eucharistic Congress in Juba, South Sudan, Nov. 22, 2024. (OSV News/Reuters/Samir Bol)



by Catholic News Service

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Vatican City — September 3, 2025

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Pope Leo XIV offered his prayers for the dead after days of heavy rain triggered a landslide in a remote area of Sudan, and he prayed for all involved in the ongoing search and rescue operations.

"His Holiness Pope Leo XIV was deeply saddened to learn of the devastation caused by the landslide in the village of Tarasin in Sudan's central Darfur region, and he assures everyone affected by this disaster of his spiritual closeness," said a telegram from Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

The cardinal sent the message Sept. 2 to Bishop Yunan Tombe Trille Kuku Andali of El Obeid.

Late Sept. 1 the Sudan Liberation Movement-Army, a rebel group controlling the area, reported that the entire village of Tarasin had been buried in the landslide Aug. 31 and that up to 1,000 people were dead. The group said only one person had survived, The Associated Press reported.

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The BBC later quoted the U.N.'s deputy humanitarian coordinator for Sudan as saying at least 370 people had died in the landslide in the village, which is in the remote Marrah Mountains in western Sudan.

Antoine Gérard, the U.N. official, told the BBC that because the area was so remote and rugged, it was difficult to know the scale of the damage or the exact number of victims.

Parolin assured Andali that Pope Leo was "praying especially for the eternal rest of the dead, for those who mourn their loss, and for the rescue of the many persons still missing."

Leo also "offers encouragement to the civil authorities and emergency personnel in their ongoing relief efforts," the cardinal said.