

MESSAGE OF HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN TIME OF COVID-19

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya, I bring you greetings and a message of peace of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ. At this critical time, and particularly conscious of the adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on all aspects of our lives, we, your Shepherds, echo the invitation of our Lord *"come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Mt.11:28). Our response to this invitation should lead us to new ways of coming closer to Him with all our cries, pains, sorrows, fears, anxieties and burdens of life so as to find solace during this difficult time.

At this time when social gatherings have been minimized and places of worship closed, we should rediscover the value of the family as the domestic Church. Therefore, our families have to become places where social values, virtues and morals for our children and youth are taught, encouraged and supported. This is the only way to deal with the social and moral evils affecting our society today. For this reason, we call upon parents and care-givers to first strengthen their relationship with God and strive to be exemplary companions to their children. Pope Francis reminds us that parents should always be aware of the weight of their example as they form the children in faith and morals.

We, the Catholic Bishops, we are particularly concerned about the on-going debate on the Reproductive Health Care Bill No. 23 of 2019. We note that some sections of this Bill go against the Constitution of Kenya in regard to the right to life and the protection of the children and the family. We appreciate that the Senate has expressed openness to engage the Church on this matter. In our engagement with the Senate, we shall seek to defend the right to life, the dignity of children and the family as inseparable unit. We shall also advocate for the responsibility of the Ministry of Education through Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to provide age-appropriate and value-based human sexuality education to learners. All stakeholders must be engaged in this process.

On behalf of the Bishops, I appreciate individuals and groups that have continued to champion matters pertaining to sanctity of life, defence of family and protection of children. We call upon all Christians and people of good-will to stand up and defend the family unity, the dignity of our children, the religious and positive cultural values of our people and our identity as Kenyans. Covid-19 pandemic has taught us that our faith, our family values and our unity are crucial in managing the emerging



challenges. We also appeal to all of you to continue adhering to the Covid-19 containment measures provided by the Government so as to curb the spread of the Coronavirus for our own good and the good of others.

Finally, I express my gratitude to KBC, Capuchin TV, TV47 and Ukweli TV online, for transmitting live this Holy Mass. Our thanks also go to St. Mary's Ongata Rongai Parish Choir together with their priest (Fr. Francis Mwangi) from the Diocese of Ngong for animating the Mass, and also Mr. Joseph Ngatia (our sign language liturgical interpreter).

May Almighty God bless you all and lead you through these difficult times.



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Rt. Rev. Maurice Muhatia Makumba
Bishop of the Diocese of Nakuru
Chairman of KCCB-Seminary Episcopal Commission
5th July, 2020

