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10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### **CALL TO PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DURING THE TIME OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Dear people of God, today I stand before you on behalf of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, at a time when the enjoyment of cessation of the lockdown is accompanied with anxieties and fears over the increasing number of persons infected and affected with Covid-19. At the dawn of reopening of the County boundaries, places of worship and imminent resumption of local and international travels, there is also fear of the increase of infections in the coming days.

Faced with these realities, we need to remind ourselves that the decision to reopen the Country has been made after a serious consideration of the many factors that are affecting us as a Country. Such factors touch on our health, our economy and our social life. The full unlocking of the Country is dependent on everyone taking personal responsibility in containing the spread of coronavirus to a flattened curve. With this in mind, we your Shepherds, call upon each one of us to take our Presidents' call to personal and social responsibility seriously.

At a personal level, each one of us should be conscious of the risk factors that facilitate the spread of Covid-19 and be ready and committed to observe the basic Covid-19 preventive measures and the directives from the Ministry of Health. It is also a personal responsibility to ensure that other people are safe from contracting Covid-19 by training and constantly reminding them to strictly adhere to all the health containment measures. In a special way, each one of us should be more

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CORPORATING: THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE

1) Commission for Doctrine, 2.) Commission for Liturgy, 3.) Commission for Missions, 4.) Commission for Pastoral and Lay Apostolate, 5.) Commission for Ecumenism, 6.) Seminary Episcopal Commission, 7.) Commission for Clergy and Religious, 8.) Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue, 9.) Commission for Education and Religious Education, 10.) Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 11.) Caritas Kenya, 12.) Catholic Health Commission of Kenya, 13.) Commission for Social Communications, 14.) Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Seafarers, 15.) Council for Economic Affairs, 16.) Ad Hoc Commission for AIDS Relief, 17.) Canon Law National Office, 18.) Family Life National Office, 19.) Apostolate to the Nomads (A.N.A.)

***"You shall be my Witnesses", (Acts 1:8) for the Sanctification and Salvation of all People.***

conscious of the high risk of Covid-19 infections to the elderly, the children, and those with underlying conditions of our families. These members of our society need to be safeguarded and protected from contracting Covid-19. In this, we should be guided by the word of God to care of one another (cf. 1 Peter 3:8).

In addition to the vulnerable members of our society, we should also not forget that there are still many people whose means of livelihood have adversely been affected by the pandemic. Therefore, we call upon all of us to continue living the values of compassion and generosity by feeding the hungry, taking care of the sick, clothing the naked, and giving water to the thirsty (cf. Mt. 25:35-36). These values are enshrined in our cultures and religions. It is for this reason that Pope Francis has invited all people who are looking forward to the end of Covid-19 pandemic to have a vision rich in humanity and reminded us not to *“go back to our selfish pursuit of success without caring about those who are left behind.”*

As we start the phased re-opening of the places of worship, we call upon all the Faithful to exercise strict compliance to all the guidelines provided and encourage others to do the same. We specifically appeal to our spiritual leaders to reach out, more than ever before, to those who may not have the opportunity to come to places of worships due to the restrictions. We equally appeal to the Government to partner with religious and professional institutions across the Country in order to enhance psycho-social services to individuals and families who need it.

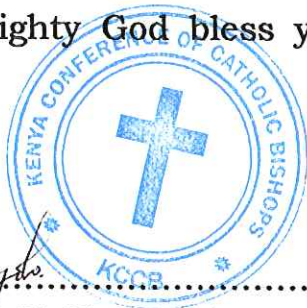
To our children and youth, we love you, we treasure you and we care for your well-being. The extended period of your stay at home is meant to protect you from contracting the virus; it is neither a punishment nor anybody's fault. However, we are being reminded by the adverse impact of Covid-19 that in life things do not always go our way. Therefore, you need to look for and choose positive ways of spending this period while at home.

I passionately appeal to you, young people, to continue adhering to Covid-19 containment measures, keep a cordial relationship with your parents, caregivers, and family members. In addition, take this as an opportunity to strengthen your communication with members of your

family and to share with them your thoughts, feelings, and experiences with openness. I also urge you to maintain a close relationship with God through prayers. Keep yourselves busy by reading helpful materials and using social media responsibly.

As I conclude, I call upon all Kenyans to know that God is in control of the experiences we are going through and He is calling us at this hard time to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers (cf. Isaiah 30:20). May God make us strong, steadfast, and fearless as He marches with us. For sure God will never fail or forsake us. Finally, I express my gratitude to KBC, Capuchin TV, TV47 and Ukweli TV online, for transmitting live our Sunday Masses since April 2020. Our thanks also go to Holy Cross Dandora Parish Choir together with their priest (Fr. Luke Muhindo) from Outering Deanery and the various Choirs who have been animating the Sunday Masses, and also Fr. Joseph (our sign language liturgical interpreter) from the Nairobi Chaplaincy. We also express our special gratitude to H.E. John Cardinal Njue, Fr. Peter Kamomoe, Fr. Wallace Ng'ang'a, Fr. Benard and Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Rono, concelebrating priests, the Deacons and the Acolyte for coordination of all the Sunday Masses since March 2020 to date.

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



*Philip Anyolo*

Most Rev. Philip Anyolo

Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Kisumu/Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Homabay and the Chairman of KCCB

12<sup>th</sup> July, 2020