

A MESSAGE OF LOVE, HOPE AND JOY DURING TIME OF COVID-19

Our dear Christians and people of good-will, on my own behalf and that of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), I bring you greetings and message of God's love, hope, and joy. For almost four months now, we have experienced the reality of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. This impact has touched on every aspect of our lives including health, social, economic, political, spiritual and family. Above all, our communal worship has been affected due to closure of places of worship. With the closure of places of worship, we may think we have lost our sense of oneness and the conventional way of worship. As your Shepherds, we are confident that God is still at the centre of our lives; in addition, our desire for communal worship as we continue to praise and worship Him individually and at family level is still growing strong.

We have to recognize that while we cannot gather in the usual way, our duty and obligation to worship God remains indispensable. I would like to invite you to reflect on the following questions: How does God want you to continue relating with Him during this time of Covid-19 when the places of worship are closed? As individuals, we all need to find time to meditate and talk with God in prayer. St. John Paul II says: "a prayer influences our lives so that our lives become a prayer." When our lives are influenced by prayer, we go out of our way to love and serve God and our neighbours. Let us all mirror the early Christians. While we create physical distance so as not to spread the virus, we can do works of mercy to our neighbours by feeding and clothing them. As St Theresa showed us, we can do small things with great love. There is so much we can do at this time; we just need to ask the Holy Spirit for his inspiration. Could our relationship with God influence our relationship with those suffering from the impact of Covid-19? Could we inspire the suffering with hope, joy and courage?

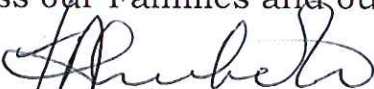
What routines have we set up in our families to ensure that there is time for communal family worship? "Every home is called to become a domestic Church in which family life is completely centred on the Lordship of Christ and His love for the Church" (Pope Benedict XVI). As a domestic Church, the family is called to proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life. It is here that the parents and care-givers impart the values of Gospels. These are values of respect, love, thanks-giving, charity, forgiveness, endurance, selflessness and generosity. The home is the first school of faith virtues and values. Our homes, therefore, should be the first places of worship.

Let us read our Holy Scriptures, sing our favourite hymns, recite our Rosary and pray together from our homes.

Dear people of God, a strengthened domestic Church is one of the greatest positive off-shoot of Covid-19. We have lost so much through the Covid-19, we cannot afford to lose our faith, our worship and our family values. I now would like to address our youth and children. Our dear children and youth, you need to appreciate that you too are indispensable part of the family and the Church; you are our hope. We are aware that during this prolonged stay at home, you are facing various challenges and wondering when this Covid-19 will be over. While Covid-19 may be with us for a while, you cannot afford to lose hope and allow social media, anxiety, boredom, negative peer pressure and destructive behaviour ruin your life. Let us not use the time we have on endless hours on using electronics negatively to keep yourselves busy. Instead, let us draw up realistic routines to see how to use our time wisely; I know you are capable of doing wonders. I encourage you with the words of Pope Francis in his address to children and young people in 2019: *“Evil does not have the last word. Nor will it have the last word in your life, for you have a friend who loves you and wants to triumph in you.”* This true friend is Jesus Christ, our Saviour. My prayer for you all is that God gives you genuine friends during this time who stand at your side in times of difficulties.

Finally, I express my gratitude to all health workers and all who are working tirelessly to ensure that Covid-19 is contained and the infected persons receive the best possible medical care. As we encourage the health workers to remain resilient and patient, we continue to urge all of us to strictly adhere to the Covid-19 containment measures, namely, washing hands with running, properly wearing of masks and avoiding crowded places. Your health and that of your loved starts with you.

I also thank all the media houses for continuously educating us on matters of Covid-19. To KBC, Capuchin, TV47 and Ukweli TV, may God bless you for transmitting live this Holy Mass. Our gratitude also goes to St. Peter and Paul Parish Choir from Kiambu Deanery for animating this Mass and to all those who have made this possible. May God bless you all; May God bless our Families and our Country Kenya.

By 

Rt. Rev. Anthony Ileri Mukobo, Bishop of Apostolic Vicariate of Isiolo and Chairman of KCCB-Commission for Liturgy – 28th June 2020.

