

## MESSAGE OF HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF KENYA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Greetings and peace of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ. We Catholic Bishops of Kenya, bring to all of you, our dear Christians and people of good will, a message of hope and encouragement during this difficult time in our Country and indeed the whole world. The Word of God in *Isaiah 41:10* encourages us saying “*Do not be afraid, for I am with you! I am your God, let nothing terrify you, I will make you strong and help; I will protect you and save you*” (Isaiah 41:10).

We address this message to you at a time that our Country has now gone beyond the 1,000 mark of the confirmed patients of Corona virus. These new highs have come at a time when the Government of Kenya has intensified its efforts of containing the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, more and more evident that we all need to join hands and fight this pandemic by strictly observing the guidelines that the Ministry of Health has put in place. In the same vein, let us keep reminding our family members and other people we interact with to adhere to the same guidelines. This will truly make us our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers.

As we continue to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, we as Catholic Bishops, want to assure all citizens of our continuous prayers and spiritual support. We are aware of the anxiety and uncertainty that this Pandemic and other natural disasters like floods, outbreak of Cholera, locusts and mudslides, are causing to the families and especially the most vulnerable persons. Due to these disasters, individuals, families, Institutions and businesses have been affected negatively.

We take this opportunity to applaud the citizens for your resilience, and effort to mitigate the spread of Corona virus. We are grateful to the individuals, Churches and Religious Organisations, that continue to support the most vulnerable by contribution towards their basic needs. We also thank the Government for the sustained effort to ensure the spread of Covid-19 is controlled. The health care workers in all Hospitals and at all levels have done us proud; may God continue blessing you. Parents and Care-givers are also playing a critical role in ensuring the well-being of children during this long-stay at home period. We know it is not easy but we pray that God gives you strength to guide and mould the children into persons God desires them to be.

We also applaud elected leaders that have continued to support the fight against Coronavirus and other disasters across the Country. May God reward you abundantly.

As your Shepherds, we are also concerned about the current political mood in the Country. In this regard, we call upon our Political leaders to demonstrate their leadership by committing themselves to the service of the Kenyans and not engaging in divisive Politics; indeed, this is not the time for Politics. Rather, this is the time that all our leaders should unite to fight the common enemy, that is, Coronavirus.

In the light of today's readings, I pose two key questions to our Politicians: Are you wise and sensitive enough to know that in the process of your political intrigues, you are causing concern, panic, anxieties and unnecessary worries among Kenyans who value peace and unity above all else? Have you forgotten where we came from, the lives lost, the property destroyed because of political rivalry and quest for power especially during the post-elections time?

I come from North Rift and our people are confused and unable to understand what is really happening to our politicians and the promises they had made; People here are still hurt. The wounds of post-election violence are still not yet healed. Please, I beg you, do not open these wounds and do not destroy all those efforts of peace building that people like the late Bishop Cornelius Korir worked day and night to ensure that we have a cohesive society and peaceful Kenya. Please see the good of this Country and put aside the political games and the jostling for political positioning regarding 2022 Elections. We have a big problem in front of us and if we don't put all our energies in eradicating Covid-19, there might be no people to rule in the year 2022.

Today we celebrate World Communications Day. The message for the year 2020 from Pope Francis is based on the theme: *"That you*

*may tell your children and grandchildren” (Exodus 10:2); Life becomes history.* With fake news becoming ever more sophisticated, all of us need the wisdom, courage and patience to discern and embrace constructive stories. We need information based on truth which is objective, accurate and fair. And for those who are pushing to introduce Comprehensive Sexual Education in our Schools, we categorically say No.

Finally, we wish all the Muslims in Kenya a very happy Eid Mubarak. May this Eid bring happiness in your hearts and to your families.

I conclude with the prayer of the Psalmist 56:3-4 where it says: *“When I am afraid O Lord Almighty, I put my trust in you. I trust in God and I am not afraid.”*

May God bless you all; May God bless our beloved Country Kenya.

By



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