

KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



KENYA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

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Our Ref:

PRESS STATEMENT BY KCCB

Your Ref:

CONSCIENCE: A PATH TO LIFE

“Everyone who knows what is the right thing to do and does not do it commits a sin” (James 4:17)

Preamble

Dear Kenyans, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! We, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, send our greetings to you as we congratulate our newly consecrated Bishop Joseph Mwangela, whom we warmly welcome to the Bishops' Conference and pledge to support in his new ministry as the shepherd of the people of the Diocese of Kitui. We take this opportunity to express our solidarity with all Kenyans during these trying moments of COVID-19 pandemic. We thank our health workers in all our health institutions, who are tirelessly giving hope to our sick brethren. We encourage them to look at the greater good of the sick that they serve; meanwhile, we appeal to the Government to look into their needs even for better service delivery. We pray for all the sick, especially with the corona-virus, that they may recover. And to all those who have lost their loved ones through this virus and other diseases, we condole with you and your families. We live in hope and prayer that it will come to an end.

On 22nd February 2020, we, your shepherds, released a Pastoral Letter in which we highlighted a number of issues that we are currently facing, and offer insights into how we should tackle the challenges we are facing as a Country. We wish to bring to your attention some of these current issues that we have to address as a nation.

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INCORPORATING: 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.

1. The battered Economy following the Covid-19 pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused severe havoc on our economy; thousands of Kenyans have lost jobs and business opportunities many families, particularly those that depend on employment and more so on daily wages, are facing enormous difficulties sustaining themselves. For this reason, we call for more commitment on the part of the Government to avail more resources to assist the most vulnerable members of our society, the poor, the jobless and all those who are struggling to make ends meet.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed many gaps in the world and in Kenya. It has impacted heavily on the social fabric of our nation. The closure of schools and educational institutions has shown how weak our families are. Cases of domestic violence, erosion of family values, lack of proper parental guidance of children, increase of crime, and loss of moral values, are some of the challenges that will need to be addressed as post-Covid strategies. In the face of such a situation, we are convinced that it is the task of every individual and community to work towards strengthening the family institution and formation of conscience for our young people to embrace values that enhance their lives.

We are glad that gradually, while observing the guidelines and rules that are given by relevant authorities, we are reopening our places of worship. We appreciate the cooperation of our Faithful in observing protocols and in adherence to guidelines given to them. We continue urging our Faithful to strictly follow the guidelines given, namely, washing of hands, wearing masks and all other measures to be observed. This is the only sure way of combatting the virus.

2. Revenue share Debate

We call upon the Senate to immediately bring into conclusion the Revenue allocation Bill so that the monetary allocations to the Counties may urgently be distributed. The Senate should not continue holding the Country in ransom by their narrow interests, political favoritism and revenge missions, at the expense of the well-being and the good of the people of Kenya. We expect the Senators to demonstrate the highest degree of patriotism and love for the Country instead of the bi-partisan approach we are seeing at the moment.

3. Reproductive Health Bill

Similarly, we have expressed our grave concern in regard to the Reproductive Health Bill whose basic intention is to introduce the disguised abortion on demand. We cannot claim God is in our midst when in fact, we are allowing the evil of some individuals who may have killed their conscience to legislate for the killing of our unborn children.

It is of utmost concern that in a Country which believes in the sanctity of human life and human dignity, certain entities will be allowed to propagate ideologies that degrade that very dignity in the name of freedom of choice. This is going against the very Constitution that we purport to follow. As your shepherds, we call upon the Government to close all clinics and health units that are procuring abortions and administering contraceptives to minors and teenagers in the name of protecting them. This is evil.

4. Responsible parenting

We must recall parents to their primary responsibility of instilling good morals and good habits in their children, by spending sufficient time with them. Parenting is the biggest investment any parent can make, and it requires skill, effort, commitment and patience. As a moral duty, families must take full responsibility over the education of their children as a virtue and in morality especially on sexual education. We urge parents to teach their children the correct doctrine as opposed to other

doctrines. Families should encourage one another in this apostolate. We wish to especially highlight the aggressive anti-family agenda being peddled, such as the “gender ideology” that is contrary to the teaching of our lord Jesus Christ.

5. The fight against corruption

Amidst the many struggles we are facing due to Covid 19 pandemic, Kenyans are angry that there are some among us who see an opportunity to divert to themselves resources meant to fight the pandemic and its effects. This is a shame. The funds in billions that have been received from various sources, including our international partners, to fight the pandemic must be accounted for to the last cent. We, the Catholic Bishops, take great exception of the allegations of misuse of the Covid-19 funds that were designated for the fight against the pandemic. Once again, we are witnessing the ugly head of corruption, which we have continuously condemned, shamelessly looting from the vulnerable people ravaged by the virus and harsh economic times. We call upon the auditors, the investigative agencies and the judiciary, to take decisive action to deal with this evil and have all those involved in this scam to face the law. Corruption is not a path to life, it is a path to death. We condemn the alleged looting of Covid-19. money and indeed all forms of pillaging of public resources of all levels.

6. Political Responsibility

While the ongoing political realignments are normal in a democracy, the manner in which it is currently done here in our Country is risky, insensitive and is creating fear among Kenyans as we move towards the 2022 general elections. The calls for a peaceful Kenya have remained with us since the 2007 post-election violence. Yet, political campaigns seem to be taking us back every time we plan a general election.

We all want a peaceful Kenya. The Constitution, and indeed all laws, will not amount to peace and stability if we do not hold ourselves

accountable to our own beliefs that peace, stability and accountability can only be brought about in an inclusive round table conference.

All of us, especially our political leaders, must take responsibility to ensure that political realignments do not become an excuse to put people at political risk leading to the political violence we are used to seeing in every election year.

7. Peace not lawlessness and Ethnic Violence

The recent deadly conflicts in Narok, Baringo and Marsabit and the manner of forced evictions in Njoro and Mau area over the disputed Mau Forest Cover are a scar on us all as Kenyans.

The County and the National Governments have an obligation to commit whole-heartedly to creating and respecting systems of good governance that guarantee high-level service delivery. The high levels of poverty, mistrust, nepotism, violence, murder, human trafficking, tribal clashes, cronyism and outright misappropriation of public funds show the rot in our governance systems, and that we have lost our conscience as a society.

The primary purpose of a Government is to protect its people from all forms of aggression, that risk the lives of its people. This includes protection from regrettable community and ethnic fighting in parts of this Country. The Government intelligence system has the capacity to give early warning alerts to the security functionaries to avert these perennial ethnic, inter-community and inter-clan deadly fights. The people responsible for these acts are possibly known and should be apprehended and brought to the court of justice.

As Bishops, we emphasize our hope and the hope of many people of good-will that the challenges we face can be tackled by embracing a spirit of forgiveness tempered with justice. It is possible to build positive peace even in the face of death. It is the desire of the Church, as part of her mission, to mediate to avoid any type of conflict, and to intervene early in order to avoid them escalating. We have the great example of the late Bishop Cornelius Arap Korir, in his effort to resolve conflicts

that threatened national, county and community peace. We know it is possible to live in peace with each other however diverse we are.

8. The referendum debate

As Catholic Bishops, we would wish to give some guidelines which can assist Kenyans in determining which process can be followed, namely,

a) Any referendum must unite Kenyans for a common good

We cannot stress enough to the people of Kenya and the Government, that a divisive referendum like the one we witnessed in 2005 and 2010, must be avoided at all costs. In reflecting further, we caution that a referendum can also be expensive and maybe wasteful while we find ourselves as a Country with the pressing issues of the people's unmet economic, social and democratic development needs. We will be hesitant to legitimize a process that will further hurt the people. We, therefore, support only solid and transparent plans, adopted with a clear converging national consensus, if and when the referendum takes place.

b) A Constitution outlives its makers

Any proposal for amendments should be acceptable only when it has clear long-term goals. Any self-serving short-term proposals having the interests of just a few privileged and highly placed individuals must be rejected. A criterion must be put in place that only permits amendments that will advance the national interest applying its guiding principles and values in Article 10 of the Constitution.

c) Amendments must be specific and compelling

We make a strong recommendation to all Kenyans to study and look into any amendment proposals in order to judge whether they are specific and compelling. In the spirit of fostering dialogic democracy, it is important to listen before accepting or rejecting a proposal for a constitutional amendment. Dialogue must guide our movement forward as a cohesive, just and democratic Country.

Conclusion

Dear Kenyans, all of us have a duty to be watchful that we do what is right for the good of everyone. Jesus reminds us that the greatest commandment is to “love one another as God loves us” (John 13:34). As children of God, we should reflect on our successes, joys, failures, and sufferings, and make the necessary amendments.

No one has a monopoly of knowledge. We learn from one another, always encouraging one another in this path of life leading us to our eternal destiny in God. For the Spirit inspires us with hope when we are at the verge of giving up, and raises us again with Jesus Christ our companion in all that we do.

May Our Mother Mary help and encourage us in this battle of conversion in our lives and culture, so that we can be fully alive in accordance with our Christian calling and the demands of Christ.

May God bless you all, may God bless our Country Kenya!



Most Rev. Philip Anyolo
Chairman of KCCB/Kisumu/
Apostolic Administrator, Homa Bay

Saturday 29th August 2020

PRESENT

1. Rt. Rev. John Oballa Owaa
2. His Eminence John Cardinal Njue
3. Most Rev. Martin Kivuva Musonde
4. Most Rev. Anthony Muheria
5. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mairura Okemwa
6. Rt. Rev. Maurice Crowley
7. Rt. Rev. Alfred Rotich
8. Rt. Rev. Norman King'oo Wambua
9. Rt. Rev. Peter Kihara

DIOCESE

- Vice-Chairman/Ngong
- Nairobi
- Mombasa
- Nyeri
- Kisii
- Kitale
- Kericho
- Machakos
- Marsabit

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| 10. Rt. Rev. David Kamau Ng'ang'a | - Auxiliary- Nairobi |
| 11. Rt. Rev. Anthony Ileri Mukobo | - Isiolo Vicariate |
| 12. Rt. Rev. Virgilio Pante | - Maralal |
| 13. Rt. Rev. Salesius Mugambi | - Meru |
| 14. Rt. Rev. James Maria Wainaina | - Murang'a |
| 15. Rt. Rev. Paul Kariuki Njiru | - Embu |
| 16. Rt. Rev. Maurice Muhatia Makumba | - Nakuru |
| 17. Rt. Rev. Dominic Kimengich | - Eldoret/
- Apostolic Administrator, Lodwar |
| 18. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mbatia | - Nyahururu |
| 19. Rt. Rev. Joseph Alessandro | - Garissa |
| 20. Rt. Rev. Joseph Obanyi | - Kakamega
- Apostolic Administrator, Bungoma |
| 21. Rt. Rev. Joseph Mwongela | - Kitui |
| 22. Very Rev. Fr. Benjamin K. Maswili | - Apostolic Administrator,
Military Ordinariate |
| 23. Very Rev. Fr. Albert Buijs | - Diocesan Administrator, Malindi |