



**SPEECH BY BISHOP MOSES HAMUNGOLE
AT THE HAND OVER CEREMONY OF DONATED ITEMS
FROM C&S INVESTMENTS LTD TO ZCCB
IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

14TH APRIL 2020

On behalf of the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) and indeed on my own behalf, I wish to take this opportunity, first of all, to extend our Easter greetings to you: **"May the grace and joy of the Risen Christ be with you all!"**

As Christians, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus gives us a sure hope that God is with us and will lead us from the darkness that has befallen the entire world due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) to light, just as he overcame death by raising his Son Jesus Christ from the dead.

In order to defeat the pandemic, we must all do our part to protect ourselves and others from being infected with covid-19. I am therefore glad to note that even at this Press Briefing, we are observing social distancing, washing our hands thoroughly with soap and sanitizing them.

The Coronavirus situation has come at a time when Zambia has been struggling on many fronts to improve the livelihood of the people, especially the poor and vulnerable. Last year, we were hit by draught in

southern, western, parts of Lusaka, central and eastern provinces which resulted in many household food levels being very low. To make matters worse, this year, the northern half of our country has had floods which affected their crops leaving many people hungry. The question is; how will people survive now that COVID-19 is already beginning to stretch their ability to recover from these natural calamities? Whereas in the past, we could have cried out for help from the international community, this time, we are on our own because everyone is fighting the pandemic and using their resources to save their citizens. Then, who will help us?

We, the Catholic Bishops in Zambia, strongly believe that we can mitigate the suffering of the poor and vulnerable by sharing whatever resources we have among us. Those who have more can help those who have less. This way, we will contribute towards resources needed to save many of our people from being infected with the virus, from passing it to others, and from dying with the disease. Indeed, we need to ensure that there is provision of timely health care to those who are sick of whatever disease, including COVID-19.

In his *Urbi et Orbi* Message delivered in St. Peter's Basilica on Easter Sunday 2020, the Holy Father, Pope Francis said: ***“This is not a time for indifference, because the whole world is suffering and needs to be united in facing the pandemic. May the risen Jesus grant hope to all the poor, to those living on the peripheries, to refugees and the homeless. May these, the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters living in the cities and peripheries of every part of the world, not be abandoned. Let us ensure that they do not lack basic necessities (all the more difficult to find now that many businesses are closed) such as medicine and especially the possibility of adequate health care.”***

Therefore, at this point, may I sincerely express my gratitude to C&S Investments Limited and its Company Directors, Mr. Paul Steele, and Ms. Brenda Sakala for coming to the aid of the Catholic Church in Zambia. Your gesture to the Conference of Bishops and indeed the entire Catholic community in Zambia is commendable.

These items will go a long way in mitigating some of the challenges that the institutions which will directly benefit have been facing. As you may already know, the Catholic Church in Zambia runs 59 health facilities situated in all the 10 Provinces. Out of these, 22 are Hospitals and 37 are Rural Health Centres. These have been facing a number of challenges such as inadequate financial resources, materials and drugs during this situation of COVID-19. These institutions also need to be prepared to offer essential frontline services to some of our people who may contract the disease. At the same time, their role in helping communities to prevent the spread of the diseases is very critical. They cannot do this effectively without the necessary tools to carry out their job.

Apart from our health care facilities, these donations will be shared with Old People's Homes, Orphanages and a number of Hospices. May I hasten to mention that the Catholic Church is here merely a channel of help for all vulnerable peoples. In all our institutions and programs, we do not discriminate against non-Catholics. Be rest assured that the end beneficiaries of these donated items will be people from all walks of life, regardless of tribe, race, creed and political affiliation. Mr. Steele and Ms. Banda, your donation therefore will be channeled towards the most needy, some of whom are here to receive the items.

On behalf of the ZCCB, I am here to thank you most sincerely for this generous donation. Your initiative to donate to ZCCB does not only make a difference to ZCCB and the beneficiaries of these items, but also gives an example to other corporate organisations and individuals to share their resources. During a crisis like this one, it is contributions like yours that will help us to work together to overcome it. Let us not always wait on

foreign donors when we also can share in solidarity and support of the Church's ministry to the poor and vulnerable people.

To all Catholics and people of good will, we continue to remind you to keep and follow the measures we as your shepherds communicated to you on 28th March 2020. That way, with the daily updates from the Ministry of Health, we shall reduce the Coronavirus infections in Zambia and we shall keep ourselves safe.

May I also take this rare opportunity to announce that, in line with the guidelines provided to us by the Holy See under the COVID-19 Task Force, **the Church in Zambia has set up a COVID-19 Response Fund (CRF)**. This Fund will be housed at **Citi Bank, ZEC Lenten Fund, Account Number: 0251000936**. The fund at this juncture will mainly be used to prevent the spread of the disease in Zambia. It will also support the health facilities to respond to the pandemic. Apart from that, the Fund will be used to support the Church programs that not only look after the sick and terminally ill, but also the elderly people, people living with mental and physical disabilities, orphanages and generally the poor in society. This fund will supplement the efforts government has put into place. We therefore urge our Catholic faithful and other people of good will, to heed this call and contribute generously towards this Fund.

Let us be a people of Hope! And may the Spirit of the Risen Lord bless us and deliver us all from the power of the Coronavirus and its painful effects of suffering and death.

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