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Gov'ts Need Prayers to Take Hard Decisions on COVID-19 – Pope



Mrs. Matilda Amissah-Arthur

Rethink Demeaning Widowhood Rites
– *Former Second Lady*

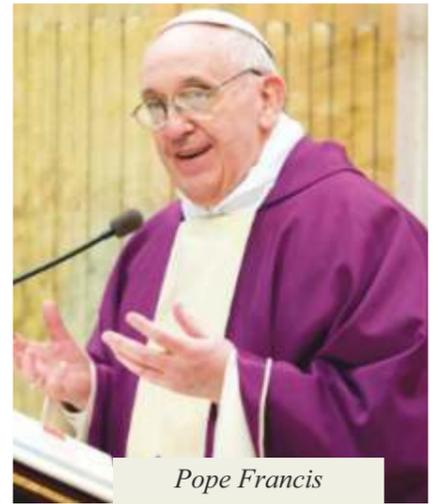
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Pope Francis has asked people to pray for government officials and leaders who are tasked with making critical decisions and taking drastic measures that may make people unhappy.

Each day at his livestreamed morning Mass, the Pope has been dedicating each liturgy to people affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

“Let us keep praying together for the ill, their relatives, for parents with children at home, but most of all, I would ask that you pray for authorities,” the Pope said at the beginning of the Mass on March 12.

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Pope Francis

Vatican Issues Decree For Holy Week Liturgies With Pandemic Restrictions

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IT IS TIME TO CONSIDER A LOCKDOWN IN GHANA

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CATHOLIC
World News

Don't Squander Your Lives in Social Media – Pope Tells Youth

Pope Francis has said that the fast-paced digital age can cause young men and women to focus more on capturing moments for their social media, rather than experiencing them.

"Today, we are often 'connected' but not communicating. The indiscriminate use of electronic devices can keep us constantly glued to the screen..." he said in a message for World Youth Day 2020.

"With this message, I would like to join you, young people, in calling for a cultural change, based on Jesus' command to 'arise,' the pope said.

The message, released March 5 at the Vatican, centered on a verse from the Gospel of Luke: "Young man, I say to you, arise!"

"Arise" and "stand up" are the themes for World Youth Day 2020-2022: While the 2020

"World Youth Day will be celebrated at the Vatican this Palm Sunday, the 2022 "World Youth Day" will take place in Lisbon.

The theme for World Youth Day 2020, Pope Francis said, was what Jesus said before raising a young man from the dead.

He noted that the youth seek gratification, through entertainment and fleeting moments, and give in to "widespread growing digital narcissism."

"All too many people are living this way! Some of them have perhaps bought into the materialism of all those around them, who are concerned only with making money and taking it easy, as if these were the sole purpose of life," the Holy Father said.

"In the long run," he added, "this will inevitably lead to unhappiness, apathy and boredom with life, a growing sense of emptiness and frustration."

He reminded the youth on Christ's gesture of compassion

toward the suffering of the boy's widowed mother, saying "sometimes our first reaction is to take a picture with our cellphone without even bothering to look into the eyes of the persons involved."

"All around us, but at times also within us, we can see realities of death: physical, spiritual, emotional, social. Do we really notice them, or simply let them happen to us? Is there anything we can do in order to restore life?" the pope asked.

Jesus shows young men and women the importance of compassion and empathy toward the suffering of others, rather than being self-absorbed, the pope said.

"Do not let yourselves be robbed of this sensitivity!...May you always be attentive to the plea of those who are suffering, and be moved by those who weep and die in today's world," he pleaded. – CNS

The Vatican announces stricter measures to control the spread of the coronavirus, including closing St. Peter's Basilica and other public services.

St. Peter's Basilica and Square will remain closed to tourists and guided tours until 3 April.

The Holy See Press Office announced the closures on Tuesday afternoon in a communique.

As of Tuesday, March 10, the Vatican Post Office's mobile unit in St. Peter's Square will also be shut down, along with the two sales points of the Vatican Publishing House and the Photographic Service of the *L'Osservatore Romano*,

Covid-19: Vatican Closes St. Peter's Basilica to Tourists

which will remain available online.

The Vatican's mess hall will close its doors to employees as of Wednesday, but is activating a meal delivery service for the various offices of the Holy See and the Vatican City State.

Guests and employees can still access the Vatican pharmacy and supermarket, though entrances will be restricted to avoid crowds forming inside.

The measures will remain in effect until at least 3 April 2020 to avoid spreading the Covid-19 coronavirus, according to the communique.

Vatican News



Italian police guard a shuttered St. Peter's Square

Pope Offers Thanks for Efforts to Combat Coronavirus

Pope Francis says all those battling COVID 19 – those who are afflicted, but also doctors, nurses, caregivers and others – are close to his heart. He also urges people to remember the sufferings of Syrian refugees on the border between Greece and Turkey.

At the Wednesday General Audience – which was livestreamed from the Apostolic Library – Pope Francis turned his thoughts towards all those, in Italy and around the world, who are struggling against the coronavirus epidemic.

As of Tuesday, more than 120,000 cases of the coronavirus had been identified worldwide, and more than 4,300 people have died from the disease. Almost 67,000 people affected have recovered, and internationally,

doctors and scientists are working to find a vaccine. Several of the most severely hit countries, including Italy, have seen their healthcare systems sorely tried by the outbreak, and are adopting stringent measures to halt the spread of the disease.

In his remarks at the General Audience, Pope Francis turned his thoughts to those on the frontlines of the struggle against COVID 19.

Right now, I would like to speak directly to all those ill with the coronavirus, who are suffering from this sickness, and to the many people suffering uncertainty related to their own illnesses. I offer my heartfelt thanks to hospital personnel, doctors, nurses, and volunteers who in this difficult moment are close to people who are suffering.

The Holy Father also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the faithful who are praying for relief for those who are suffering, thanking "all Christians, and men and women of goodwill, who are praying - united together, no matter the religious tradition to which they belong. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your efforts".

But though the world's attention is focused on the coronavirus epidemic, Pope Francis also recalled the plight of "the poor Syrians who are suffering on the border between Greece and Turkey, a people who have suffered for many years". He noted that they have been forced to flee from their homes on account of war, hunger, and disease. "Let us not forget our brothers and sisters, including so many children, who are suffering there". *Vatican News*

Interreligious Dialogue, Answer to Sahel Insecurity – Cardinal

Cardinal Philippe Ouédraogo, President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), has reaffirmed the Church's

preference for interreligious dialogue, as an option in resolving conflicts in the Sahel region.

"Interreligious dialogue holds a special place in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel. It is a major pivot in resolving terrorists'

attacks in the Sahel region in particular and Africa in general," Cardinal Ouédraogo, who is also the Archbishop of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, said.

The SECAM President, was speaking on the side-lines of SECAM's Standing Committee meeting in Kenya's capital, Nairobi last week..

Cardinal Ouédraogo continued, "Interreligious dialogue constitutes the focus of our pastoral work where the different religious

confessions, Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, the traditional African religions – whose customary chiefs are essentially its supporters, come together to reflect on the issues of terrorism,"

Sharing his experience of interfaith dialogue, Cardinal Ouedraogo said believers of different faiths could co-exist and work together.

"We try to put a lot of emphasis on internal and external solidarity at the local, regional and international level, and as a local proverb says, 'one finger doesn't pick up flour.' It takes more than one finger to pick up flour. Hence the need to join forces, both internally and externally," the 75-year-old Cardinal observed.

The Africa Sahel region encompasses Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan and Eritrea.

Vatican News



Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Chad especially have been on the receiving end of recurrent terrorist attacks by jihadist groups.

Rethink Demeaning Widowhood Rites – Former Second Lady

By Angela Ofosu Boateng

The Former Second Lady, Mrs. Matilda Amissah-Arthur, has called on Ghanaians to “rethink the things we do as part of widowhood rites because they are demeaning and dehumanising”.

She said most of the rites, especially those performed for women who lose their spouses end up hurting them more than they already are.

Mrs. Amissah-Arthur said this in an address to students of the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) as well as Religious and lay faithful of the Catholic and Methodist Churches in Koforidua recently on the topic “*Journeying with Grieving People: A Reflection on Traditional Beliefs and Practices*”.

She explained that the need to rethink these widowhood rites was because society has evolved, hence most of these rites have outlived their usefulness and are no longer relevant to society.

She added that though these rites were originally to guide the bereaved so as not to bring shame to

the widow and her family, they have been exaggerated and are sometimes used as a means to punish, especially, women who are usually considered as ‘killers’ of their spouses.

Mrs. Amissah-Arthur cited as an example the confinement of the widow for three months with the intention of ascertaining whether the woman is pregnant or not, but with modernization, there are easier ways of finding out whether or not the woman is pregnant without having to confine her.

She also mentioned such practices as shaving off the widow's hair, tying a rope around her and pulling her around the community, putting charcoal in the widow's food and forcing the widow to bath with the water used to bath the corpse of a dead spouse as a way to ascertain whether or not she has been faithful to the husband.

She noted that unfortunately, men are often left out while these cruel acts are meted out only to women by their fellow women.

These rights, she said, are usually seen as a payback time to punish especially women who are not in good terms with the families of

their spouses.

The former Second Lady stressed that these acts are demeaning and are against human rights and must be stopped. She suggested that since grieving is a personal and inward act of expressing pain, the bereaved should be allowed to express his or her grief in ways that make her feel less burdened.

She called on Churches to champion the fight against these inhumane widowhood rites and educate their faithful on the need to end these ‘barbaric’ acts which are not in conformity with Christianity and modernization.

On his part, the Most Rev. Joseph Afrifah-Agyekum, Bishop of the Koforidua Diocese, called on women who are both culprits and victims of these ‘heinous acts’ to champion the cause of bringing it to an end.

The programme was chaired by Dr. S G Ofori, a retired Dermatologist who advised men to clearly write their death wishes so that their wives are not forced to go through these widowhood rites.

The CPE, a programme of Rev. Msgr. Alex Bobby Benson, trains people in the caregiving ministry such as Hospital and Prisons Chaplains, to put the Bible into practice in the lives of people in crisis situations including the terminally ill, the bereaved, and the aged among others.

This year's programme, which started on January 8 and ended on March 28, had five students who are all Ministers of the Methodist Church.

‘Gov’ts Need Prayers to Make Hard Decisions’

Continued from front page

Government authorities, he said, “must make decisions and many times they have to decide on measures that the people do not like. But it is for our own good.”

Many times these officials “feel alone, not understood,” he said. “Let us pray for our governing leaders who have to make decisions on these measures, that they feel accompanied by people's prayers.”

The Italian government announced on March 11 new measures in effect at least until March 25 mandating the complete closure across the country of all commercial and retail businesses, except for grocery stores, drug stores, tobacco shops, gas stations, newsstands and banks. Factories and farms were required to adopt increased measures to maintain worker safety, and essential services, such as utilities, public transportation and the post office, would still be functioning with safety protocols in place.

The stricter measures came as the number of new cases and deaths related to the virus continued to spike. At least 800 people have died and there are currently at least 10,000 known cases of infection, according to the Italian health ministry.

In his homily at the Mass, the Pope reflected on the problem of indifference – when people are very well informed and aware of bad things happening around them, but the news does not “reach the heart” or move them with compassion.

Such indifference is displayed in the day's Gospel story (Lk 16:19-31) of Lazarus, the poor man, at the rich man's door – a man who dined sumptuously each day and did not even share the scraps.

The rich man was “very, very informed, but his heart was closed. Information did not reach the heart of this rich man; he was not able to be moved by others' ordeals,” the Pope said.

“This happens to us, too,” he said. “We all know – because we hear it on the news or in the papers – how many children suffer from hunger today in the world, how many children do not have the medicine they need, how many cannot go to school.”

People know, but they dismiss it as somehow part of life and go on with their own lives because “this information does not reach the heart,” he said.

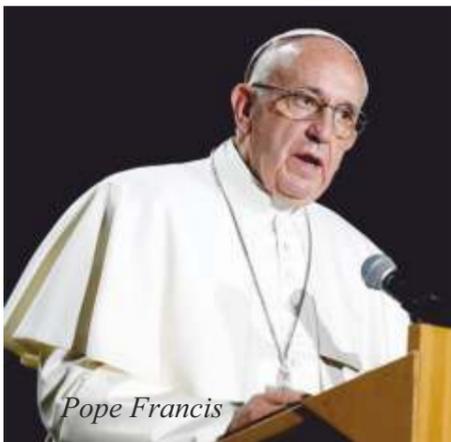
What people think, know and feel are all detached from each other, he said. “The heart is cut off from the head; they are indifferent.”

“Perhaps even those of us here in Rome, we are worried because the stores are closed” and experience other inconveniences, “and we forget about the starving children, we forget those poor people at the nations' borders seeking freedom, these forced migrants who are fleeing from hunger and war and only find walls, a wall made of iron, barbed wire.”

“We live in indifference,” he said, the indifference of being “well informed but not feeling other people's reality.”

The Pope asked that people pray for the grace of not becoming indifferent, that “all the information of human pain that we have reaches the heart and moves us to do something for others.” *CNS*

Vatican Issues Decree For Holy Week Liturgies With Pandemic Restrictions



Pope Francis

While conferences and meetings can be postponed for months because of the coronavirus pandemic, the liturgies of the Holy Week and Easter cannot, with the exception of the Chrism Mass, said the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

“By the mandate of the supreme Pontiff for the year 2020 only,” the Congregation issued guidelines on March 20 for celebrating the Triduum and Easter liturgies without the presence of the faithful.

“Easter is at the heart of the entire liturgical year and is not simply one feast

among others. The Easter triduum is celebrated over the arc of three days, which is preceded by Lent and crowned by Pentecost and, therefore, cannot be transferred to another time,” said the “Decree in the Time of COVID-19.”

The decree was signed by Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation, and by Archbishop Arthur Roche, Secretary.

Because the Chrism Mass is not formally part of the Triduum, they said, a Bishop can decide to postpone its celebration. Usually the Mass is celebrated in the Holy Week and includes a gathering of all the Priests of the Diocese to renew their Priestly promises. During the Mass, the oils – the chrism – used in the sacraments are blessed by the Bishop and distributed to the Priests to take to their Parishes.

Where public Masses have been canceled, the decree said, the Bishops, in agreement with their Bishops' Conference, should ensure that the Holy Week liturgies are celebrated in the cathedral and in parish churches. The faithful should be advised of the times for the celebrations, so that they can pray at home at the same time.

“Live – not recorded –

televsual or internet broadcasts are helpful,” the decree said.

On Holy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper should be celebrated in the cathedral and in parish churches even without the faithful present, it said. “The faculty to celebrate this Mass in a suitable place, without the people, is granted in an exceptional manner to all Priests” this year.

“The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted” when there are no faithful present, it said. The traditional procession with the Blessed Sacrament at the end of the Mass is also omitted, and the Eucharist is placed directly in the tabernacle.

If there is any way to do so, the decree said, the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion should be celebrated and, among the formal prayers of petition, there should be “a special intention for the sick, the dead, for those who feel lost or dismayed.”

For the celebration of the Easter

Vigil without the faithful present, it said, the preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted, but the Easter candle is still lit and the “Exsultet” Easter proclamation is sung or recited.

Processions and other expressions of popular piety that are traditional around the world during Holy Week may be transferred to another date, the decree said. It suggested, for example, September 14-15 in connection with the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. – *CNS*

EDITORIAL

IT IS TIME TO CONSIDER A LOCKDOWN IN GHANA

The world is facing unprecedented times in view of the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which is affecting almost all countries.

The Catholic Standard commends President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for banning all public gatherings including conferences, workshops, funerals, festivals, political rallies, church activities, and other related events as part of measures to prevent the spread of the virus in the country.

While lauding the President for these directives and other measures that are being taken, we would like to add our voice to officials of the Ghana Medical Association (GMA), the Trades Union Congress and other individuals and organisations to appeal to the Government to seriously consider a nationwide LOCKDOWN.

We are of the conviction that it is better to take such a bold decision now to prevent the spread of the virus. A political decision taken in this line in these abnormal times should not be seen as ruthless and unsympathetic. We do not have to wait till the situation gets out of hand before we start running helter-skelter. Countries like Italy, Germany, the US and the UK who have better health facilities and systems have either imposed total shutdowns or partial lockdowns. The number of cases are rising and may get out of control. This is the time for us to listen to the advice of our health experts. The lockdown may be for a week or two in the first instance.

This Paper is not oblivious of the painful conditions a lockdown would bring about in the country. However, it is better to swallow a bitter pill now than to refuse the obvious and get a worse situation in our hands, sooner or later. We have to take into consideration our very poor individual and collective sanitary and health situations.

If for any superior reason(s) a total lockdown is not feasible, at least a partial one may be considered. In such a case, the directives already issued by the President may go further to include:

- A ban on the use of public transport services that do not provide enough social distances by way of their seating arrangements. What we are currently experiencing at the transport stations and in the mini buses is, to say the least, an eye sore.
- Limit the number of officials in offices to only those who are very critical to offering public services. A shift system may be applied.
- Restriction of human activities in the bigger cities – a kind of curfew.
- Intensifying communication in the form of public service announcements in several Ghanaian languages particularly in the rural areas for us as a country to adapt to the new reality of life. Do not let us weigh the economic cost against the benefits of public health.

For *The Catholic Standard*, this pandemic should serve as a wake-up call for all of us to reconsider our lifestyle or behaviour and re-evaluate our selfishness and greed for the good and wellbeing of everybody; this is what the Catholic Church, led by Pope Francis has been advocating for, since time immemorial, but to little effect.

Indeed, this global pandemic, and other infectious disease epidemics in recent times, cannot be separated from the larger societal challenges like climate change, deforestation, threats to food security and the neglect of the poor and needy.

Our prayers are with you- our readers and your loved ones during these trying times. The challenges and uncertainties we are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic or crisis are really unprecedented. This is the time for us to express our solidarity with our brethren. Stay safe, stay healthy.

Gov't Must Adopt Mechanism to Monitor Arms In-flows – Laity Chairman

By Damian Avevor

Professor Elias N. K. Sowley, Chairman of the National Catholic Laity Council, has called on the government to develop a robust mechanism for monitoring the inflows of arms into the country.

In a message at the launch of “Silencing the Guns” campaign in Accra recently, Prof. Sowley suggested that sporadic searches be conducted for unlicensed guns, after a stipulated period of gun registration.

According to him “It is emerging that private individuals have sophisticated weapons than that of the state security agencies. This is evidenced by the rising incidence of crime, some of which are committed with sophisticated weapons.”

Prof. Sowley further suggested that “Citizens who own guns, whether legally or illegally should be encouraged to register them without penalties, particularly in the case of illegally acquired ones.”

He noted that illegal acquisition of weapons may be the reason individuals are unwilling to license them, saying “this state of affairs has caused many Ghanaians to live in fear.”

The National Laity Chairman proposed the institution of incentive awards for the Security and civilian informers able to find large caches of arms.

In a similar message, the leadership of the Knights of St. John International and Ladies Auxiliary, commended the campaigners.

“We stand firmly with you in the



Prof. Sowley

quest to “silence the guns” so that we can all enjoy real peace in Africa, and make it possible for better standard of living for the people of Africa,” Peter C.N. Sangber-Dery and Eugenia Ekuia Enyimayew, respective Supreme Subordinate Commandery President and Supreme Subordinate Auxiliary President, said.

The “Silencing the Guns” campaign initiative is under the auspices of the Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network Africa (JENA), the Lead Magis Africa and the Jesuit Ignatian Youth Networks for Intergenerational Outcomes (IYNIIGO).

According to published estimates, of the 640 million Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) circulating globally, about 100 million are in Africa. Thirty million of this is in sub-Saharan Africa, of which eight million circulate in West Africa.

POGA 2000 Organises Career Fair for OLA SHS Students



*POGA 2000 Year Group

The 2000 year group “Past OLA Girls Association (POGA), made up of professionals from the medical, teaching, human resource, engineering, journalism, creative arts, hospitality, technological, entrepreneurship, auditing and statistics, has organised a career fair for students of the OLA Girls SHS, Ho.

The interactive sessions included self-identity examination, mentor-mentee relationship, voluntarism and networking.

Speaking after the event, some students admitted they had a better view of making career choices.

The OLA School leadership and teachers expressed appreciation to the Group, led by its President, Mrs. Ruby Martha Tawiah and Mrs. Carine L. Malor, Chairperson of the Career Fair Planning Committee.



Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 25.03.2020

DECREE

In time of Covid-19 (II)

Considering the rapidly evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and taking into account observations which have come from Episcopal Conferences, this Congregation now offers an update to the general indications and suggestions already given to Bishops in the preceding decree of 19 March 2020.

Given that the date of Easter cannot be transferred, in the countries which have been struck by the disease and where restrictions around the assembly and movement of people have been imposed, Bishops and Priests may celebrate the rites of Holy Week without the presence of the people and in a suitable place, avoiding concelebration and omitting the sign of peace.

The faithful should be informed of the beginning times of the celebrations so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes. Means of live (not recorded) telematic broadcasts can be of help. In any event it remains important to dedicate an adequate time to prayer, giving importance above all to the *Liturgia Horarum*.

The Episcopal Conferences and individual dioceses will see to it that resources are provided to support family and personal prayer.

1 - **Palm Sunday.** The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated within sacred buildings; in Cathedral churches the second form given in the Roman Missal is to be adopted; in parish churches and in other places the third form is to be used.

2 - **The Chrism Mass.** Evaluating the concrete situation in different countries, the Episcopal Conferences will be able to give indications about a possible transfer to another date.

3 - **Holy Thursday.** The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the procession is also omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. On this day the faculty to celebrate Mass in a suitable place, without the presence of the people, is exceptionally granted to all Priests.

4 - **Good Friday.** In the Universal Prayer, Bishops will arrange to have a special intention prepared for those who find themselves in distress, the sick, the dead, (cf. *Missale Romanum*). The adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant.

5 - **The Easter Vigil:** Is to be celebrated only in Cathedral and parish churches. For the "Baptismal Liturgy" only the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" is maintained (cf. *Missale Romanum*).

Seminaries, houses of clergy, monasteries and religious communities shall follow the indications of this decree.

Expressions of popular piety and processions which enrich the days of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum can be transferred to other suitable days in the year, for example 14 and 15 September, according to the judgement of the Diocesan Bishop.

De mandato Summi Pontificis pro hoc tantum anno 2020.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 25 March 2020, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

✠ Arthur Roche,
Archbishop Secretary



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ALL EDITORS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NMC ADVISORY ON COVERAGE OF CORONA VIRUS ISSUES

Since the global outbreak of the corona virus pandemic and the President's proactive measures to protect Ghana, the media have demonstrated commendable support for the national cause and justified why the Constitution (1992) gave the media a pride of place.

As we continue to mobilise towards collective success, there's one area of

practice the Commission would like to draw attention to.

In the legitimate attempt to reduce public anxiety and provide hope in this moment of disquiet, some media have resorted to making jokes about the disease

While humour may have its place in reducing anxieties in moments of national stress, it also carries the risk of minimising the sense of urgency and possibly leading to complacency in public response.

The Commission would therefore like to remind the media that in a situation like this, balance still remains our greatest professional virtue. And the best way to achieve that is to rely on the official sources for accurate information.

With God on our side, we know we shall triumph.

GEORGE SARPONG
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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To all Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Lay Faithful,

ADDITIONAL DIRECTIVES ON THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID -19) PANDEMIC FROM THE GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE .

Receive warm Lenten greetings from the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference.

In consonance with the directives issued on Saturday, March 21, 2020 at 9:00pm by His Excellency, Nana Akufo-Addo, the President of Ghana calling for a National Day of Prayer and Fasting on March 25, 2020 for God's intervention to end the Coronavirus Pandemic in Ghana and in the whole world, we, your Bishops, further recommend that:

- All Catholics and People of goodwill observe the day as such.
- As Wednesday, March 25, 2020 marks the Solemnity of the Annunciation, the beginning of human salvation, let us all pray to the Divine Healer who has taken seed in human history to heal our troubled world from the pandemic. On this same day, Pope Francis calls on all Christians globally to recite at the same time the prayer Jesus taught us - the "Our Father" to invoke the Omnipotent God to intervene in this crisis. We recommend that this is done in Ghana at 12:00 noon.
- Fridays within the Lenten season and the rest of this season be used to do more penance, fasting and praying for an end to the spread of the virus.

We know the critical moment we are facing as a Church which includes the inability to assemble for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and other spiritual activities. However, our Faith and prayer-life at home are not affected. We, therefore, urge all families to use these challenging times to continue to build up the domestic Church through the reading and sharing of the Word of God, praying the Rosary and other devotional prayers.

It is our wish that all and sundry will do their part in this time of uncertainty to adhere to all directives put in place by the State and the Church to curb the spread of the Covid-19 as quickly as possible.

We, your Bishops, assure you of our prayers and blessings.

May God who is our healer, protector and shield keep us safe and heal all those infected with the virus in these trying moments.

MOST REV. PHILIP NAAMEH
METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF TAMALE &
PRESIDENT, GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
ISSUED ON TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020

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Gov't Holds Stakeholder Sessions On Public Education Drive

Members of the Government of Ghana COVID-19 Sensitisation Team recently engaged members of the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association, Ghana Journalists Association and Private Newspapers Association of Ghana with further sessions on sustaining public education on the pandemic.

The engagements were held separately at the premises of the Ministry of Information and the International Press Centre, both in Accra.

Government is using the engagements to primarily equip the media with the appropriate information on the outbreak of the pandemic in the country.

The training programmes will be extended to all the regions.

Addressing the gathering, the General Secretary of the Ghana Medical Association, Dr. Justice Yankson, admonished the media to “as much as possible stick to the right professionals at all times. “You have the prerogative to invite people to your programmes but I think this time around, you should scrutinise the level of the professionals before they come out to put information that throws all the good work that the nation is doing into a state of confusion. The first-to-report syndrome, in as much as it is a great asset for every media house, we think that this time, we should also be very circumspect in the way we apply it”.

In the wake of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in the country, the Government has brought together both the media and medical professionals in a bid to streamline the flow of information from health experts down to the vast majority of Ghanaians. Last week, the Government announced a collaboration with these key media umbrella bodies and the various



Oppong Nkrumah

Medical Associations in the country in order to make sure information is disseminated smoothly.

The Minister of Information, Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, pointed out that the essence of the collaboration is to “support and ensure that public education goes well so that when the public knows what to do, we are all better protected.”

In addition, the Ghana Health Service and the Ghana Medical Association distributed flyers, handbill materials and self-quarantine guides to educate the media and the public on the rudiments of self-quarantine as well as the contact details of the Regional and National response teams designated for communication on the Covid-19.

Other speakers at the ceremony included Deputy Information Minister, Mr. Pius Enam Hadzide, Presidential Advisor on Health, Dr. Nsiah Asare, Deputy Health Minister, Mr. Alexander Abban and Dr Aboagye Dacosta of the Risk Communication Department of the Ghana Health Service.

Source: ghanaweb.com

Anglophone Vincentians Leadership Conference Ends in Accra

By Damian Avevor

National Leaders of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP) from English speaking African countries recently held their third leadership conference in Accra to reinforce leadership and spiritual principles upon which the Society was founded.

The five-day training at the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) Hall, Accra was also aimed at sensitising the SSVP Africa Group 1 Leaders on Vincentian Spirituality, Effective Communication, Aggregation, Institution and Twinning Procedures; and Qualities of Good Leadership.

The Vincentians who attended the March 12 to 16, 2020 training were from Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, Liberia, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Kenya as well as selected National and International officers of the Society.

Madam Ama Gaines, a Communications Specialist in an address told the Vincentian leaders drawn from eight African countries to see communication as an effective practice of leadership at their various National Conferences.

She urged the leadership of the Society to appreciate that communication involves two parties, the giver and the receiver and urged leaders to live what they tell the membership.

Dr. (Mrs.) Veronica N. Nwokoch, the Formation Training Coordinator of the SSVP Africa Group 1 from Nigeria, stressed on the need to “Make your

meeting open enough for them to feel comfortable & able to bring to your attention those problems that may need some teasing; Many problems can be resolved across the table in a relaxed atmosphere.

“As leaders, we therefore need to be virtuous and inclusive,” Dr. Nwokoch said, calling on the Vincentian leaders to be “integrated and holistic, marked by harmony and balance, he added.

On his part, Fr. Andrew Campbell, SVD, the National Spiritual Advisor, Ghana, who spoke on Vincentian Spirituality, said the motivation for the members was found in the spirituality of the Society which involves both prayer and action.

He said as spiritual leaders, “We are called to reflect on the spirit and inspiration of St. Vincent de Paul and living according to God's will under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” He stated that the commitment to the Mission and Culture of the Society, calls us to a life of simplicity, integrity, meekness, honesty and humility and our experience of solidarity with people who are poor, marginalised or without power.

The Inter-Territorial Vice President of the SSVP Africa Group 1, Patrick Ebhojie from Nigeria, who chaired the training Sessions, noted that the Vincentian leader must keep the flame alive through prayer and contemplation and being grounded in the lives of people who are poor or in need.

He reminded the African leaders that leadership was all about sacrifice,

continued on back page

Good Shepherd School Wins National Catholic Brain Battle Quiz

By Damian Avevor

The maiden edition of the Brain Battle Mathematics and Science Quiz for Catholic Basic and Junior High Schools (JHS) in Ghana, ended on March 15, 2020 at the Christ the King Parish hall, Accra with the Good Shepherd School in the Ashanti region taking home the coveted trophy, GHc10,000 and many consolation prizes.

They won with 47.5 points, beating St. Mary School, Brong-Ahafo with 2 points who were first runner-up with 45.5 points. Mount Mary School in the Eastern Region placed third with 27.5 points.

The second placed School received GHc5, 000 and the third had GHc2, 000 in addition to other consolation prizes. Other contesting Schools were also rewarded.

The St. Anthony of Padua School from the Western Region, Ancilla School from Upper West region and St. Mary's Preparatory and JHS, Brong-Ahafo Region, who displayed their Science practical Project were also awarded for excelling in

that category. The practical project included the generating of electrical energy from urine, a technology for sorting out different Ghana Cedi coins and the use of biogas for power.

With the slogan *It's Mental, not Muscles*, the quiz contest was aimed at enhancing the knowledge of Basic School pupils in Ghana in the study of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Ing. Dr. Ken Ashigbey, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ghana Chamber of Telecommunication, who was the Guest of Honour at the Grand Finale, commended the finalists for making their schools proud and thanked their teachers for moulding them in the area of Science and technology.

He noted that the world has become a global village which require skills and innovations. He expressed joy that young people through Catholic education and the brain battle quiz have brought to bare their creativity, innovations and initiatives of science, maths and technology.”

He lauded the confidence of the contestants and asked them “to take their



Archbishop Kwofie presenting a dummy cheque of GHc10,000 to the contestants of the Good Shepherd School.

education seriously especially by enhancing their skills in science, mathematics and technology.”

Rev. Fr. Lazarus Anondee, Secretary General of the Ghana's National Catholic Secretariat said the quiz “serves as an impetus for performance and future national quiz,” noting that “the teaching and learning of science and mathematics should be taken seriously by every family and schools since we are now in a technological world.”

Archbishop John Bonaventure Kwofie, the Episcopal Chairman for Education, thanked the organisers, contesting schools, teachers and all the

contests especially the finalists for exhibiting great knowledge at the competition, saying that “the next event will be super.”

He said the Brain battle quiz was an opportunity to prepare the young ones for the future especially for the National Science and Maths Quiz for Senior High Schools and prayed that this year, a Catholic SHS again wins the national trophy.

The quiz was organised by the National Catholic Education Directorate and the Cocktail Media, an NGO under the auspices of Archbishop Kwofie.

Oyarifa Spiritan Rectorate Launches Silver Jubilee



The Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Rectorate, Oyarifa in the Accra Archdiocese run by the Spiritans, has launched the celebration of its 25th Anniversary.

Launching the anniversary, Mrs Monica Gaikpah, said a Thanksgiving Mass with Confirmation would climax the anniversary. There would also be special celebrations for societies and groups in the Rectorate.

The Priest-in-charge of the Rectorate, Rev. Fr. George Omondi Onyango, CSSp, paid tribute to former Priests and Seminarians, especially Rev. Fr. Francis Mulders, SMA, and the late Archbishop Dominic Andoh, for their support in establishing the Oyarifa Church.

He encouraged the faithful to devote time to make the year-long celebration successful.

The Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Rectorate, once known as the St. Paul Church, started as a fellowship by three families: the Gbormitas, the Hamenus and the Azametis, who had come from the St. Francis Xavier Church, Kotobabi for Rosary devotion and Bible sharing.

Until its elevation as a Rectorate, the church was an outstation of the Saint John the Evangelist Church, Adenta Housing Down.

From Felix Nyaaba, CAMP-G

The St. Victor's Major Seminary, Tamale recently celebrated Rector's Day on the feast of the Chair of St. Peter, with Mass presided over by the Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Daniel Saaka, Vice Rector of the Seminary and concelebrated by Formators and rectors of other Formation Houses.

Fr. Daniel Saaka, in a homily noted that the Rector's Day symbolises service, discipline and unity in the community, and reminded the seminarians that a leader is not to be served but to serve.

He explained that the Seminary is noted for discipline, and encouraged them to pray for their Rectors.

A get-together climaxed the celebrations at which trophies were presented to

St. Victor's Seminary Holds Rector's, Benefactors' Days

winning Houses of the Seminary.

In a related development, benefactresses and benefactors of the Seminary visited the Seminary and instituted the "Friends of St. Victor's Seminary Association" to support it.

They joined the seminarians and the formators in a Mass and later had breakfast with them.

Rev. Fr. Sebastian Balansuah, a formator of the Seminary, in a homily encouraged the seminarians to make progress in their spiritual growth.

The interim executive of the "Friends of St. Victor's Seminary" is made up of Joseph Attiah as Chairman, Dr. Conrad Kuuder, Vice Chairman, Zita Adumglo, Secretary and Vida Awogtah Nabson, Vice Secretary. The rest are Amos Balaara, Financial Secretary, Augustine Seidu, Treasurer, Elizabeth Naah, Organizer, and Gideon Adu, Assistant Organizer.

Rev. Fr. Daniel Saaka, Vice Rector of the Seminary is an ex-officio member.

From Ernest Nabonasongo and Matthew Akakpo



Seminarians in a volley ball game.



Fr. Saaka with the Executives

Live Holy Lives – Bishop Adanuty



**Bishop Adanuty with the concelebrating Priests.*

The Most Rev. Anthony Kwami Adanuty, Bishop Emeritus of the Keta-Akatsi Diocese, has challenged Catholics to live holy lives.

In a sermon at a Sogakope Deanery thanksgiving Mass, to mark the creation of the Keta-Akatsi Diocese, the Bishop urged them to strive for perfection in all their endeavours.

A symposium was held earlier at Adidome, facilitated by Sir Stephen Adzamli, the Director of the Laity Council and Rev. Fr. Wonder Senyo, Assistant Parish Priest, Sogakope.

In attendance at the Thanksgiving Mass were Priests and Parishioners from Parishes, Rectories and Outstations of the Deanery.

From Sam Gomashie



SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020 - SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020

'Every Man for Himself' is not a Solution to Pandemic, Pope Says

As more and more countries start to feel the economic pinch due to the coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis urged business leaders to seek solutions that will not hurt employees and their families.

"Each (country) must find concrete solutions depending on their situation, but of course, 'every man for himself,' is not a solution," the pope said in an interview via Skype that aired in Spain March 22. "A business that lays off employees to save itself is not a solution. In this moment, instead of laying off, we must welcome and make everyone feel that there is a society of solidarity."

When told by Spanish journalist Jordi Evole that business leaders could argue that he may not be knowledgeable business management and the struggles of maintaining a business with staggering production losses, the pope said they were right in their assertion.

But, he continued: "I do know the hardships that will face the employee, the workers and their families. And there are certain realities appearing, and we are being asked to take care of those realities."

Commenting on the images of

him blessing an empty St. Peter's Square at the end of his Sunday Angelus address, Pope Francis said that the square has become "a desert."

Although he does not meet with groups, the pope said he still holds personal meetings "every hour or every half-hour, and I continue to work normally."

He was also asked if he was an "optimist" when it came to how the world would be after the current crisis is over.

"I don't like that word because optimism sounds to me like makeup," something false and superficial, he said. "I have hope in humanity, in men and women, and I have hope in the people. I have a lot of hope (in) the people who will take lessons from this crisis to rethink their lives. We are going to come out better, although there will be fewer of us, of course. Many will remain on the path and it is hard. But I have faith we will come out of this better."

While all of Italy has been on lockdown since March 9 and Spain followed suit March 14, more and more countries, including the United States, have begun to adopt similar measures in an effort to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

When asked what he would tell men, women and families who live in fear due to the pandemic, the pope said that "the last thing I would do is tell them something."

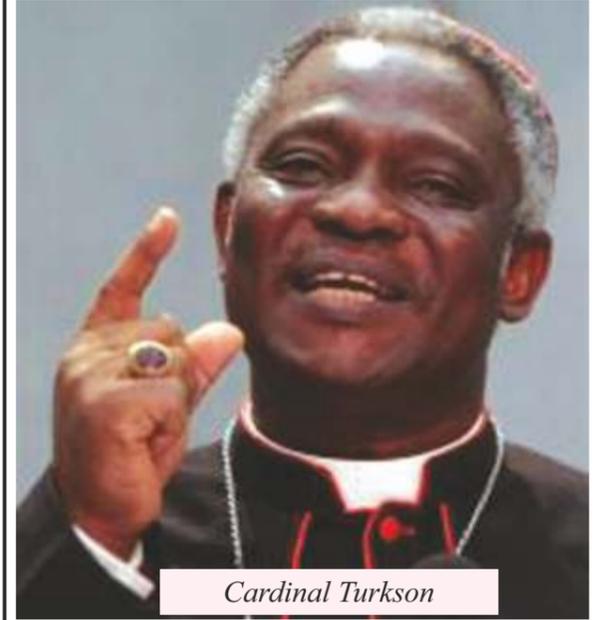
"What I try to do is make them feel that I am close to them. Today, the language of gestures is more important than words. Of course, something should be said, but it is the gesture of sending them a greeting" that is most important, he said.

The current pandemic, Pope Francis added, has also revealed the plight of the less fortunate, which is a tragedy "that is concealed from societies."

"A couple of days ago, a police officer – with good intentions – told a man, 'Sir, please go home, you can't be out here in the street.' And this man told him, 'I don't have a home. I live on the street,'" the pope recalled.

"We must start to be close to those people who we only know as a concept: the homeless, those who are taken advantage, the sad world of exploited women which is all a business. And this brings us close to those people who, in a way, have very little hope because they don't have anywhere to lean on. It's very sad but at the same time, we start to realize that these people exist," he said. *CNS*

COVID-19 Pandemic: Time to Understand Value of Brotherhood – Cardinal Turkson



Cardinal Turkson

While the coronavirus pandemic gripping the world highlights the frailty of human life, it is also an opportunity for people to unite in solidarity, says Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

"For each person, believer or nonbeliever, this is a good time to understand the value of brotherhood, of being linked to one another in an indissoluble way," he said in a statement on March 11.

It is "a time in which, in the horizon of faith, the value of solidarity which springs from the love that is sacrificed for others, helps us to see the 'other' -- person, people, or nation -- not as just as an instrument, but as our 'counterpart,' a 'helper,' made to share with us in the banquet of life to which all people are equally invited by God," he wrote.

The Italian government has taken drastic measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, which has infected thousands in the country, especially in the northern regions of Lombardy and Emilia Romagna.

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced on March 11 that all businesses, restaurants and bars would be closed except for supermarkets, pharmacies and essential services.

Cardinal Turkson said that in Italy and around the world, many are experiencing "days of great concern and growing anxiety" at a time when "human fragility and vulnerability" are particularly clear because of the pandemic.

Like any other emergency situation, he added, the challenges facing countries trying to contain the virus also "highlight more clearly the serious inequalities that characterize our socioeconomic systems."

"Faced with this range of inequalities, the human family is challenged to feel and live truly as an interconnected and interdependent family," the Ghanaian cardinal said. "The prevalence of the coronavirus has demonstrated this global significance, having initially affected only one country and then spread to every part of the globe."

Addressing the lack of liturgical celebrations, especially during the Lenten season, Cardinal Turkson said Catholics are called in this time "to an even more deeply rooted journey on what sustains spiritual life: prayer, fasting and charity."

"If we cannot gather in our assemblies to live our faith together as we usually do, God offers us the opportunity to enrich ourselves, to discover new paradigms and to rediscover our personal relationship with him," the cardinal said. *CNS*

Anglophone Vincentians Leadership Conference Ends in Accra

Continued from page 6

telling them that 'as leaders you have to put in more effort in whatever you do for the good of society, adding that Vincentian leadership is not something we do, but the person we are.'

A Thanksgiving Mass was held at the Christ the King Catholic Church after which the Vincentians interacted with about 60 street children at the Christ The King Soup Kitchen.

They also



*The Vincentians with Fr. Andrew Campbell, SVD, the National Spiritual Advisor, Ghana after a Thanksgiving Mass at the Christ the King Parish on Sunday, March 15, 2020.

visited the SSVV Centre for the Aged in Tema. The Sister in charge of the Centre, Sr. Bridget Agbenyo, briefed the

participants on the operations of the Centre and the challenges confronting the management of the Centre.