



Catholic Archdiocese of Accra

LENTEN PASTORAL LETTER TO ALL CHRIST'S FAITHFUL IN THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ACCRA

My Dear People of God,

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

Two years ago, when I wrote to encourage you to observe the season of Lent, the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic were at their peaks. So, we could not even gather in our respective churches to worship together. Today, though the pandemic is still with us, we thank God that we can gather to worship as well as go about our daily activities while observing the prescribed protocols. In this pastoral letter, I wish to encourage all to observe the key elements of the Season and to urge all to become true missionaries.

1. Lent, A Season of Grace

Lent is a season in which the Church reminds us of the need to constantly allow the grace of God, like fresh rainfall, to renew our relationship with Him.

Often this renewal begins with **repentance**. Hence, let us in this Lenten Season soberly heed to our Lord's call to repentance and acceptance of the demands of His Good News: "**repent** and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). Christian renewal, however, is not static but dynamic. Therefore, to sustain it we need to use the various channels of God's grace of renewal; **confession, prayer, fasting** and **almsgiving**.

2. Legacy of Hope

On 16th January, 2022, I launched the Legacy of Hope projects in the Archdiocese. Subsequently, the sod-cutting of the Children's Hospital, which is first of the Legacy of Hope projects, took place at Atomic-Kwabanya on 18th January, 2022. I wish to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the organizers of the sod-cutting event, parishes, church associations, organizations, families, and individuals who cheerfully donated or pledged various sums of money on the occasion.

In this Lenten Season, I wish to encourage every Catholic in the Archdiocese to make a commitment to donate towards the realization of the construction of the Children's Hospital. The Lenten practices of fasting and almsgiving go hand-in-hand. The monies we save through fasting should be committed to almsgiving/charity. And the Children's Hospital project affords us a unique opportunity to be charitable to many children across several future generations. The Lord will certainly reward in abundance all who cheerfully give towards this impactful legacy project. Here is His assurance to all: "give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap" (Luke 6:38).

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3. Missionary: A Soul for Christ

The national censuses over the past few decades show a downward trend of the percentage of Catholics in the country. This should be a wake-up call for all Catholics in Ghana, especially all those confirmed or old enough to be confirmed, to heed the command of Christ: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). Whereas not all can be full-time missionaries, we can all undertake the project of *a soul for Christ every year*. Let us each endeavour to lead a soul to Christ every year.

It is disturbing that the Catholic population is going down, therefore, let us use the forty (40) days of Lent to prepare and equip ourselves to become fishers of souls for Christ (cf. Luke 5:10). In the first place, this preparation entails the Lenten acts of personal renewal which will make our witnessing credible. Secondly, equipping ourselves also requires that we intensify our reading and study of the Word of God. As a fisherman uses a net to catch fish, so by proclaiming the Word of God (the spiritual fishing net), we can “catch” souls for Christ. Thus, St. Paul affirms: “For, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ But how are they to call on One in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in One of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim Him?” (Rom. 10:13-14).

As Catholics, while drawing souls to Christ, we will haul them into the spiritual boat, namely, the Church which He entrusted to St. Peter (cf. Matt. 16:13-19). This Lent, therefore, is the time to arise, Catholic faithful, and gird our loins, so that we can push the boat into the sea. Then, from Easter Sunday, we can row the boat together to locate souls, and cast the spiritual net of God’s Word to catch them for Christ. These souls include lapsed and defected Catholics some of whom our visits and acts of kindness could be like the bait used by fishermen to attract them back into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Conclusion

Finally, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Help of Christians, and Health of the Sick, may our nation and indeed the whole world experience an ever-dwindling effect of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with a progressive restoration of the normalcy of life!

Have a Spirit-filled season of Lent!

+ *John B. Kwofie*

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Metropolitan Archbishop of Accra



Given this 2nd day of March 2022, Ash Wednesday.