



# KENYA EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE

## CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

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Our Ref:

Your Ref:

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012, Nairobi

To all the Christ faithful of the Catholic Church - Kenya:  
Clergy and Religious,  
Catechists,  
Lay faithful (Catholic Men, Women and Youth)

### PASTORAL LETTER: PASTORAL APPROACH TO CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

*"...God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good" (Gen 1. 31)*

May the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God the Father and creator of heaven and earth, and in fellowship of the Holy Spirit descend upon you.

I write on behalf of the Kenya Episcopal Conference and the entire body of the Christ faithful of the Catholic Church in Kenya to remind you and call your attention, my brothers and sisters to the moral and pastoral responsibility we have towards our creator and his creation by virtue of our Christian faith.

The opening chapter of the Bible begins with these words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." At the end of creation he created man and woman in his own image (cf. Gen 1.26). He blessed them and gave them every creature and the whole earth to rule over, care for, and cultivate. (cf. Gen. 1.28-31)

The Catholic tradition teaches that creation is part and parcel of the salvific plan of God. The catechism of the Catholic Church states that "*creation is the foundation of all God's saving plan, the beginning of the history of salvation that culminates in Christ*". (Catechism no. 280) the document describes creation as the basis of human and Christian life, "*for it makes explicit the response of the Christian faith to the basic questions that men (and women) of all times have asked themselves: Where do we come from? Where are we going?...*" (Catechism. 282). All Christ Faithful must, therefore, show respect for the Creator by good stewardship of creation.

The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, (Africa's commitment) *Africae Munus*, reiterates that unprecedented desertification and environmental pollution are caused by human exploitation and greed. The Holy Father observes that, "*Serious damage is done to nature, to the forests, to flora and fauna, and countless species risk extinction. All of this threatens the entire ecosystem and consequently the survival of humanity.*" (*Africae Munus* no. 80) This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions which cannot be ignored.

INCORPORATING: THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S OFFICE

**Commissions:** 1) Commission for Liturgy, 2) Commission for Doctrine, 3) Commission for Pastoral & Lay Apostolate, 4) Seminary Episcopal Commission, 5) Commission for Missions, 6) Commission for Religious & Clergy - Liaison Committee, 7) Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 8) Commission for Education & Religious Education, 9) Commission for Social Communications, 10) Commission for Ecumenism, 11) Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue, 12) Commission for Development and Social Services/Caritas Kenya, 13) Commission for Health, 14) Commission for Refugees, Migrants & Seafarers, 15) Commission for Finance **Non Commissions:** 1) Canon Law National Office, 2) Family Life Office, 3) Apostolate to the Nomads (A.N.A)

The Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC) is committed, through various programs and Catholic institutions to promote environmental care from an integral pastoral perspective. The Kenya Episcopal Conference, through the *commission of pastoral and lay apostolate* and related KEC commissions and institutions has committed to develop a long term plan for pastoral approach to the care for God's creation in partnership with Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) which will be launched this year 2012.

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) is a non - governmental organization based in UK working with faith groups around the world to conserve the environment. Their objective is assisting the different faith traditions to develop their faith consistent long term plans for a sustainable conservation of environment. Last year ARC organized a forum of faith traditions in Nairobi in which the Kenya Episcopal Conference participated. Faith groups were invited to make a long term commitment to the care and protection of environment by promoting good practices through their faith institutions and premises.

This initiative, in addition to the current social engagement of the Catholic Church in similar programs is a Pastoral approach to environmental care and is specifically addressing the environmental care from a faith point of view. We need to integrate the practice with our faith: through catechesis, homilies, Christian songs, poems, dramas and all the literature that can promote the care of environment as a Christian obligation and priority. It is an invitation to all the Christians to participate actively in the all-inclusive initiative to protect our planet earth.

We invite all the Christ faithful: religious, clergy, catechists and laity; including, Youth, Catholic Women Associations, Catholic Men Associations and all other lay associations to prioritize their engagement with the environmental care as a way of appreciating and advancing the creative mission of God whose image we bear. The areas of engagement include, in general: education, farming and agriculture, tree planting. Through our catholic institutions, schools, parishes, retreat centres, pastoral centres, shrines, church owned land we are committed to realize this dream of building a healthy society, healthy earth and a healthy Church.

Your cooperation, your creativity, your contribution is all we need to realize this dream together. Faith commitment to a living planet is a Catholic commitment to the care of God's creation.

Signed, 

Rt. Rev. James Maria Wainaina

**CHAIRMAN: KEC-Commission for Pastoral and Lay Apostolate**

**Cc. His Eminence John Cardinal Njue – Chairman - Kenya Episcopal Conference**  
**All Arch/Bishops - Kenya Episcopal Conference**  
**Rev. Fr. Vincent Wambugu - KEC-Secretary General**  
**Rev. Fr. Charles Odira – National Pastoral Coordinator**