



CARITAS GHANA

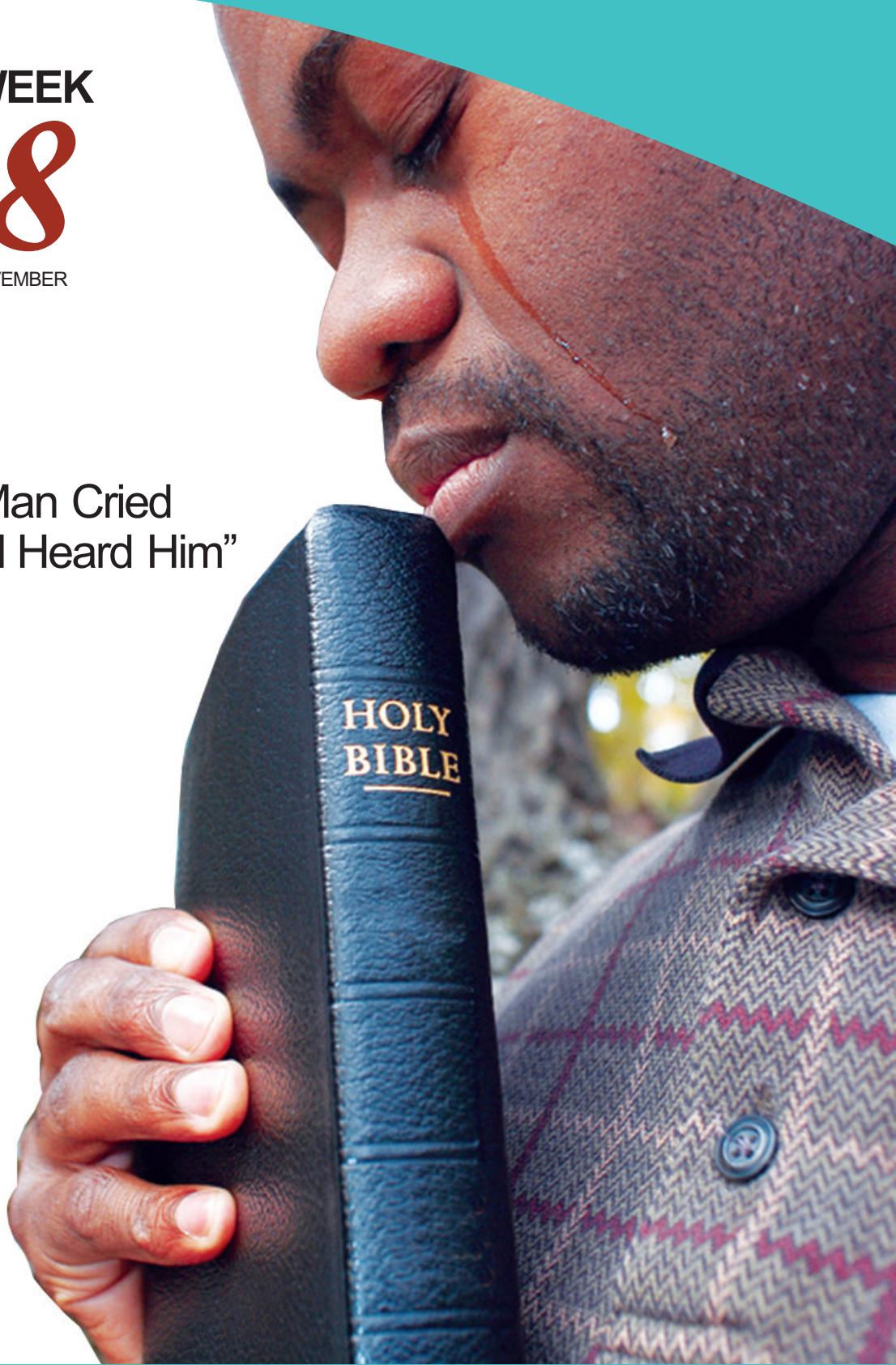
CARITAS WEEK  
**2018**

28TH OCTOBER – 4TH NOVEMBER

**Theme:**

“This Poor Man Cried  
and the Lord Heard Him”

**SPONSORS:**



CARITAS WEEK, 2018



**His Holiness, Pope Francis**







**His Excellency Nana Addo-Dankwa Akufo Addo,  
President of the Republic of Ghana**



**His Eminence Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle,**  
-President of Caritas Internationalis and Archbishop of Manila, Philippines



**His Eminence Peter Cardinal Appiah Turkson**  
Prefect of Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Vatican Rome.





**His Excellency Most Rev. Jean Marie Speich**  
Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana



## Most Rev. Philip Naameh

– Metropolitan Archbishop of Tamale and President of Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference.



## Most Rev. Gabriel Justice Anokye

Metropolitan Archbishop of Kumasi, President of Caritas Africa and 1st  
Vice President of Caritas Internationalis





**Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu**  
Bishop of Konongo-Mampong Diocese and Episcopal  
Chairman of Caritas Ghana



**Mr. Michel Roy**  
Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, Vatican, Rome

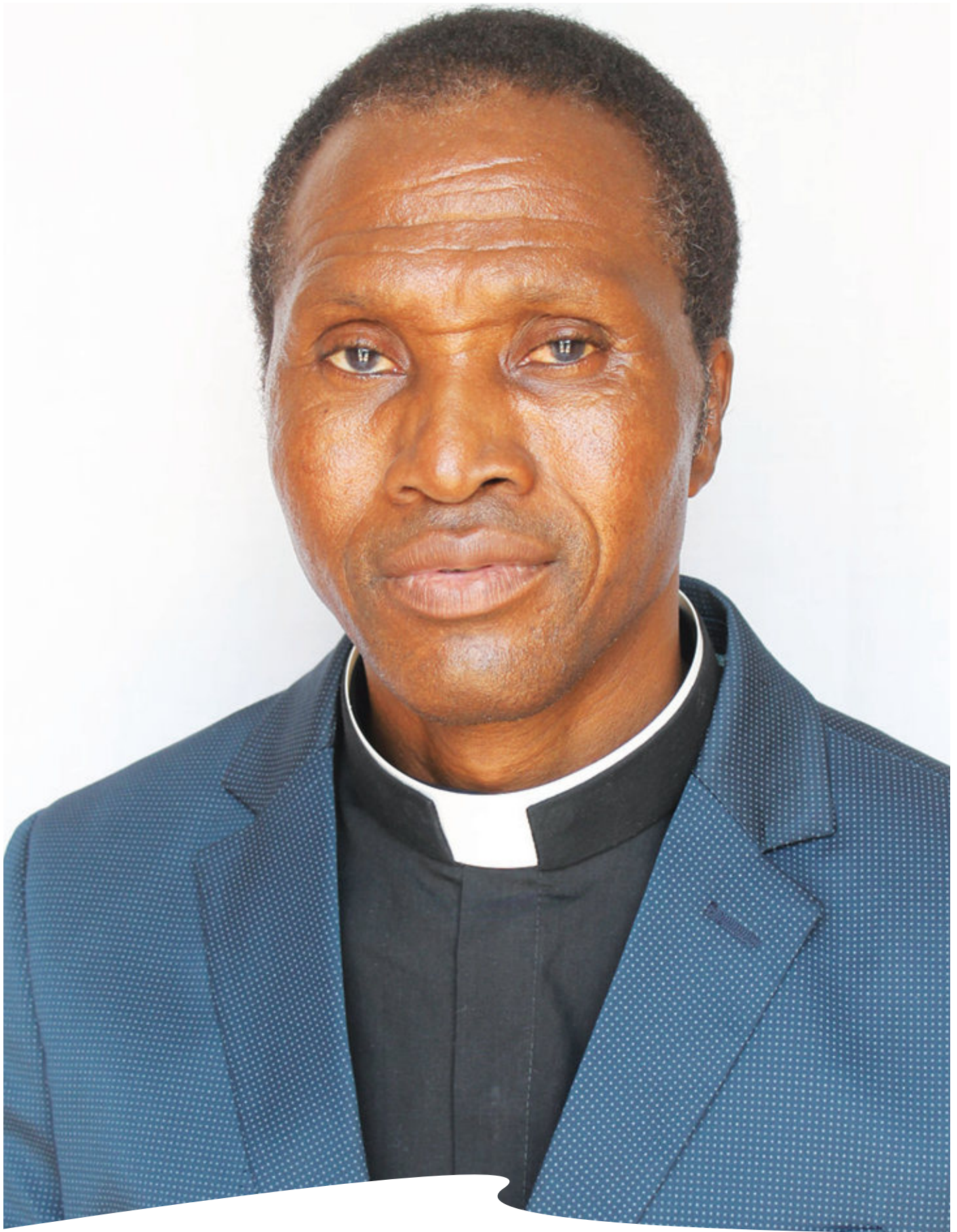


**Mr. Albert Mashika**

**Executive Secretary – Caritas Africa, Lome, Republic of Togo.**







**Very Rev. Fr. Lazarus Anondee,**  
Secretary General, Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and  
Member of Caritas Ghana Board of Directors



## **Rev. Fr. Wisdom Larweh**

**Assistant Secretary General, Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference  
and Member of Caritas Ghana Board of Directors**





## **Mr. Samuel Zan Akologo**

**Executive Secretary, Department of Human Development and  
Caritas Ghana; Secretary, Caritas Ghana's Board of Directors.**



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## Message from the Episcopal Chairman for the Maiden CARITAS WEEK in Ghana, 2018

***“UBICARITASETAMOR, DEUSIBI EST” – “Where there is CHARITY and LOVE that is where God is”!!***

**T**his popular Latin song refrain expresses the spirit of Caritas – the Service of Charity. The Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference has decided to give greater impetus and visibility to the Caritas model and brand in Ghana. The Conference first gave approval for the registration of Caritas Ghana as an organizational entity owned by the National Catholic Secretariat, on behalf of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference. Following a formal launching of Caritas Ghana in June, 2016 and a series of reviews by the Conference, it went further to institutionalize a CARITAS WEEK in Ghana during their 2017 Plenary Assembly in Ho.

These are welcome developments for the Church in Ghana, especially for the promotion of integral human development. The developments are consistent with the *Motu Proprio, Intima Ecclesiae Natura* (In the Service of Charity). It is also consistent with the call for an ‘organized service of charity’ in the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (# 20). The Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference also formally acknowledged the global Management Standards for all Caritas Member Organizations, which have been formulated by Caritas Internationalis and endorsed by His Holiness Pope Francis. As Episcopal Chairman for Caritas in Ghana, I am greatly delighted that the Church in Ghana is following a road-map well laid out for the institutional development of Caritas for a well-organized service of charity.

The CARITAS WEEK is expected to be a means of popularizing the service of charity as an integral part of the Church’s Mission. Through the annual celebrations of this dedicated Week, Caritas will be more felt in Communities, Church Groups, Civil Society, public policy spaces and indeed, all of society.

I would like to thank all my Brother Bishops of the Conference and especially the Members of the Episcopal Committee for the Department of Human Development who have made this profound decision through the discernment of the



Spirit. The Executive Secretary of the Department of Human Development, Mr Samuel Zan Akologo, has worked tirelessly with his staff to facilitate the decision of the Bishops’ Conference on the institutionalization of the Caritas model in Ghana. His efforts and those of his colleague staff in the Department of Human Development are greatly acknowledged and appreciated by the Bishops and the leadership of the National Catholic Secretariat.

May the theme for the 2018 CARITAS WEEK, “This Poor Man cried and the Lord heard him” inspire Caritas Ghana and the entire Church to be more responsive to the cries of the poor. I give my Episcopal blessing to the maiden 2018 CARITAS WEEK in Ghana.

***Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu  
Bishop of Konongo-Mampong Diocese and  
Episcopal Chairman of Caritas Ghana.  
August, 2018***

## INTRODUCTION:

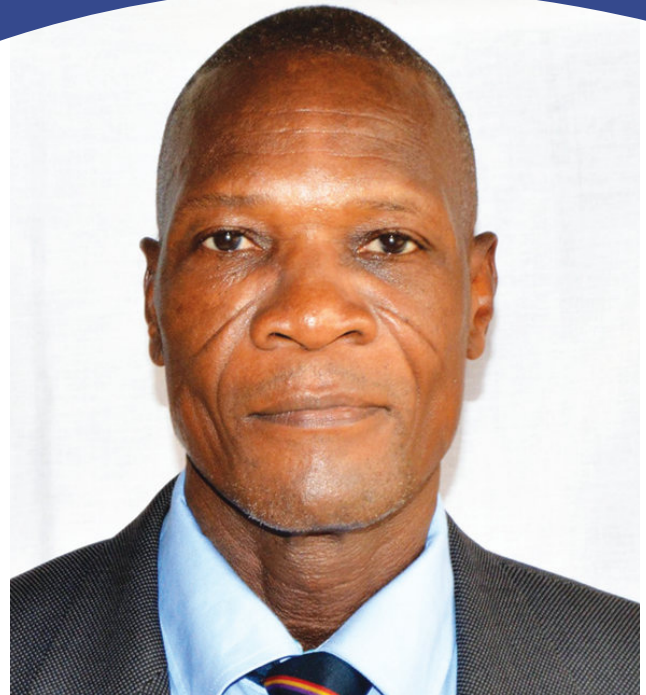
By Mr. Samuel Zan Akologo, Executive Secretary, Department of Human Development and Caritas Ghana; Secretary, Caritas Ghana's Board of Directors.

## CARITAS WEEK IN GHANA, 2018!!

Caritas Ghana is the Development, Relief and Public Policy Advocacy Agency of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC). Caritas (the service of Charity), is a constitutive part of the Mission of the Church. According to Pope Francis, a 'Church without Charity does not exist' and Caritas is the 'caress of the Mother Church to her children, her tenderness and closeness'. The introduction of the "Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura" of Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI instructs as follows: "The service of charity is (...) also a constitutive element of the Church's mission and an indispensable expression of her very being". The institutional development of Caritas Ghana was formalized, with a certificate of incorporation in March, 2016, as a National Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) of the Catholic Church in Ghana with the National Catholic Secretariat as the Owner (on behalf of the Bishops' Conference).

The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) approved a CARITAS WEEK in November, 2017 at their Plenary Assembly in Ho to promote Caritas and its purpose in the Church and Society in Ghana. The Conference delegated to the Episcopal Committee for the Department of Human Development to further deliberate on the detail arrangements for the Week. The Episcopal Committee, in January, 2018, proposed that the CARITAS WEEK be scheduled to coincide with the newly established WORLD DAY OF THE POOR by Pope Francis which falls on the Thirty-third (33rd) Sunday in Ordinary Time of the Church's Liturgical Calendar. For 2018, it was further proposed that the Week be celebrated from 28th October to 4th November, in view of the 2018 Plenary Assembly of the GCBC which was already scheduled for the week of 11 – 18 November. The 2018 scheduled date for the CARITAS WEEK was to ensure that Bishops would be available in their respective Dioceses for the maiden CARITAS WEEK celebration.

The theme for the 2018 CARITAS WEEK is "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him" (Psalm 34:6). This is the title of the message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Second World Day of the Poor which is scheduled for 18th November, 2018. Caritas Ghana has suggested that the 2018 CARITAS WEEK be celebrated in ALL DIOCESES,



PARISHES, RECTORIES AND COMMUNITIES following the programme outline for the Week. Each Diocese can however adapt this framework in very creative and innovative ways to reflect their respective local environment and circumstances. It is the responsibility of each Coordinator of the Diocesan Caritas Organization/Development Office to remind his/her Bishop to issue a letter to ALL his Collaborators; especially Parish Priests to facilitate the celebration. The Programme of celebration is expected to be inclusive and embrace all the sectors for the Service of Charity (Health, Education, Justice and Peace, Social Development etc) and in collaboration with Catholic Charity Organizations and Social Action Groups like the Knights, St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Youth and Women Organizations, MAREDES etc!!

"Caritas member organizations fulfill their mission by reaching out to men and women, children, youth and elders of all races and creeds, in particular the poor and marginalized; providing social services, saving lives, rebuilding and empowering communities, working for justice and integral human promotion. A task that mobilizes Church leaders at all levels, parish groups including the poor themselves, volunteers and professionals, in collaboration with other civil society actors, public institutions and international institutions". (Ref: SERVING OUT OF LOVE: CARITAS IDENTITY AND MISSION, Caritas Internationalis' Publication: Approved by the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, Vatican City, May 2018).



# PROGRAMME OUTLINE:

## Day One (Sunday): 28th October, 2018

Launching of the Week: Introduction to Caritas, its organization, purpose and its Ecclesial identity. References can be made to: Motu Proprio – In the Service of Charity (*Intima Ecclesia Natura*), *Deus Caritas Est*, Rebuilding the Catholic Service of Charity in Ghana (Caritas Ghana, March 2017).

## Day Two (Monday): 29th October, 2018

Reflection on Poverty and its impact on any specific and relevant social segment or environmental concern of your area (Diocesan context) e.g. Impact of Poverty on Women or Youth or the Aged, or Farmers or the Family or Deforestation etc.

## Day Three (Tuesday): 30th October, 2018

Reflection on National Policies targeting the Poor in society and discussion on how to maximize their implementation and impact. The National Social Protection Policy could be the main focus.

## Day Four (Wednesday): 31st October, 2018

*Reflection on the Theme: "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him"*. The Pope's Message for the Second Word Day of the Poor should be the primary reference resource material for this reflection.

## Day Five (Thursday): 1st November, 2018

Reflection on sustainable ways by which the Church can support and empower the poor. There should be focus also on a Fund Raising event, sale of Caritas' promotional merchandise and ideas on Social Impact Investment opportunities. Dioceses can also consider drawing from ideas which would come from the planned National Conference on Integral Human Development in September 4 - 8, 2018 on *"The Church in Ghana today and the promotion of Integral Human Development: Rethinking and Reconstructing Commitments, Approaches and Institutional Development"*

## Day Six (Friday): 2nd November, 2018

Discuss and adopt Action Plans and Strategies for the empowerment of the Poor; including through Advocacy at the Local level. Make use of your own Diocesan Strategic Plans for Human Development (if any) and Caritas Ghana's Strategic and Advocacy Plans (2017 – 2021).

## Day Seven (Saturday): 3rd November, 2018

Mobilize and undertake a charity activity at the Parish or Community level. This day should be devoted to doing something concretely with the poor like an Agape meal, visit a Poor Home for the Aged, Orphans, the Neglected and Abandoned.

## Day Eight (Sunday): 4th November, 2018 - CLOSING

Climax Event! Thanksgiving Mass is highly recommended! On this day, Caritas' promotional merchandise could also be sold or auctioned! The climax should also be an opportunity to launch the Action Plans and Strategies agreed in Day Six for the period preceding the next CARITAS WEEK in 2019!



# MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

## SECOND WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time  
18 November 2018

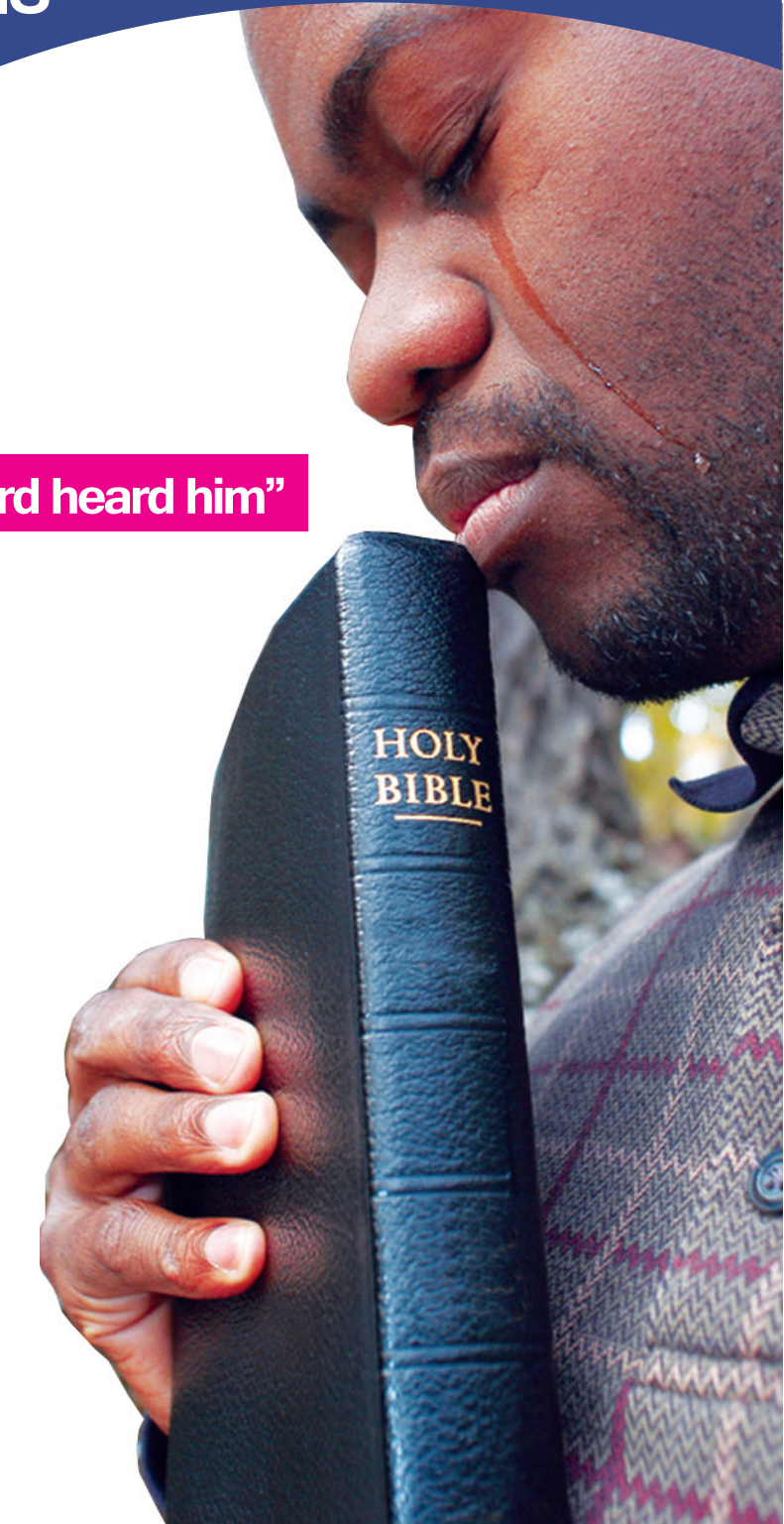
**“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him”**

1. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him” (Ps 34:6). The words of the Psalmist become our own whenever we are called to encounter the different conditions of suffering and marginalization experienced by so many of our brothers and sisters whom we are accustomed to label generically as “the poor”. The Psalmist is not alien to suffering; quite the contrary. He has a direct experience of poverty and yet transforms it into a song of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Psalm 34 allows us today, surrounded as we are by many different forms of poverty, to know those who are truly poor. It enables us to open our eyes to them, to hear their cry and to recognize their needs.

We are told, in the first place, that the Lord listens to the poor who cry out to him; he is good to those who seek refuge in him, whose hearts are broken by sadness, loneliness and exclusion. The Lord listens to those who, trampled in their dignity, still find the strength to look up to him for light and comfort. He listens to those persecuted in the name of a false justice, oppressed by policies unworthy of the name, and terrified by violence, yet know that God is their Saviour. What emerges from this prayer is above all the sense of abandonment and trust in a Father who can hear and understand. Along these same lines, we can better appreciate the meaning of Jesus’ words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3).

This experience, unique and in many ways undeserved and inexpressible, makes us want to share it with others, especially those who, like the Psalmist, are poor, rejected and marginalized. No one should feel excluded from the Father’s love, especially in a world that often presents wealth as the highest goal and encourages self-centredness.

2. Psalm 34 uses three verbs to describe the poor man in his relationship with God. First of all, “to cry”. Poverty cannot be summed up in a word; it becomes a cry that rises to heaven and reaches God. What does the cry of the poor express, if not their suffering and their solitude, their disappointment and their hope? We can ask ourselves how their plea, which rises to the presence



of God, can fail to reach our own ears, or leave us cold and indifferent. On this World Day of the Poor, we are called to make a serious examination of conscience, to see if we are truly capable of hearing the cry of the poor.



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To hear their voice, what we need is the silence of people who are prepared to listen. If we speak too much ourselves, we will be unable to hear them. At times I fear that many initiatives, meritorious and necessary in themselves, are meant more to satisfy those who undertake them than to respond to the real cry of the poor. When this is the case, the cry of the poor resounds, but our reaction is inconsistent and we become unable to empathize with their condition. We are so trapped in a culture that induces us to look in the mirror and pamper ourselves, that we think that an altruistic gesture is enough, without the need to get directly involved.

3. The second verb is “to answer”. The Psalmist tells us that the Lord does not only listen to the cry of the poor, but responds. His answer, as seen in the entire history of salvation, is to share lovingly in the lot of the poor. So it was when Abram spoke to God of his desire for offspring, despite the fact that he and his wife Sarah were old in years and had no children (cf. Gen 15:1-6). So too when Moses, in front of a bush that burned without being consumed, received the revelation of God’s name and the mission to free his people from Egypt (Ex 3:1-15). This was also the case during Israel’s wandering in the desert, in the grip of hunger and thirst (cf. Ex 16:1-6; 17:1-7), and its falling into the worst kind of poverty, namely, infidelity to the covenant and idolatry (cf. Ex 32:1-14).

God’s answer to the poor is always a saving act that heals wounds of body and soul, restores justice and helps to live life anew in dignity. God’s answer is also a summons to those who believe in him to do likewise, within the limits of what is humanly possible. The World Day of the Poor wishes to be a small answer that the Church throughout the world gives to the poor of every kind and in every land, lest they think that their cry has gone unheard. It may well be like a drop of water in the desert of poverty, yet it can serve as a sign of sharing with those in need, and enable them to sense the active presence of a brother or a sister. The poor do not need intermediaries, but the personal involvement of all those who hear their cry. The concern of believers in their regard cannot be limited to a kind of assistance – as useful and as providential as this may be in the beginning – but requires a “loving attentiveness” (Evangelii Gaudium, 199) that honours the person as such and seeks out his or her best interests.

4. The third verb is “to free”. In the Bible, the poor live in



the certainty that God intervenes on their behalf to restore their dignity. Poverty is not something that anyone desires, but is caused by selfishness, pride, greed and injustice. These are evils as old as the human race itself, but also sins in which the innocent are caught up, with tragic effects at the level of social life. God’s act of liberation is a saving act for those who lift up to him their sorrow and distress. The bondage of poverty is shattered by the power of God’s intervention. Many of the Psalms recount and celebrate this history of salvation mirrored in the personal life of the poor: “For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him” (Ps 22:24). The ability to see God’s face is a sign of his

friendship, his closeness and his salvation. “You have seen my affliction, you have taken heed of my adversities... you have set my feet in a broad place” (Ps 31:7-8). To offer the poor a “broad space” is to set them free from the “snare of the fowler” (Ps 91:3); it is to free them from the trap hidden on their path, so that they can move forward with serenity on the path of life. God’s salvation is a hand held out to the poor, a hand that welcomes, protects and enables them to experience the friendship they need. From this concrete and tangible proximity, a genuine path of liberation emerges. “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid” (Evangelii gaudium, 187).

5. I find it moving to know that many poor people identify with the blind beggar Bartimaeus mentioned by the evangelist Mark (cf. 10:46-52). Bartimaeus “was sitting by the roadside to beg” (v. 46); having heard that Jesus was passing by, “he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me’” (v. 47). “Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more” (v. 48). The Son of God heard his plea and said: “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “Master, let me receive my sight” (v. 51). This Gospel story makes visible what the Psalm proclaims as a promise. Bartimaeus is a poor person who finds himself lacking things as essential as sight and the ability to work for a living. How many people today feel in the same situation! Lack of basic means of subsistence, marginalization due to a reduced capacity for work, various forms of social enslavement, despite all our human progress... How many poor people today are like Bartimaeus, sitting on the roadside and looking for meaning in their lives! How many of





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them wonder why they have fallen so far and how they can escape! They are waiting for someone to come up to them and say: “Take heart; rise, he is calling you” (v. 49).

Sadly, the exact opposite often happens, and the poor hear voices scolding them, telling them to be quiet and to put up with their lot. These voices are harsh, often due to fear of the poor, who are considered not only destitute but also a source of insecurity and unrest, an unwelcome distraction from life as usual and needing to be rejected and kept afar. We tend to create a distance between them and us, without realizing that in this way we are distancing ourselves from the Lord Jesus, who does not reject the poor, but calls them to himself and comforts them. The words of the Prophet Isaiah telling believers how to conduct themselves are most apt in this case. They are “to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke... to share bread with the hungry and bring the homeless and poor into the house... to cover the naked” (58:6-7). Such deeds allow sin to be forgiven (cf. 1 Pet 4:8) and justice to take its course. They ensure that when we cry to the Lord, he will answer and say: “Here I am!” (cf. Is 58:9).

6. The poor are the first to recognize God’s presence and to testify to his closeness in their lives. God remains faithful to his promise; and even in the darkness of the night, he does not withhold the warmth of his love and consolation. However, for the poor to overcome their oppressive situation, they need to sense the presence of brothers and sisters who are concerned for them and, by opening the doors of their hearts and lives, make them feel like friends and family. Only in this way can the poor discover “the saving power at work in their lives” and “put them at the centre of the Church’s pilgrim way” (Evangeliium Gaudium, 198).

On this World Day, we are asked to fulfil the words of the Psalm: “The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied” (Ps 22:26). We know that in the Temple of Jerusalem, after the rites of sacrifice, a banquet was held. It was this experience that, in many dioceses last year, enriched the celebration of the first World Day of the Poor. Many people encountered the warmth of a home, the joy of a festive meal and the solidarity of those who wished to sit together at table in simplicity and fraternity. I would like this year’s, and all future World Days, to be celebrated in a spirit of joy at the rediscovery of our capacity for togetherness. Praying together as a community and sharing a meal on Sunday is an experience that brings us back to the earliest Christian community, described by the evangelist Luke in all its primitive simplicity: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them

to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:42.44-45).

7. Countless initiatives are undertaken every day by the Christian community in order to offer closeness and a helping hand in the face of the many forms of poverty all around us. Often too, our cooperation with other initiatives inspired not by faith but by human solidarity, make it possible for us to provide help that otherwise we would have been unable to offer. The realization that in the face of so much poverty our capacity for action is limited, weak and insufficient, leads us to reach out to others so that, through mutual cooperation, we can attain our goals all the more effectively. We Christians are inspired by faith and by the imperative of charity, but we can also acknowledge other forms of assistance and solidarity that aim in part for the same goals, provided that we do not downplay our specific role, which is to lead everyone to God and to holiness. Dialogue between different experiences, and humility in offering our cooperation without seeking the limelight, is a fitting and completely evangelical response that we can give.

In the service of the poor, there is no room for competition. Rather, we should humbly recognize that the Spirit is the source of our actions that reveal God’s closeness and his answer to our prayers. When we find ways of drawing near to the poor, we know that the primacy belongs to God, who opens our eyes and hearts to conversion. The poor do not need self-promoters, but a love that knows how to remain hidden and not think about all the good it has been able to do. At the centre must always be the Lord and the poor. Anyone desirous of serving is an instrument in God’s hands, a means of manifesting his saving presence. Saint Paul recalled this when he wrote to the Christians in Corinth who competed for the more prestigious charisms: “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (1 Cor 12:21). Paul makes an important point when he notes that the apparently weaker parts of the body are in fact the most necessary (cf. v. 22), and that those “we think less honourable we invest with the greater honour, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require” (vv. 23-24). Paul offers the community a basic teaching about charisms, but also about the attitude it should have, in the light of the Gospel, towards its weaker and needier members. Far be it from Christ’s disciples to nurture feelings of disdain or pity towards the poor. Instead, we are called to honour the poor and to give them precedence, out of the conviction that they are a true presence of Jesus in our midst. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40).

8. Here we can see how far our way of life must be from that of the world, which praises, pursues and imitates the rich and powerful, while neglecting the poor and deeming them useless and shameful. The words of the Apostle Paul invite us to a fully

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evangelical solidarity with the weaker and less gifted members of the body of Christ: “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together” (1 Cor 12:26). In his Letter to the Romans, Paul also tells us: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly” (12:15-16). This is the vocation of each of Christ’s followers; the ideal for which we must constantly strive is ever greater conformity to the “mind of Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:5).

9. Faith naturally inspires a message of hope. Often it is precisely the poor who can break through our indifference, born of a worldly and narrow view of life. The cry of the poor is also a cry of hope that reveals the certainty of future liberation. This hope is grounded in the love of God, who does not abandon those who put their trust in him (cf. Rom 8:31-39). As Saint Teresa of Avila writes in *The Way of Perfection*: “Poverty comprises many virtues. It is a vast domain. I tell you, whoever despises all earthly goods is master of them all” (2:5). It is in the measure in which we are able to discern authentic good that we become rich before

God and wise in our own eyes and in those of others. It is truly so. To the extent that we come to understand the true meaning of riches, we grow in humanity and become capable of sharing.

10. I invite my brother bishops, priests, and especially deacons, who have received the laying on of hands for the service of the poor (cf. Acts 6:1-7), as well as religious and all those lay faithful – men and women – who in parishes, associations and ecclesial movements make tangible the Church’s response to the cry of the poor, to experience this World Day as a privileged moment of new evangelization. The poor evangelize us and help us each day to discover the beauty of the Gospel. Let us not squander this grace-filled opportunity. On this day, may all of us feel that we are in debt to the poor, because, in hands outstretched to one another, a salvific encounter can take place to strengthen our faith, inspire our charity and enable our hope to advance securely on our path towards the Lord who is to come.

From the Vatican, 13 June 2018

Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua

# APOSTOLIC LETTER ISSUED 'MOTU PROPRIO' OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF, BENEDICT XVI ON THE SERVICE OF CHARITY

## Introduction

“The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia) and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable” (Deus Caritas Est, 25).

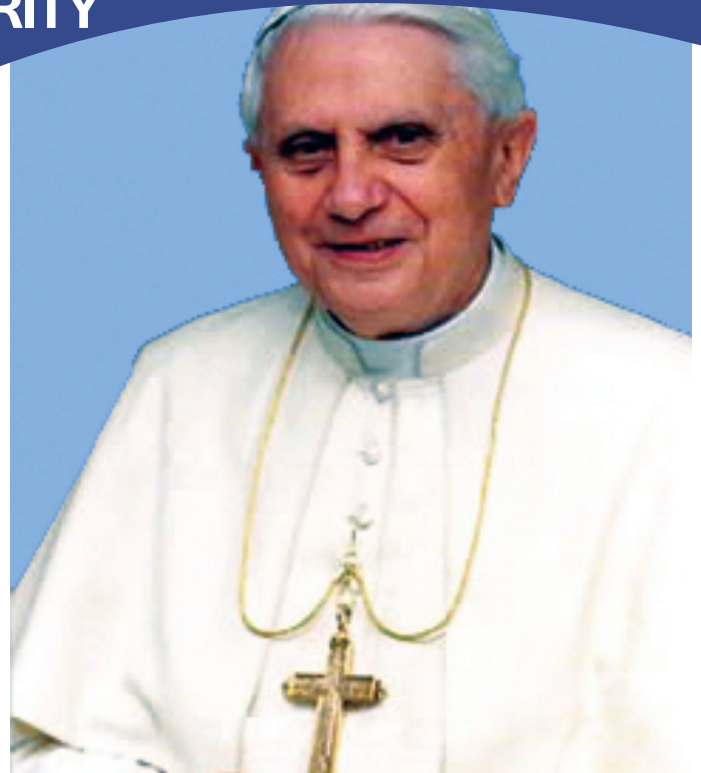
The service of charity is also a constitutive element of the Church’s mission and an indispensable expression of her very being (cf. *ibid.*); all the faithful have the right and duty to devote themselves personally to living the new commandment that Christ left us (cf. Jn 15:12), and to offering our contemporaries not only material assistance, but also refreshment and care for their souls (cf. Deus Caritas Est, 28). The Church is also called as a whole to the exercise of the diakonia of charity, whether in the small communities of particular Churches or on the level of the universal Church. This requires organization “if it is to be an ordered service to the community” (cf. *ibid.*, 20), an organization which entails a variety of institutional expressions.

With regard to this diakonia of charity, in my Encyclical Deus Caritas Est I pointed out that “in conformity with the episcopal structure of the Church, the Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, are charged with primary responsibility for carrying out in the particular Churches” the service of charity (No. 32); at the same time, however, I noted that “the Code of Canon Law, in the canons on the ministry of the Bishop, does not expressly mention charity as a specific sector of episcopal activity” (*ibid.*). Although “the Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops explored more specifically the duty of charity as a responsibility incumbent upon the whole Church and upon each Bishop in his Diocese” (*ibid.*), there was still a need to fill the aforementioned lacuna and to give adequate expression in canonical legislation to both the essential nature of the service of charity in the Church and its constitutive relationship with the episcopal ministry, while outlining the legal aspects of this ecclesial service, especially when carried out in an organized way and with the explicit support of the Bishops.

In view of this, with the present Motu Proprio I intend to provide an organic legislative framework for the better overall ordering of the various organized ecclesial forms of the service of charity, which are closely related to the diaconal nature of the Church and the episcopal ministry.

It is important, however, to keep in mind that “practical activity will always be insufficient, unless it visibly expresses a love for man, a love nourished by an encounter with Christ” (*ibid.*, 34). In carrying out their charitable activity, therefore, the various Catholic organizations should not limit themselves merely to collecting and distributing funds, but should show special concern for individuals in need and exercise a valuable educational function within the Christian community, helping people to appreciate the importance of sharing, respect and love in the spirit of the Gospel of Christ. The Church’s charitable activity at all levels must avoid the risk of becoming just another form of organized social assistance (cf. *ibid.*, 31).

The organized charitable initiatives promoted by the faithful



in various places differ widely one from the other, and call for appropriate management. In a particular way, the work of Caritas has expanded at the parish, diocesan, national and international levels. Caritas is an institution promoted by the ecclesiastical Hierarchy which has rightly earned the esteem and trust of the faithful and of many other people around the world for its generous and consistent witness of faith and its concrete ability to respond to the needs of the poor. In addition to this broad initiative, officially supported by the Church’s authority, many other initiatives have arisen in different places from the free enterprise of the faithful, who themselves wish to help in various ways to offer a concrete witness of charity towards those in need. While differing in their origin and juridical status, both are expressions of sensitivity and a desire to respond to the same pressing need.

The Church as an institution is not extraneous to those organized initiatives which represent a free expression of the concern of the baptized for individuals and peoples in need. The Church’s Pastors should always welcome these initiatives as a sign of the sharing of all the faithful in the mission of the Church; they should respect the specific characteristics and administrative autonomy which these initiatives enjoy, in accordance with their nature, as a manifestation of the freedom of the baptized.

Alongside these, the Church’s authority has, on its own initiative, promoted specific agencies which provide institutionally for allocating donations made by the faithful, following suitable legal and administrative methods which allow for a more effective response to concrete needs.

Nevertheless, to the extent that such activities are promoted by the Hierarchy itself, or are explicitly supported by the authority of the Church’s Pastors, there is a need to ensure that they are managed in conformity with the demands of the Church’s teaching and the intentions of the faithful, and that they likewise respect the legitimate norms laid down by civil authorities. In view of these



# APOSTOLIC LETTER ISSUED 'MOTU PROPRIO' OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF, BENEDICT XVI ON THE SERVICE OF CHARITY

requirements, it became necessary to establish in the Church's law certain essential norms inspired by the general criteria of canonical discipline, which would make explicit in this sector of activity the legal responsibilities assumed by the various subjects involved, specifying in particular the position of authority and coordination belonging to the diocesan Bishop. At the same time, the norms in question need to be broad enough to embrace the significant diversity of the institutions of Catholic inspiration which are engaged as such in this sector, whether those originating from the Hierarchy or those born of the direct initiative of the faithful, received and encouraged by the local Pastors. While it was necessary to lay down norms in this regard, there was also a need to consider the requirements of justice and the responsibility of Bishops before the faithful, with respect for the legitimate autonomy of each institution.

## Dispositive Part

Consequently, upon the proposal of the Cardinal President of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, and after consultation with the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, I establish and decree the following:

Art. 1. - § 1. The faithful have the right to join in associations and to establish agencies to carry out specific charitable services, especially on behalf of the poor and suffering. To the extent that these are linked to the charitable service of the Church's Pastors and/or intend to use for this purpose contributions made by the faithful, they must submit their own Statutes for the approval of the competent ecclesiastical authority and comply with the following norms.

§ 2. Similarly, it is also the right of the faithful to establish foundations to fund concrete charitable initiatives, in accordance with the norms of canons 1303 of the Code of Canon Law (CIC) and 1047 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO). If foundations of this type correspond to the characteristics set forth in § 1, they will also observe, *congrua congruis referendo*, the provisions of the present law.

§ 3. In addition to observing the canonical legislation, the collective charitable initiatives to which this *Motu Proprio* refers are required to follow Catholic principles in their activity and they may not accept commitments which could in any way affect the observance of those principles.

§ 4. Agencies and foundations for charitable purposes promoted by Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life are required to comply with these norms, and they must follow the prescriptions of canons 312 § 2 CIC and 575 § 2 CCEO.

Art. 2. - § 1. The Statutes of each charitable agency referred to in the preceding article must also contain, in addition to its institutional offices and structures of governance in accordance with canon 95 § 1 CIC, the guiding principles and objectives of the initiative, the management of funds, the profile of its workers, as well as the reports and information which must be presented to the competent ecclesiastical authority.

§ 2. A charitable agency may use the name "Catholic" only

with the written consent of the competent authority, as laid down by canon 300 CIC.

§ 3. Agencies promoted by the faithful for charitable purposes can have an Ecclesiastical Assistant appointed in accordance with the Statutes, according to the norm of canons 324 § 2 and 317 CIC.

§ 4. At the same time, the ecclesiastical authority must bear in mind its duty to regulate the exercise of the rights of the faithful in accordance with canons 223 § 2 CIC and 26 § 2 CCEO, and thus to avoid the proliferation of charitable initiatives to the detriment of their activity and effectiveness with regard to their stated goals.

Art. 3. - § 1. With regard to the preceding articles, it is understood that the competent authority at the respective levels is that indicated by canons 312 CIC and 575 CCEO.

§ 2. For agencies not approved at the national level, even though they operate in different Dioceses, the competent authority is understood to be the diocesan Bishop of the place where the agency has its principal office. In any event, the agency has the duty to inform the Bishops of other Dioceses where it operates and to respect the guidelines for the activities of the various charitable agencies present in those Dioceses.

Art. 4. § 1. The diocesan Bishop (cf. canon 134 § 3 CIC and canon 987 CCEO) exercises his proper pastoral solicitude for the service of charity in the particular Church entrusted to him as its Pastor, guide and the one primarily responsible for that service.

§ 2. The diocesan Bishop encourages and supports the initiatives and works of service to neighbour in his particular Church, and encourages in the faithful the spirit of practical charity as an expression of the Christian life and sharing in the mission of the Church, as indicated in canons 215 and 222 CIC and 25 and 18 CCEO.

§ 3. It is the responsibility of the diocesan Bishop to ensure that in the activities and management of these agencies the norms of the Church's universal and particular law are respected, as well as the intentions of the faithful who made donations or bequests for these specific purposes (cf. canons 1300 CIC and 1044 CCEO).

Art. 5. - The diocesan Bishop is to ensure that the Church enjoys the right to carry out charitable activities, and he is to take care that the faithful and the institutions under his supervision comply with the legitimate civil legislation in this area.

Art. 6. - It is the responsibility of the diocesan Bishop, as indicated by canons 394 § 1 CIC and 203 § 1 CCEO, to coordinate within his territory the different works of charitable service, both those promoted by the Hierarchy itself and those arising from initiatives of the faithful, without prejudice to their proper autonomy in accordance with their respective Statutes. In particular, he is to take care that their activities keep alive the spirit of the Gospel.

Art. 7. - § 1. The agencies referred to in Article 1 § 1 are required to select their personnel from among persons who share, or at least respect, the Catholic identity of these works.

§ 2. To ensure an evangelical witness in the service of charity, the diocesan Bishop is to take care that those who work in the Church's charitable apostolate, along with due professional

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competence, give an example of Christian life and witness to a formation of heart which testifies to a faith working through charity. To this end, he is also to provide for their theological and pastoral formation, through specific curricula agreed upon by the officers of various agencies and through suitable aids to the spiritual life.

Art. 8. – Wherever necessary, due to the number and variety of initiatives, the diocesan Bishop is to establish in the Church entrusted to his care an Office to direct and coordinate the service of charity in his name.

Art. 9. - § 1. The Bishop is to encourage in every parish of his territory the creation of a local Caritas service or a similar body, which will also promote in the whole community educational activities aimed at fostering a spirit of sharing and authentic charity. When appropriate, this service is to be established jointly by various parishes in the same territory.

§ 2. It is the responsibility of the Bishop and the respective parish priest to ensure that together with Caritas, other charitable initiatives can coexist and develop within the parish under the general coordination of the parish priest, taking into account, however, the prescriptions of Article 2 § 4 above.

§ 3. It is the duty of the diocesan Bishop and the respective parish priests to see that in this area the faithful are not led into error or misunderstanding; hence they are to prevent publicity being given through parish or diocesan structures to initiatives which, while presenting themselves as charitable, propose choices or methods at odds with the Church's teaching.

Art. 10. - § 1. It is the responsibility of the Bishop to supervise the ecclesiastical goods of the charitable agencies subject to his authority.

§ 2. It is the duty of the diocesan Bishop to ensure that the proceeds of collections made in accordance with canons 1265 and 1266 CIC and canons 1014 and 1015 CCEO are used for their stated purposes [cf. canons 1267 CIC, 1016 CCEO].

§ 3. In particular, the diocesan Bishop is to ensure that charitable agencies dependent upon him do not receive financial support from groups or institutions that pursue ends contrary to Church's teaching. Similarly, lest scandal be given to the faithful, the diocesan Bishop is to ensure that these charitable agencies do not accept contributions for initiatives whose ends, or the means used to pursue them, are not in conformity with the Church's teaching.

§ 4. In a particular way, the Bishop is to see that the management of initiatives dependent on him offers a testimony of Christian simplicity of life. To this end, he will ensure that salaries and operational expenses, while respecting the demands of justice and a necessary level of professionalism, are in due proportion to analogous expenses of his diocesan Curia.

§ 5. To permit the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Article 3 § 1 to exercise its duty of supervision, the agencies mentioned in Article 1 § 1, are required to submit to the competent Ordinary an annual financial report in a way which he himself will indicate.

Art. 11. – The diocesan Bishop is obliged, if necessary, to make known to the faithful the fact that the activity of a particular

charitable agency is no longer being carried out in conformity with the Church's teaching, and then to prohibit that agency from using the name "Catholic" and to take the necessary measures should personal responsibilities emerge.

Art. 12. - § 1. The diocesan Bishop is to encourage the national and international activity of the charitable agencies under his care, especially cooperation with poorer ecclesiastical circumscriptions by analogy with the prescriptions of canons 1274 § 3 CIC and 1021 § 3 CCEO.

§ 2. Pastoral concern for charitable works, depending on circumstances of time and place, can be carried out jointly by various neighbouring Bishops with regard to a number of Churches, in accordance with the norm of law. When such joint activity is international in character, the competent Dicastery of the Holy See is to be consulted in advance. For charitable initiatives on the national level, it is fitting that the Bishop consult the respective office of the Bishops' Conference.

Art. 13. – The local ecclesiastical authority retains the full right to give permission for initiatives undertaken by Catholic agencies in areas of his jurisdiction, with due respect for canonical norms and the specific identity of the individual agencies. It is also the duty of the Bishop to ensure that the activities carried out in his Diocese are conducted in conformity with ecclesiastical discipline, either prohibiting them or adopting any measures needed in cases where that discipline is not respected.

Art. 14. – Where appropriate, the Bishop is to promote charitable initiatives in cooperation with other Churches or Ecclesial Communities, respecting the proper identity of each.

Art. 15. - § 1. The Pontifical Council Cor Unum has the task of promoting the application of this legislation and ensuring that it is applied at all levels, without prejudice to the competence of the Pontifical Council for the Laity with regard to associations of the faithful as provided for in Article 133 of the Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus, the competence of the Secretariat of State's Section for Relations with States, and the general competences of other Dicasteries and Institutes of the Roman Curia. In particular, the Pontifical Council Cor Unum is to take care that the charitable service of Catholic institutions at the international level is always to be carried out in communion with the various local Churches.

§ 2. The Pontifical Council Cor Unum is also competent for the canonical establishment of charitable agencies at the international level; it thus takes on the responsibilities of discipline and promotion entailed by law.

I order that everything I have laid down in this Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio be fully observed, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, even if worthy of particular mention, and I decree that it be promulgated by publication in the daily newspaper L'Osservatore Romano and enter into force on 10

December 2012.  
*Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 11 November, in the year 2012, the eighth of my Pontificate.*

**BENEDICTUS PP. XVI**

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