

RESOLUTIONS BY THE NATIONAL UNION OF GHANA CATHOLIC
DIOCESAN PRIESTS' ASSOCIATIONS (NUGCDPA) AT ITS 28TH
NATIONAL AND 16TH BIENNIAL CONGRESS, 3RD - 6TH JANUARY 2023

Preamble

We, the members of the National Union of Ghana Catholic Diocesan Priests' Associations, meeting in our 28th National and 16th Biennial Congress at Koforidua within the Accra Province from 3rd to 6th January, 2023, under the theme "A synodal church and the welfare of the diocesan priest in a changing world," hereby make these resolutions based on the following observations and recommendations.

We acknowledged with immense gratitude the august presence of his Excellency Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, Daasebre Kweku Boateng III, Omanhene of New Juaben Traditional Area, and all the other invited guests at the Opening Ceremony. We are also grateful to the host Bishop and the Priests, Religious and Laity of Koforidua for their generous support and hospitality. We also fondly remembered and prayed for the souls of the Late Emeritus Pope His Holiness Benedict XVI and the Late Bishop of Wa, His Eminence Cardinal Richard Baawobr.

Observations

1. A call to a synodal church is a Kairos moment. It is a call to encounter, listen to one another and discern together the will of God and so dialogue with one another. This journeying together involves everyone: the bishops, the priests, the religious, deacons and the laity, building good human relationships that foster and promote evangelization. It also involves dialogue between the church and the society.

2. We noted that the world is changing at a very rapid pace. It is now a digital world, dominated by social media, breakdown of traditional family values and a revolution in the concept of marriage. This changing world is both an opportunity and a challenge for evangelization.

3. We have come to appreciate during this Congress different dimensions of priests' welfare. The first important aspect of priest welfare is his total

commitment in serving the people as his vocation demands. To be fair, the second is that it is incumbent on the church to provide sufficiently for the priests' welfare, that includes material and emotional well-being, for "... the labourer deserves his wages" (1Tim 5:18), especially priests on retirement, priests who are sick and those in austere places of ministry (cf. Canon 281# 1). The third aspect is that the church should have structures and mechanisms in place to ensure that priests' welfare is adequately funded and sustained.

Recommendations

On the backdrop of the aforementioned, we recommend the following:

1. The health needs of priests must be given the utmost priority. Priests who go on retirement, those with ill-health and the aged must be given special care. Dioceses can look into the possibility of establishing Health Insurance Scheme for their priests.
2. We are happy that most dioceses have a pension scheme. We recommend that the scheme should be enhanced to provide adequate care for retired priests. Dioceses who do not have, we recommend they establish one.
3. There is the need for some level of dialogue as far as possible during appointments in order to create the right level of motivation to elicit the best from them.
4. On sabbaticals and annual leave periods, where it is possible, priests who have served a stipulated period of time could be allowed to go on sabbatical with the appropriate incentives.

Resolutions

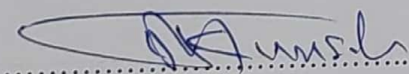
In view of the above observations and recommendations, we make the following resolutions.

1. In the spirit of sacramental brotherhood, being each other's keeper we resolve to live harmoniously together, to visit and support each other regularly and avoid unhealthy competition, for "a true brother is not a competitor but a gift for a shared ministry."

2. To practice priestly fraternity by sharing goods, praying and socializing together, for these moments are times for regeneration and recreation for a total well-being.
3. To ensure good health, we resolve to go for our regular medical check-ups, exercise, eat well and rest well.
4. In view of the Church's commitment to a synodal church we resolve to practice servant leadership, that is, to journey together with our laity, collaborate with them and empower them to use their talents, time and treasure in and for the benefit of the church.
5. To build good human relationships with the laity to generate more interest in the Church life and motivate them to own the church to contribute to her growth and development.
6. To implement the model of a synodal church with the resolutions above to build strong Catholic communities ready and willing to participate in the mission of the church in order to stem the declining Catholic population in the country.

Conclusion

We thank God for the fruits of this Congress and through the intercession of Mary our Mother we hope to implement these recommendations and resolutions for the wellbeing of the church and the salvation of souls.



Very Rev. Fr. Thaddeus Kuusah
(President – NUGCDPA)

Date: 5th Jan 2023