

Dear Brothers,

At the dawn of this mandate, I send you my fraternal greetings.

As Supreme Knight, I know that I will not have the opportunity to meet you all in person.

In fact, the Noble Order of Marshall today comprises of 174 councils, and if I have to visit all of them, I would only meet a maximum of twenty-four.

Nevertheless, my best wish is to keep in touch with you, and God willing, I would like to share a reflection with you every month.

The theme for this month is how we use our time.

*So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. (Ps. 89 :12)*

In a developed country, a gentleman was rushing an African friend who had just arrived.

- Hurry! Let's run and catch that bus!

Once inside, the happy gentleman said to the African:

- We've saved three minutes

And the other retorted:

- What are you going to do with it?

In the "advanced" countries, people have no answers to such questions. Today, we're increasingly forgetting what walking is all about. We want to go faster and faster. This brings to mind Daniel's prophecy: "Many will wander here and there" (Daniel 12, 4).

In the Gospel we don't see Jesus running anywhere; he was content to walk. In his days, there were carts, camels and horses, but he never used anyone of them. Only once did he ride an animal whose pace was slower than that of a man.

It is good to save minutes. Each one is a jewel which value we often do not appreciate until it is too late.

The story goes that a man was walking along a river in the dark. Stumbling over a small bag filled with stones, he picked it up. To spend his time, he occasionally threw a stone into the river. The noise it made as it fell into the water amused him. When he got home, there were only two stones left in the bag. He then realized that they were diamonds.

We run to gain minutes, and what we have gained, we waste in worthless activities, conversations or amusements.

In useless conversations, in gossip, in backbiting.

Speaking of backbiting, let us listen to the warning of the word of God :

Backbiting is not only an unkind word in itself; it can also be a true word spoken with evil intent. We may speak the truth, but what is the point if our aim is evil?

The very fact that God's Word warns us so earnestly against backbiting should be enough to turn us away from it as we turn away from evil.

We live in a world of slander and calumny: God is blasphemed (1 Pet. 4:4); the way of truth is blasphemed (2 Pet. 2:2); authority is despised, dignities are reviled (2 Pet. 2:10); Christians are reviled (1 Pet. 4:4).

"They speak unjustly of what they do not know" (2 Pet. 2:12). "Let not, therefore, that which is good in you be blamed" says the apostle Paul to the Romans (14:16).

Let us have no relationship with this slanderous, abusive, blasphemous world. Rather, let us purify ourselves from the evil eye, from evil suspicions, from the wicked tongue, from evil works, from the wicked heart of unbelief!

It is certainly not in vain that the Word of God emphatically warns us against the widespread habit of talking about others. Scandals, lack of love, disregard, contempt and division are the sad consequences.

When a brother or sister has committed some fault, we should speak to them in a spirit of grace, with discretion, without seeking to reveal the fault. Moreover, let's not forget the serious warning of Matthew 7:34, about the mote and the beam in the eye.

A cashier is responsible for every cent that passes through his hands.

A man who has lived seventy years will answer to God for the thirty-seven million minutes of his life.

*So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.*

Sir/Kt Bro. Richard Ayih-Akakpo

Supreme Knight

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