



International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs
Mouvement International des Intellectuels Catholiques
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Living in Times of Covid-19: *Experiences of Catholic (Christian) Lay Across Africa*

1. Background

Since first being recorded late last year in China, the Covid-19 coronavirus has spread around the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared it a global pandemic. Up to until mid-February, Europe had become the worst-affected region, with Italy and Spain particularly most affected. Currently, the pandemic has spread around the world and developing countries, including those in Sub-Sahara Africa have not been spared. Currently, over a million people have been infected. As at 3rd March, WHO estimated that Covid-19 had a 3.4 % mortality rate having caused a loss of life of close to 60,000 people and recovery of slightly 250,000 people around the world. In Africa, South Africa, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Kenya are among countries with high recorded infections.

The epidemic is causing untold suffering to human life. The coronavirus pandemic demands social distancing, quarantine and isolation. It has send billions of people into lockdown as health services struggle to cope. Many workers are now reduced to working from home. Schools, around the world, have been closed and teachers have found themselves managing virtual classrooms, communicating with their students over social media platforms. Majority of churches around the world have suspended their Sunday services and worshippers now find themselves following online services. No one knows what will happen next. The requirement to social distance, quarantine and isolate has resulted to loneliness epidemic. Majority of individuals today lack sufficient social connection and such conditions can augment the negative effects of stress and reduce physical and emotional resilience that people will need to fight the COVID-19. As a result, relational connection is important at this moment of COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Pax Romana ICMICA-Africa Organises a Live Discussion on COVID-19

It is in this view that Pax Romana ICMICA-Africa plans to hold an on-line session bringing together Catholic professionals across Africa and beyond to share their hopes and

experiences about the COVID-19. With members drawn from different countries, divergent professional orientation and experiences, the on-line session will bring together members to reflect on how Catholic (Christian) Lay Across Africa are living through the difficult times of Covid-19.

The International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ICMICA-Pax Romana) is a global community of Catholic intellectuals and professionals engaged in the world with a spirituality of action. Inspired by the Gospel and the Catholic social tradition, we live our faith by engaging the challenges of our times. As a movement, we are committed to the option for the poor, integral human development, interreligious dialogue, and the empowerment of women and young professionals. ICMICA brings together professionals, small communities and national movements to support one another across borders and to offer a voice in international forums, including the Vatican and the United Nations system.

In Africa, Pax Romana-ICMICA is present in close to 15 countries, mapped as per the regional episcopal conferences. They include Eastern Africa sub-region comprising of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and South Sudan; West Africa sub-region comprising of Mali, Togo, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Ivory Coast; Southern Africa comprising of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Madagascar and; Central Africa that includes DRC and Cameroun. There are plans to launch the movement in countries like Central Africa republic and Congo Brazzaville.

3. Scope of the Discussion

Members will reflect on the following among others issues;

- a) What is the situation like, right now?
- b) How has this epidemic affected you, your family, community and the country at large?
- c) Given this is an epidemic that needs direct government intervention, what is the government doing to avert the situation?
- d) Obviously, given that government needs support, tell us an idea of how different organizations in countries handling this epidemic, and more so the Church.
- e) What are your hopes and challenges (fears) regarding the way this epidemic is being handled and what sort of needs to be done to improve the situation? How do you see the situation evolving?
 - i. Is the frequency of testing adequate?

- ii. Are the health systems adequate enough to respond to the crisis?
 - iii. Are measures considering the poor and marginalized
- f) How can we, as Pax Romana family in Africa, support each other at this time of crises? Are there practical suggestions?

4. The Proposed Program

Time	Activity	
12:45 - 13:00 GMT	Members connect	<p><i>The Moderator begins to take a roll call</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes a clear and concise introduction about the structure and organisation of the discussion.
13:00 -13:10 GMT	Introduction of members	<p><i>The Moderator calls the meeting to order</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites Fr. Emmanuel Mulu to offer a word of prayer. • Introduces speakers and other key participants on the discussion - very briefly- name, country of origin and profession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Follow the order provided above ○ The order is just based on language
13:10 -13:15 GMT	Word of Prayer	<p><i>Rev Fr. Emmanuel Mulu (Chaplain, KMCP) or any other member</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i></p> <p>Makes a word of prayer</p>
13:15 - 14:30 GMT	Reflections	<p>a) Reflections from Discussants</p> <p><i>The Moderator calls the meeting to order</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator leads the sessions
14:30 - 14:40 GMT	Closing remarks	<p><i>Mr. Marcel AKPOVO (Moderator)</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides concluding remarks • Welcomes
14:40 – 14:45 GMT	Closing Song and Prayer	<p><i>Rev Fr. Emmanuel Mulu (Chaplain, KMCP)</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i></p> <p>Closes with a word of prayer</p>

5. Time and Dates

Date: Saturday, 11th April 2020

Time: from **12:45GMT**

Link: <https://meet.google.com/jxe-shzg-wsp>

Pass code: jxe-shzg-wsp

6. Guidelines

a. *Before the Event:*

- All members to connect at least 15 min before the Starting time. **@12:45GMT**
- Ensure your microphone and camera are working
- Ensure you have enough internet connectivity
- Ensure your phone and computer is well charged

b. *During the Event:*

i. *Moderator(s)*

- To lead the entire session
 - provide guidelines
 - begin by providing an overview of the discussion
 - call speakers to provide their interventions
 - keep an eye on any questions from the audience
- Politely interrupt the speaker if the time given to the person is over
- Provide a short summary of intervention by French Speakers, for the English speakers.

ii. *Presenters and Other Listeners*

- Mute (switch-off) your micro-phone if you are not speaking (very important)
- Unmute (switch-on) your micro-phone if you are not speaking (very important)
- Ensure there is no noise at the background (very important)
- Ensure you have a suitable background
- Speak in a clear voice while ensuring their cameras are on
- Be mindful of time

c. *After the Discussions:*

iii. *Moderator*

- Thank members and provide a short closing remarks
- Word of prayer

iv. *Technician*

- Disconnect the channel for the observers to leave.

7. Core members of members

The following will be core members of the organising team for this task.¹

Region	Country	Name
East Africa	Kenya	Samuel Mukundi
	Tanzania	Thomas Ommulisa
South Africa	Zambia	Kaputo Chenga
	Zimbabwe	Albert Dhafana
	South Africa	Tshiamo Moela
	Madagascar	Joseph Rahasa
University Students representative	Ethiopia	Fasika Lachore ²
West Africa	Ghana	Justus Atayaaba
	Togo	Dr. Jules Wahare
	Ivory Coast	Loukou Léon
	Benin	Dr. Jules Zannou
	Mali	Dr. Afou Chantal Bengaly
	Burkina Faso	Martine Badoré
Central Africa	Cameroun	Fabrice Nintedem
	RDC	Valentine Makongo
	Gabon	ÉMANE Idris Roméo
Europe	UK	Alex Mthobi
	France	Philippe Ledouble
America	USA	Dr. Kevin Ahern
Moderators	Benin	Marcel AKPOVO
	Ivory Coast	Emmanuel Loukou
Chaplain	Kenya	Fr. Emmanuel Mulu

¹ Names arranged by order of language understanding.

² Representing University Students in Africa

