**YOUTH LEADERSHIP**

**Norms Governing the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi Leadership**

*The norms here below govern the leadership of Missionary Youth Movement (MYM), Youth For Christ (YFC) and Young Adults Catholic Association (YACA).*

There are three main juridical levels of leadership and governance within the Archdiocese

1. The Archdiocesan Council which is headed by the Archdiocese Youth Chaplain, the Youth Coordinator and members of the Youth Council who are elected to represent the deaneries within the Archdiocese
2. The Deanery Councils and the Prison Chaplaincy led by Deanery Chaplains for the deaneries and Prison Chaplain for the Prison Chaplaincy. The Deanery Council coordinates the activities of the parishes under their care.
3. The Parish Council lead by the parish youth chaplain, animators, matrons and patrons. The council coordinates the youth in the parishes inclusive of the outstations.

The above three form the main juridical structures of the youth. However, to aid in the coordination of the Four Zones within which the Deaneries are divided, a Zonal council is also elected.

**THE YOUTH CHAPLAINS**

The Youth Chaplains have the responsibility to assist, guide and govern the activities of the youth under their care. They may veto any activity or decision of the council under their juridical care if they judge that such is right. They have the authority to take disciplinary measures of youth under their care and give direction on matters of faith and morals. The chaplains should work closely with the matrons and patrons of the youth where applicable and also with the youth councils, giving them the necessary guidance and freedom to run their activities.

Youth leadership of the three main juridical levels has the following six offices that form the executive:

1. Chairperson
2. Vice Chair Person
3. Organizing Secretary
4. Secretary
5. Deputy Secretary
6. Finance Secretary or Treasurer

In addition to the six above, the following five departments, whose heads are referred to as ‘***secretaries***,’ shall be established:

1. **Communication** – The secretary will be involved in the media and keeping all the members updated including the other leaders that the council have under their care. This post may be taken by the executive secretary or the deputy. However, at the Archdiocese Council, the Communication Secretary is different from the Executive Secretary.
2. **Liturgy** – The secretary shall coordinate all matters involving liturgy and the planning of such. The secretaries at all levels shall work with the ADN secretary to plan spiritual and religious activities and attend workshops that may be organized to educate youth on Church liturgy.
3. **Sports** – The secretary coordinates all the activities involving sports
4. **Culture** – The cultural secretary organized and coordinates activities involving drama, music and other cultural festivals.
5. **Charity, Advocacy and Hospitality/Welfare** – The secretary coordinates charitable works of the council and other youth, advocacy works such as tree planting and peace walks and also for the care of the council in terms of meals or trips.

The above five departments, including the finance department, may have a secretary deputized by two people who are part of the council according to the needs of each council. However, this is mandatory for the ADN councils. Members of the executive, other than the Chair, can serve as secretaries of the said departments except in ADN council where the secretaries shall be different from the council.

**Rationale on Secretaries and Departments**

The reason why such departments are in place is to ensure team work and that the whole council is involved in running youth activities according to their juridical levels. It will also help to increase financial accountability and avoid the one-man shows where one member of the council does all the work.

It is important to note therefore that the work of animators and coordinators is to help the youth run their activities and not run for them. Exception to this belongs to the MYM who are still underage but nonetheless should be given responsible space and freedom to take responsibilities and run them with proper guidance and advice.

The Chairperson has the responsibility of coordinating the different departments without usurping their different competencies. This he/she does hand in glove with the executive.

Each council shall come up with the following:

1. Vision
2. Mission
3. Objectives
4. Strategies and activities

These are to be implemented within the term of the current council as part of its legacy and a marker of difference made.

For the Archdiocesan Council, each department shall also have their vision, mission, objectives, strategies and activities written down and submitted to the Youth Chaplain and the Youth Coordinator.

**TEAM VISITS**

The deanery executive is obliged to visit all the parishes under its care at least once a year or at least meet with the youth leadership of the parishes under their care. The executive shall have a program of how they will visit their parishes within twelve months and have this program sent to the Archdiocese youth office.

Moreover, the deanery executive (the whole council maybe involved) should plan to have a meeting with the Archdiocese Youth Office at least once in 12 months.

The Archdiocesan Executive Council is also obliged too to meet with all deanery leaders at least once in twelve months and to submit their program to the youth coordinator.

Adherence to the above is to be taken seriously. The Archdiocese Youth Office may forbid any deanery from participating in Archdiocese level activities if these guidelines are not adhered to.

**GENERAL NORMS GOVERNING ALL YOUTH LEADERS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE**

At the start of his pontificate, Pope Francis addressed the members of the curia who work at the Vatican. He asked them to take up the following three principles as points of reference and inspiration in their service. Norms are not rules even though they might be occasionally used as such. They are guidelines that ensure faithfulness and focus to the goal at hand. Persons exhibiting personal maturity see in principles and norms, a path and not a prison. Each youth group and council is free to come up with their own specific norms adhering to the ones given here. These are therefore meant for all of us to be sources of personal excellence and in delivery of duty.

**Professionalism**

1. ***Competence and precision***

Competence is a having the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver a certain service. If in case you are a secretary of any office, get to know what that office entails and how best you can deliver that. This means keeping oneself updated through study and enquiry. Precision is about ensuring excellence in accomplishing given goals. It is about time management, deadlines, order, preparation and ensuring that whatever is done was done in the best possible way and not just the bare minimum.

1. ***Personal Reputation and Prudence***

Once you are a leader, your personal reputation must be carefully guarded. Leadership is about trust between the leader and the people he or she leads. One cannot influence the followers unless they seem in him/her, the values that he/she demands. It would be impossible to work with a leader if the word on the ground bespeaks of a person who is immoral, of loose character among other negatives. That is not to mean that there will not be critics and naysayers since such will always be for leaders. Guard your social media presence and interaction so that they do not become a source of scandal for others however well-meant or non-malicious. Exercise prudence so that you might not be seen as to permit certain behaviors since you were part of the group when such happened.

1. ***Accountability***

Pope Francis says that the devil enters through the pocket and that money is the dung of the devil. Where money is, there the devil lurks. We cannot expect the civil leadership to be transparent and accountable whereas we, who serve in the Church, are not even close to that. Any sales or transaction must be recorded and kept with the financial secretary. The records must be defensible and clear. All material goods entrusted to the council during its term or during certain events should not be used in any way for personal benefit and enrichment. As a leader, you must ensure that in your deanery, all monies are accounted for. You cannot simply pass the buck to someone else. Insist that in all offices that you hold, accountability and transparency is upheld. The Archdiocese Youth Chaplain or the Youth Coordinator may demand the audit of finances at the deanery level or may authorize the Archdiocese Youth Finance Secretary to do so.

**Holiness**

1. ***Witness to the Faith and Morals***

It is presumed that a person who seeks leadership within the Church, or whatever kind of greater service to the Church, does so out of an understanding of what the Church upholds. The Church, through her Tradition, Magisterium and Scripture, is the teacher of faith and morals. A mature Catholic can indeed struggle to understand some of the teachings of the Church but cannot in any way be an authentic Catholic but arrogantly live as if the teachings of Christ through His Church do not matter. It is like joining a company but selling the products of its competitor! You would be fired and people would definitely not sympathize with you. The teachings of the Church inform both our personal and private lives including our businesses. You cannot have a business or income generating activity that is opposed to the teachings of the Church and yet you want to be a leader within the same Church. Such a position is immature and hypocritical. It is indeed a selfish move that seeks not conversion but personal benefit. Such leaders who persist in such should honestly resign or be assisted to do so. Leadership within the Church is not a Sunday event but a holistic character leadership. A leader must therefore seek to be conversant with Church teachings but above all seek a closer relationship with Christ in terms of personal prayer, reading scriptures, a sacramental life and charity to the weakest in the community of faith.

1. **Integrity and Pace Setting**

In line with the above, leaders must be people of integrity especially if they serve the Body of Christ, the Church. Buying leadership positions through any form is to be severely condemned and such leaders firmly assisted to leave. The Church cannot be a place where bribery and corruption is a way of life since the larger society exhibits such. Moreover, a leader must be careful to avoid moral scandals in situations that might be acceptable to the larger society but frowned upon by the Church such as drug use, social places visited, immodesty, pseudo-marriages and imitation of the current thinking in matters around the body and sex among other issues. In sum, a leader must set the pace and to set the pace means to be the salt of the earth and light on a hill that others can see and imitate. Holiness is not a preserve of priests, nuns and brothers but a call to all. The main goal of Catholic leaders is not to organize sports and cultural festivals but to be channels of God’s Mercy by setting examples worth following. Always remember this; the people you lead will never rise above the levels of excellence and holiness that you yourself live by. If you are ashamed of living a holy life, you should be ashamed of seeking to lead within the Church. Holiness, nonetheless, is not in never sinning, as Pope Benedict XVI teaches, but in rising every time we sin without accepting sin in our lives as if it is okay. Let all leaders therefore be shining instruments of Christian virtue.

1. **Love for the Church**

The Church is our Mother. She gave us the faith; we received Jesus through her. It is in first of all seeking to love Christ and the Church that it is possible to keep her demanding teachings. There are many sins and weaknesses in the Church but so are there such in all families. Moreover, due to many non-Catholics making fun of the Church, some Catholics become shy. Catholic leaders, by their faith, love, life, speech and purity, defend the Church and thereby become the proud sons and daughters of the Church.

**Service**

1. **Authority**

Leadership as service has so been repeatedly used and misused that it sounds more of a cliché. However, its truth remains. Jesus asks that those who seek to lead must like him seek to serve and not to be served and that their authority is not about ruling over but in influencing. True leaders use their influence to make positive change and not their office or authority. There is a very clear difference between a boss and a leader and the main difference is their use of power. Let Church leaders therefore not be bullies or power hungry individuals. On the other hand, to be a leader is to accept that one has authority and responsibility. One cannot act as if such has not been entrusted to him or her. Leaders therefore must be very respectful and assertive without becoming aggressive. Be a team worker, actively involving other leaders either in your committee or council where applicable.

1. **Proactivity and Involvement**

Being proactive means to step up and take responsibility. This flows obviously from the fact that you sought to be a leader and you accepted such. Leaders must be involved and not sit on the fence or are simply there to be seen. Important activities such as meetings and youth events are a must for those who occupy offices. Missing half of the annual meetings for good or bad reason will be a reason for a leader to resign or to be assisted to do so for he/she is incapable of carrying out the work he/she promised to do. Failing to attend archdiocesan level activities which are part of the core business should lead one to questions his/her effectiveness. To emphasize again, leaders must be involved, think ahead and remain focused.

1. **Self Sacrifice**

Leadership in the Church has little if any material benefits. In this vein, those who accept leadership must also concede to the truth that self-sacrifice is needed and occasionally using one’s own resources to ensure the success and effectiveness of Church activities. Moreover, it means that at times, one’s own schedule will have to be put aside when duty calls. It calls that there will be moments when as a leader you will have to work alone, persist, be disappointed and frustrated and feel like quitting. Leadership is demanding and one who seeks it must seek it not to enrich or benefit himself/herself but to contribute to positive change. Be ready therefore to work beyond office hours and to give of yourself when you are tired and hungry and broke. Be ready to go the extra mile even when you do not feel like it. Don’t settle for mediocrity but seek to do the best. In the end, the only thing that matters are the words of Christ, “Welcome Good and Faithful Servant…., to the Kingdom that has been prepared for you since the dawn of time.” Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

**CONCLUSION**

Adherence to norms above shall be ensured by the Chaplains, Animators and the Youth Coordinators. Warning letters may be given to leaders and such copied to other levels under their care. This means that a deanery chaplain intending to write a warning letter shall copy them to all the parish priests in the deanery. However, resorting to warning letters should precede verbal corrections to the person(s) involved. If no change is witnessed, the leader may be assisted to leave his/her post and someone else invited. The chaplain shall ensure that the reasons for the dismissal are well known to all those who elected the leader by copying the letter to the parish priests in case of deanery leaders or to all deanery chaplains in case of ADN council leaders. All leaders have the freedom to appeal to the Archdiocesan Chaplain who will have the final authority to decide whether to take up the case of leave it with the deanery or youth chaplains to solve. Moreover, the Archdiocese Youth Chaplain and the Coordinator may ask the deanery chaplain to provide a different youth representative to the ADN council if the current does not fulfill the above stated guidelines.

It is important to state again that the main work of leaders within the Church is to evangelize and not necessarily through preaching. Catholic leaders are not working within an NGO but a Church. They are first of all believers in Christ and His Church. Without this, they lose their identity and are therefore no longer different with secular or civil leaders. They become mere administrators and managers but not witnesses. These norms therefore should guide all Catholic leaders to exhibit and have the mind of Christ and of the Church as they go about their roles and responsibilities with honesty and congruence.

**SIGNED**

***Rev. Fr. Edwin Hunja – Archdiocese Youth Chaplain***

***Mr. Dominic K. George – Archdiocese Youth Coordinator***