

**PASTORAL REPORT ON MILITARY CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY BY THE SENIOR CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN OF THE GHANA ARMED FORCES TO THE CONFERENCE IN ROME-ITALY APOSTOLATE MILITAIRE INTERNATIONAL (AMI)**

**GENERAL**

1. Greetings from the Military High Command, the Directorate of Religious Affairs and from all Chaplains serving with the Ghana Armed Forces. We wish to extend our appreciation to you for the honor of being accepted to join the conference after so many years of absence.

**AIM**

2. My aim of this report is to give you a brief of the Ghana Armed Forces Catholic Chaplaincy to AMI Conference for your information and perusal.

**STRENGTH**

3. We are twelve (12) Catholic Chaplains; with two (2) others will be chaplains currently under training at the Ghana Military Academy, Teshie Accra, yet to graduate in October 20<sup>th</sup>. On the other hand, over the period 3 of our Majors have been promoted Lt Cols. See Annex A with the list of the chaplains serving with the Ghana Armed Forces now. Annexes B and C for statistics and denominational strength of the Ghana Armed Forces.

**ST. CATHERINE CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY, GHQ, BURMA CAMP**

4. This is the headquarters of Catholic Military chaplaincy. The substantive chaplain is Very Rev Fr Dr Commander Alex A Anaman, who is also the Senior Catholic Chaplain and Deputy Director of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Rev Fr Lieutenant Andrew Owusu Ansah is the associate chaplain, who is also the chaplain of Army Recruit Training School in Shai Hills, Tema.

5. The year 2016 was marked with series of activities; this included a number of Marriages, Confirmation, Baptism and First Holy Communion being celebrated. Two Masses are celebrated every Sunday except the first Sunday of the month which is celebrated as family Sunday of which one Mass is celebrated.

6. We were fortunate to receive a pastoral visit of the Archbishop of Accra from 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> November 20-16 for the first time in the history of the Ghana Armed Forces, the Archbishop paid a courtesy call to the military high command, where a quarter guard salute was offered to the archbishop, and a reception was organized in his honor. In attendance were catholic serving and retired Generals who are parishioners of St. Catherine.

7. There have been about 200 men and women of army, navy and air force personnel with their families who have left the barracks on retirement and this have had a telling effect on the numeric strength of the parish. However, there have been house-to-house Visitations, Crusades, Calvary Hour (Hour of Grace) every month, all night service, and other social activities to win more souls and lapsed Catholics back to join us as form of evangelization.

8. There have been a number of projects we have embarked on. Pavement, horticulture, reroofing of the church, and we have our new parish hall just commissioned.

### **ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY, 37 MILITARY HOSPITALS**

9. The substantive chaplain is Rev Fr Lt Col CK Kemetse. In view of the proximity of the chaplaincy there has been increased of members and this has necessitated an expansion of the church, to make the church more spacious for worship.

The members have been the sole contributors of this project. The expansion work project is going on steadily and soon will be completed.

10. Two Masses are celebrated every Sunday. And the other sacraments are also being administered to the faithful.

### **ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY, TEMA**

11. St Michael Catholic Church is in the Tema/Battor deanery of the Archdiocese of Accra and is situated in Michel Camp Tema. It has about thousand (1000) registered members. Averagely between Four Hundred to Five Hundred (400-500) members attend Sunday Mass. Two Masses were celebrated every Sunday. However, the church has since been expanded, therefore only one Mass is celebrated every Sunday. Also, there is quarterly nondenominational religious parade where Muslims and Christians worship together as one unit. Rev Fr Major Francis Agyeman is the chaplain.

12. Ongoing projects are changing doors and marble altar and laying pavement blocks all of which are almost completed. The future projects include to complete the rectory, build a grotto, fence the plot offered to the Catholic Church.

### **ST. CHRISTOPHER CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY, KUMASI**

13. Rev Fr Lt Col Francis DK Agbley is the chaplain. The chaplaincy is situated in No.4 Garrison in the Archdiocese of Kumasi. Two Masses are generally celebrated on Sundays.

14. The Chaplaincy has seen a tremendous transformation in terms of structural development. However, Church growth has been very marginal, as the Church cannot be said to be a community based one. Members who once lived in the barracks now live far away from the church either as a result of retirement and or migration. They are

therefore, seen only on Sundays. This therefore, does not encourage any meaningful evening programs to be run in the church.

15. The major challenge facing the Chaplaincy is the poor patronage of religious programs by troops and their families. Equally church membership has dwindled because of retirement. This challenge is not peculiar to the Catholic chaplaincy alone.

#### **ST MARTIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, TESHIE CAMP, ACCRA**

16. The St Martin Catholic Church, Teshie Camp continues to serve the Barracks and the faithful living in the catchment area around the camp. The substantive chaplain is Rev Fr Lt Col WDK Sraha.

The chaplaincy is situated in the training schools of the Ghana Armed Forces, in the Archdiocese of Accra.

17. Two (2) Holy Masses are celebrated on Sundays except the First Sunday of every month and any other Feast Day that demands the celebration of one Mass. The congregation continues to grow in number, spiritually and in strength, because of the growing civilian population in the general area.

18. The 3000 seating capacity church building which was started since 1994 is now near completion. A parishioner a member of the St. Theresa's Society has also single handedly built a Grotto. It is dedicated to our Lady of Fatima for the church and will be consecrated during the Archbishop's next pastoral visit.

#### **ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY, AIRFORCE BASE, TAKORADI**

19. Rev Fr Major Benjamin K Effah is the chaplain at the Air Base Takoradi chaplaincy, under the Sekondi Takoradi diocese. However, the chaplain is on peacekeeping mission in Mali, therefore Very Rev Fr John Attakruh of Sekondi Takoradi diocese is the one currently taking care of the chaplaincy.

It is one of the churches in the city and enjoys the patronage of the bishop. One Mass is celebrated every Sunday and weekday Masses are also celebrated.

Baptism and first communion have been celebrated during the Easter.

20. The community has started the construction of a parish Hall to generate income for their future projects. The dedication and commitment of the people is readily commendable. However, attrition rate is affecting the community with the ongoing retirement of soldiers.

#### **OUR LADY OF FATIMA CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY, TAMALE**

21. Rev Fr Captain Ebenezer E Arthur is the chaplain for the chaplaincy. However he is on peacekeeping mission in Mali also. Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, Kamina Barracks, which is under the Archdiocese of Tamale continues to provide religious leadership and

pastoral care for 6Bn command and the Catholic faithful in and around the Kamina Barracks. The Chaplaincy is doing well and continues to hold the Easter picnic on Easter Mondays for the whole of the Archdiocese of Tamale and the Tamale metropolis. Rev Fr F/O SM Aseleku is currently the one in charge.

22. The ongoing project is the renovation of the Parish Hall, erection of summer huts around the mission house and a space for nursing mothers who may want to sit outside the church to care for their babies. Plans for extension of the church building to accommodate all parishioners, and doing pavement blocks around the church, are in the preparatory stages.

### **ST. IGNATIUS CATHOLIC CHAPLAICY, 2 BN, TAKORADI**

23. Rev Fr Captain Rudolph Twumasi Ankrah is the substantive chaplain. The chaplaincy which is under the diocese of Sekondi Takoradi, celebrates one Mass on Sunday and Masses are celebrated during the week days also.

24. Mostly members of the chaplaincy consist of troops and their families, therefore the recent military retirement has greatly affected their strength. However, the neighborhood is being developed so the prospect of getting more members is high. Equally the use of the grotto there will help to win more souls and members, as the attendance at the grotto activity is very high.

### **ST. THEODORE CATHOLIC CHAPLIANCY, SUNYANI**

25. St. Theodore Garrison Catholic Church under the diocese of Sunyani is a family of soldiers, wives and children from both 3 Infantry Battalion and 2 Recce Independent Squadron. It also draws a sizeable number of worshippers from immediate environs of the Liberation Barracks.

Masses are celebrated on Sundays and the weekdays. Rev Fr Capt AK Essien is the chaplain.

26. The following projects have been completed the mission house; marble Altar and expansion and new design of the sanctuary. A conference room for meetings is under construction.

### **ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHAPLIANCY, BAWA BARRACKS, TAMALE**

27. Rev Fr Flying Officer Samuel M Aseleku is the chaplain; he equally doubles as the chaplain rear for our Lady of Fatima chaplaincy in Kamina Barracks. The chaplaincy has continued to have a steady growth. Masses and other sacraments are celebrated for the people of God. At the moment there is no major project going on.

## **THE NAVY CHAPLAINCY**

28. Lack of Barracks setting and environment has affected the establishment of churches in the Ghana Navy's two Commands: namely the Western Naval Command in Sekondi and Eastern Naval Command in Tema. Notwithstanding quarterly nondenominational religious parades are organized for the spiritual up-liftment and morale of troops.

29. There is a barracks under construction in Tema of which places for churches and mosque have been earmarked and is almost completed. This is to follow soon with one at the West.

Rev Fr Naval Lt Sylvanus Dogodzi is the substantive chaplain at NB Tema, however, there is no Catholic Chaplain in NB Sekondi.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

30. It is envisaged that not long to come a military vicariate will be created for us through whom more vibrant chaplaincy environment will be created, where we will have more growth in military chaplaincy.

## **COMMENDATION:**

31. The Catholic chaplaincy congratulates our three senior officers Lt Cols ACK Kemetse, FDK Agbley, and WDK Sraha for their well-deserved promotion. Currently two (2) of our priests from Konongo-Mampong, and Goaso are in the Military academy. We thank their bishops for releasing them to us, and we pray for their success.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

32. The military Authorities are grateful to this August Conference and to AMI for your inviting and accepting us to this conference interest in the military chaplaincy. The Director of Religious Affairs, on behalf of the Chief of the Defense Staff, sends you regards and best wishes.

33. On behalf of all the Catholic Chaplains serving with the Forces, I express our appreciation to you for your interest in our welfare.

ALEX ABEEKU ANAMAN (REV FR DR)

NAVAL COMMANDER

SENIOR CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN

GHANA ARMED FORCES CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS AND CHAPLAINCIES