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ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ten-Year Plan

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind, with
the same love, united in heart”

Philippians 2:2



Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance
lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together
to eternal life

and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever.

Amen.





LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

This Church-wide plan is a reference document for guiding and coordinating efforts of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ethiopia General Secretariat (CBCE-GS) and dioceses and religious congregations in striving toward its vision and mission. It is the product of a year-long participatory exercise in understanding the landscape in Ethiopia and collaboratively seeking viable options in order to take advantage of opportunities and overcome key challenges – all the while prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable. The plan is inspired by the universal Church's Synodal process which requires us to listen and understand one another, identify and analyze challenges, formulate feasible options – and, most importantly, communicate abundantly and effectively.

This year-long process started with the formation of the National Steering Committee (NSC) just prior to the bishops' meeting in mid-2022, followed by development of concepts, planning, mobilization of staff and building buy-in and commitment to the process. Two key moments in this journey were gatherings which took place in December 2022 and April 2023: consultation workshops with ample participation from leadership, dioceses, the national office, congregations, partners and more. The first event aimed at ensuring stakeholders had a rich and common understanding of the landscape we face, in order to further explore analyses as well options for addressing challenges and taking advantage of opportunities. The second aimed at reviewing the analyzed challenges and opportunities as well strategic options, and coming to consensus on how the latter could assist the Church in achieving its overall purpose – first and foremost as pastors, and, emanating from that, achieving our social aims as well. Unity is essential to achieving our mission, and practically this is realized through coming together and strengthening our approaches to how we operate.

This plan is a master document intended to guide the Church in orienting national office and diocesan planning, prioritizing and guiding sectoral policies, supporting congregational planning and more. It communicates internally and to partners, donors, government and other external actors where and how the Church intends on prioritizing its efforts and resources. The aim is for us to become the *Church we want to be*, and to achieve this we need transformational change as well as a renewal of spirit and substance as we are called in the Gospels.

The NSC expresses our sincere gratitude to all who participated in this process – from leadership, to diocesan and national steering committee members, to workshop participants and more; your contributions have been invaluable. We also thank the four groups of consultants who provided essential insight and analysis to the process. We look forward to continued accompaniment by all stakeholders into the implementation phase of the strategy.

Let us continue our Synodality journey in making this framework a living document.

God Bless the Catholic Church!

+ H.Em. Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel

+H.E. Bishop Seyoum Fransua

Rev. Fr. Teshome Fikre

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FORWARD

His Holiness Pope Francis is leading the Universal Catholic Church in a worldwide process of discernment guided by the Holy Spirit. This Synodal journey engages the whole Church – clergy, religious men and women and lay Catholics – with all participating according to individual gifts, talents and charisms. We are moving forward together, united in Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Under His Holiness' leadership, the Synodal process assists the Church in carrying out her mission effectively and responding to challenges within the Church as well as across society as a whole. As we journey, we must first hear the Lord's voice in each of our hearts, speak openly, listen carefully, and hear the Lord's voice in one another as well, speaking to us all – as we chart a path forward.

The Catholic Church in Ethiopia is at a pivotal juncture, with opportunities to consolidate her evangelical mission in the current context while overcoming challenges internally and externally. Internally the Church must find harmony with effective communications and give greater focus to evangelization as her primary mission. Externally, challenges include corruption, drought and environmental degradation, extreme poverty, violence and instability, ethnic tensions and other acute socio-economic difficulties.

The Church in Ethiopia has become increasingly oriented towards social action, poverty reduction, education and health – even to the extent of being regarded by many as an NGO. Humanitarian and development work has become her defining image and character. While these are important, the Church needs to reorient herself towards her principal mission which is evangelization – and this needs to drive all of her work, especially social ministry. We must follow St. Luke's exhortation in Acts and **“devote ourselves to prayer and to the Ministry of the Word.”**¹ Otherwise, as Mother Theresa rightly pointed out, “without God we are too poor to be able to help the poor.”

In a pluralistic Ethiopia, the Church must rediscover her missionary zeal – and evangelization must regain its place at the heart of Catholic spirituality, identity and Church life. To do so, we must redefine the Church's vision, mission and approaches, engaging all levels of Ethiopian society with Gospel values. Furthermore, in light of the Catholic Church's minority profile in the country, we must be creative and dynamic in ministry, ensuring a strong prophetic voice.

The Catholic Church in Ethiopia, throughout her history, has experienced moments of grace and set-backs. We are living in the legacy of holy men and women and lay faithful who gave their lives for the mission of the Church. Our time now demands a renewal – as Pope Francis emphasizes in *Evangelii Gaudium*: **“Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to rediscover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world. Every form of Authentic Evangelization is always new.”**² Thus, we need to critically ask ourselves: what must change or improve in our evangelization? Can we move beyond current ways of doing things and be bold and creative in structure, style and method? Can we discern together pastorally as brothers and sisters, relying on one another, rather than walking alone?

To follow new ways of evangelization we need be fully cognizant of our history, the success we enjoyed and the challenges we overcame, as well as those we continue to struggle with. Pope Francis reminds us that the Church must look with penetrating eyes within herself and ponder the mystery of her own being. Genuine self-awareness inevitably leads to a comparison between the Church as Christ envisaged her and loved her as his holy and spotless bride,³ versus the actual image the Church presents today. The service the Catholic Church renders to society at large in Ethiopia through her ministries is worth recognizing. But we must reflect on improvements needed in order to – as invited by His Holiness – **respond to the pastoral needs of today.**⁴



Maintaining true Catholic identity is essential. We must understand, as followers of Jesus Christ, that we face harder challenges every day. If we are to be the people God calls us to be, if we are to restore and renew the Church and rebuild society, then we need pastoral flavor, zeal and commitment to live out our Catholic identity and communicate it in all that we do – in our parishes, convents, monasteries, schools, health institutions, development projects and in our personal lives.

In a country with extensive conflict, ethnic tension, religious division, extreme poverty, forced migration, corruption and other signs of moral decadence, the Church must play a central role in forming the consciences of our people more than ever. Our institutions must be instruments of true and authentic evangelization, peace and reconciliation. Moreover, attention must be given to catechesis as well as formation and empowerment of laity, women and youth – as they need our full support to participate genuinely in the life and mission of the Church.

The Catholic Church must urgently redefine her mission with a clear strategy for pastoral and social engagement in the full spectrum of people's needs. For effective evangelization, the Church needs to scale up communications systems within her institutions and with all stakeholders. It is for this purpose we have embarked in this great adventure of establishing a ten-year plan inspired by the Synodal journey and put into action the consensus of consultations in parishes, dioceses and national events. We must ask basic questions: What is the focus and where should the priorities of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia be – are they not centered on making disciples of Christ? Through preaching of the Word of God, and through prayer and the Divine liturgy? By building *Koinonia* (Communion), and through our work of *Diakonia* (Charity)? And in what other ways?

Strategies and priorities without an appeal for transformation and call for radical return to God are pathways to nowhere. The Church's plans and priorities must lead us to conversion, making disciples, working for the salvation of souls (*salus animarum*), for the glory of God. The process of reformulating vision, mission, values and strategy enhances our mutual understanding regarding: a) our aspirations (*The Church We Want to Be*), b) our commitment as Christ-centered, Spirit-led, mission-oriented and community-focused – listening and accompanying one another, being synodal and together on the Way, who is Christ; c) our spiritual revitalization and deepening Catholic faith, call to conversion, strengthening vocations, animation and formation, empowering pastoral agents and the laity, reaffirming Catholic identity in all of our institutions, cultivating a Christ-centered culture in all our governance systems, influencing society and paving the way for a new evangelization in new areas of the country; and d) our communion with one another, inspired by love and the unity of the Trinity, which requires dialogue and mutual understanding, grounded in our faith tradition.

Thus, this plan was developed through rich forums of consultation and born from the voices of Catholics around the country, deepened through workshops and consultations at parish, diocesan and national levels. We have journeyed synodally, genuinely and authentically, listening to one another and to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let us all own this plan, contextualize it and deepen it in our institutions, structures, planning and programming.

May God bless the Catholic Church as we embark on this journey together!

Vision and Mission

Vision:

The Catholic Church in Ethiopia focuses on making disciples through authentic evangelization in the spirit of Synodality

Mission:

Deepen faith formation and evangelization in Ethiopia through communion, participation and mission by proper celebration of the Divine liturgy, promotion of Integral Human Development, acts of charity as well as ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue





Core Values

- Love
- Truth
- Freedom
- Justice
- Mercy
- Fear of God
- Humility
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability

Core Principles

- Sacredness/Dignity of the Human Person
- Solidarity
- Common Good
- Subsidiarity
- Stewardship
- Preferential Option for the Poor and Marginalized
- Ecumenism and Dialogue

Motto

Evangelization through Integral Human Development

GOALS and OUTCOMES

This framework reflects the priorities of the Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) – with all of its rich institutions and structures – working together toward a common vision of strengthening our pastoral and social work.

This master strategy focuses on our aspirations and changes we seek in order to deepen our work, align our plans and actions and achieve our mission. The participatory nature of the planning process was intended to fulfil our Synodal ambitions through listening and understanding, and therefore build consensus around Church governance and the three ministries – pastoral, social and operational – clarifying and articulating goals and outcomes.



Holy Mass during 19th AMECEA Plenary, Don Bosco, Addis Ababa



CHURCH GOVERNANCE/ Ecclesiastical Organization

The Catholic Church is more than a human society – rather she⁵ is the mystical body of Christ, the people of God, the assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. The governance of the Church is the duty of her hierarchy, and the various functions are distributed among the leadership via a stable and ordered organization. The collection of corporate bodies, organs and persons who exercise key functions constitute the ecclesiastic organization. The goal of the ecclesiastic structure is to maintain unity and identity of the Church and guide her in an orderly way toward the realization of her mission. “The Society structured with hierarchical organs and the mystical body of Christ, the visible society and the spiritual community, the earthly church and the Church endowed with heavenly riches, are not to be thought of as two realities. On the contrary, they form one complex reality which comes together from a human and a divine element. In this way, the social structure of the Church serves the spirit of Christ who vivifies it, in the building up of the body.”⁶ During synodal consultation meetings and visits to jurisdictions, gaps in the application of Canonical provisions regarding organizing curia offices and other Church institutions were observed. Thus, structures are to follow Church law and also be responsible, fair and transparent in order to fulfill the Church’s mission. Acute challenges are to be overcome in order to ensure high levels of accountability, standards and policies that reflect the aims of leadership, full communion of Church leaders, managers and staff as well as a strong identity throughout the institution.

GOAL I: Ecclesiastical jurisdictions and institutions restructured according to the provisions of Canon Law

OUTCOME 1: The Assembly of the Catholic Bishops of Ethiopia is organized with full consideration of the two liturgical rites (the session of the council of Hierarchs and the session of the Vicars Apostolic)

OUTCOME 2: Per aspirations of the Catholic faithful in Ethiopia, proper juridical status of the Church with the government of Ethiopia is obtained

OUTCOME 3: Curia offices are re-organized in all jurisdictions

OUTCOME 4: Parish, diocesan and national forums for communion and synodal participation are established

GOAL II: Church policies fully reflect the ambitions and aims set forth by Church authorities

OUTCOME 1: Guidelines and procedures that regulate Catholic institutions and their employees are updated and maintained

OUTCOME 2: Church control systems, processes and protocols as well as legal services are strengthened in order to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and compliance

GOAL III: Full communion among Church leaders, staff, partners and all stakeholders

OUTCOME 1: Working relationships and mandates among dioceses, the national office, religious congregations, movements and all stakeholders are clarified

OUTCOME 2: Accountability, transparency and stewardship are assured across all Church structures and programs

GOAL IV: All Church structures, systems and programs strongly reflect her Catholic identity

OUTCOME 1: Ethiopian Catholic Church-Social and Development Commission rebranded as Ethiopian Catholic Church: Caritas (Catholic Caritas Ethiopia)

OUTCOME 2: Ecclesiastic structures as well as pastoral and social programs strengthen internal and external expressions of Catholic identity

OUTCOME 3: A prayerful culture of excellence throughout the Church is strengthened





Ministry of Evangelization

Evangelization is the principal mission of the Church. “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Mathew 28:19) Our pastoral ministry concerns itself with the totality of all the Church does. Thus, she comprehensively embraces essential activities of evangelization in all its expressions, catechesis, the Divine liturgy and spirituality of the faithful – as well as inspires our social ministry in addressing needs of the poor and vulnerable. In order for the Church to continue proclaiming the Word of God, Christians must together make a determined and mission-driven decision of full transformation, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be reshaped for the evangelization of today’s world, rather than for her self-preservation. The Ethiopian Catholic Church – having analyzed the current context in light of faith, and in a Synodal spirit – puts forth this pastoral framework to ensure that we renew and transform ourselves into the *Church We Want to Be*.

GOAL I: Spirituality reawakened and evangelization thriving

OUTCOME 1: Clergy and religious men and women are formed to be true disciples of Christ

OUTCOME 2: Catholic clergy care system is established

OUTCOME 3: Vibrant Family, Laity and Youth apostolates are established at local, diocesan and national levels

OUTCOME 4: Parishes become effective centers of evangelization, charity work and liturgical action of the Church

OUTCOME 5: Pastoral ministries to migrants and the diaspora community are enhanced

GOAL II: Faith formation systematically enriched with pastoral agents empowered

OUTCOME 1: Catechesis and understanding of the Word God deepened among all the faithful

OUTCOME 2: New structures and spaces for children and youth catechesis such as Sunday Schools at parish level and Catechetical centers at diocesan level are created

OUTCOME 3: Catechetical program for proper selection, training and remuneration of lay faith formators is developed

OUTCOME 4: Pastoral leadership and management skills are strengthened as part of seminary formation

GOAL III: Liturgy and celebration of the sacraments become the center and culmination of the life of the Church

OUTCOME 1: Liturgical structures are established which foster active participation in sacramental life throughout the Church

OUTCOME 2: Consistent approaches and methodologies are established in liturgical celebrations

OUTCOME 3: Formation on Divine liturgy in both Ethiopian and Latin rites is strengthened

OUTCOME 4: Research and learning are strengthened regarding the liturgical life of the Church

GOAL IV: Ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue reinvigorated

OUTCOME 1: Active support structures for ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue are established in parishes, dioceses and at national level to pursue and oversee engagement

OUTCOME 2: Diocesan and national research on ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue is enriched

OUTCOME 3: Church participation at all levels of the Inter-Religious Councils of Ethiopia is enhanced



Priests during the celebration of Saint Mary



CMRS Consultation: Synod on Synodality



Synodal consultation between associations in the Archdiocese of Addis Ababa

Charity is a responsibility of the Church. The Church proclaims that the Word “became flesh and lived among us” (Jn 1:14). The Word of God, who loves to dwell in our midst, in His inexhaustible richness, was received by the world over by diverse peoples, inspiring them with the most noble of aspirations, such as the desire for God, the dignity of every human life and equality among all human beings. Respect for differences within our human family, dialogue as a means of participation and a longing for peace must be welcomed as expressions of fraternity and solidarity — together with a responsibility to care for creation. As expressed in the encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, love of neighbor, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost the responsibility of each member of the faithful. It is also the responsibility of the entire ecclesial community: from local levels of particular Catholic groups, to the Church universal in its entirety. As a community, the Church must practice works of love in an ordered manner to be effective in society — and, thus, parishes must be organized as centers of evangelization-inspired charity. *Diakonia* — the ministry of charity exercised communally and orderly—is fundamental to the Church. Charitable structures must be well-organized within the institution and at the same time respond to legal requirement of the Ethiopian state. The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: proclaiming the Word of God (*kerygma-martyria*), celebrating the sacraments (*leitourgia*) and exercising the ministry of charity (*diakonia*). These duties presuppose one another and are inseparable. For the Church, charity is not a form of welfare which could equally be left to others — rather it is in her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being. At the same time, it is recognized that the context in Ethiopia is fraught with serious challenges in terms of greater and increasingly-complex humanitarian dynamics as well as fragile and unstable operating environments. Needs outstrip available resources and the policy environment is complex. Driven by her pastoral mission – where Catholic identity fully informs why and how social ministry interventions are carried out – the Church takes an Integral Human Development (IHD) approach attending to the whole person. This requires streamlining humanitarian, resilience and peace building interventions with strong attention to care for creation. Poor and marginalized women, children and youth are particularly targeted due to their heightened vulnerability as well as the paucity of opportunities they encounter.

TRIPLE NEXUS

Humanitarian Response

GOAL I: All people survive and recover in the face of natural and man-made disasters, adapt to changing environmental conditions, and thrive to build resilient, just and peaceful societies

Both natural and man-made disasters regularly occur across the country. Drought is common, with household assets drained and coping mechanisms quickly exhausted. Frequent conflicts cause death, displacement, hunger and damaged livelihoods. The Church seeks to respond comprehensively, saving lives by meeting immediate needs, protecting all, especially the most vulnerable, and assisting poor households put in place the building blocks for recovery – while facilitating local capacity strengthening to monitor and respond.

OUTCOME 1: Immediate food, non-food, trauma and psycho-social needs of IDPs, host community members and others affected by crises are met

OUTCOME 2: Livelihood and recovery responses for those affected by crises are strengthened

OUTCOME 3: Local leadership and capacities at diocesan and congregational levels are enhanced to respond to emergencies and reduce risks to disasters

Changing weather patterns have had devastating effects in Ethiopia in recent times. Droughts have increased in frequency, with poor households experiencing crop failure season after season. Flooding is also prevalent, often following drought, leaving damaged homes and fields, weakened herds and insufficient means of livelihood. The Church engages communities to understand key patterns as well as evolving risks and the root causes of entrenched poverty – and invests in proven and promising practices. She takes an integral ecology approach to care for creation as articulated in *Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home*¹⁰ and echoed by the psalmist: “the earth is the Lord’s and all it holds.”¹¹

OUTCOME 4: Sustained community engagement and accompaniment are strengthened in order to identify, analyze and responded to the root causes of poverty

OUTCOME 5: Research-to-technology and adoption-to-dissemination of environmentally-friendly and climate-smart technologies are strengthened

OUTCOME 6: Care for creation is strengthened via integral socio-ecological approaches



Sapling planting after the 51th CBCE Plenary Assembly in Mojo

In recent decades, Ethiopia has been experiencing increased conflict, much of it along ethnic lines and worsened by weak governance. Wars and localized violence have resulted in alarming numbers of deaths, displacement of millions, large scale home destruction and damaged livelihoods – and have torn at the very fabric of society. This begs profound questions regarding both the potential for healing and reconciliation in the country as well as the Catholic Church’s role in promoting peace and reconciliation. The Church fully embraces its call – “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”¹² – and commits to strengthening collective efforts in caring for those affected by injustice and violence, understanding and analyzing root causes, building social cohesion and striving for a just, resilient and sustained peace in Ethiopia.

OUTCOME 7: Communities at different levels of society are actively contributing to reconciliation: spiritually, psychologically, socially, structurally and ecologically

OUTCOME 8: The capacity and roles of Church leaders and staff are strengthened to better lead efforts in trauma healing, psycho-social support, social cohesion and peacebuilding

OUTCOME 9: All Church-led initiatives will have peacebuilding components integrated



H.Em. Cardinal Berhaneyesus with local community in Tullu Fera, near Bishoftu

Social Integration

Key sectors of the population in Ethiopia face challenges in terms of respect for basic human rights as well as integrating socially and economically. They are under-represented in decision-making roles and have limited access to education and employment opportunities. First, with almost three-quarters of the population under the age of 35, youth unemployment is 50% higher¹³ than the national adult average.¹⁴ And when they are working, young people are often under-employed, doing menial jobs, or engaged in sectors different from their educational and desired focus simply to have a job and an income. Second, migrants face daunting challenges as they flee from violence and seek a better life. The Church is called to “show hospitality to foreigners, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”¹⁵ Additionally, one in eight persons in the country has some form of disability, three-fourths of whom face difficulties functioning in society, and a third of those are severe cases¹⁶ – plus they experience unemployment and poverty rates of 95% or more.¹⁷ Throughout the country the Church seeks to strengthen respect for basic rights for all members of society, especially for the most vulnerable, and welcome and support full integration of these marginalized groups into our communities, ensuring equal access to opportunities. The Church supports these valued segments of Ethiopian society through her Social Rehabilitation Office via accompaniment, awareness-raising, capacity strengthening and technical support throughout her structures.

GOAL II: All members of society in Ethiopia fulfill their God-given potential

OUTCOME 1: Youth access to training, asset ownership, opportunities and career development is strengthened

OUTCOME 2: Migrants are welcomed, with rights protected and opportunities for social integration supported – and they are accompanied as full members of society in Ethiopia, promoting their Integral Human Development

OUTCOME 3: People with special needs are fully integrated into structures and programs throughout the Church



Different youth initiatives



Women initiatives supported by Church food security program

The Church’s right to establish educational institutions is articulated in Canon Law which can be claimed before the state by invoking her title to be an educator in virtue of her mission. The Church is called to support children and youth to “develop their physical, moral and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom and participate actively in social life.”¹⁸ Education has been provided since the first Catholics arrived in Ethiopia centuries ago. Moral education has been the historical backbone of Catholic schools with many parents preferring Catholic schools for their strong academic and ethical formation. However, education across the country is highly challenging as the education system is falling far short of expectations. Girls in particular face daunting hurdles: while primary school enrollment has climbed to over 90% in recent decades, less than half make the transition to high school.¹⁹ Furthermore, few students are meeting minimum standards, e.g., only one in thirty received a passing grade in the national high school exams in 2022.²⁰ Running over 430 schools at all levels, including technical colleges and the Ethiopian Catholic University, the Church places education at the heart of her mission.²¹ A Catholic school possesses a distinctive Christian environment, maintains strong Catholic Identity and respects the rights of parents to a proper faithful education. As such, the Church must continue leading changes, engaging the government on policy concerns as well as expanding, strengthening and sustaining quality services.

GOAL: Ensure formation of knowledgeable, ethical and socially responsible citizens

OUTCOME 1: Leadership and management in Catholic Education Institutions are enhanced

OUTCOME 2: Strong relations, engagement and advocacy with the government and other key stakeholders established at each level

OUTCOME 3: Catholic education services are strengthened in terms of access, quality, equity, relevance and efficiency - and ethical education is enriched by Catholic Social Teaching (CST), research and development

OUTCOME 4: Education specialization in teacher formation, privatization and other models is explored



Ledeta Catholic School students during collection of donations



Saint Mary Cistercian Catholic School scouts during the Feast of Saint Joseph

The Catholic Health Care Ministry emphasizes respect for the innate dignity of the human person, from conception to natural death. The focus is holistic, meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs while attending to health of the individual. For generations the Catholic Church in Ethiopia has been a major contributor to the development and delivery of healthcare services across the country - and currently she owns and operates ninety health institutions, serving communities with love and care, integrating prevention and curative services. As a country, Ethiopia has made much progress in health in the past two decades with sharp reductions in mortality of children under five²² as well as deaths due to malaria²³ and HIV.²⁴ These improvements have been largely due to policy reforms and increased primary health coverage, although the gains vary widely across the country. Currently, premature deaths are primarily due to neonatal disorders, diarrheal diseases, lower respiratory infections, tuberculosis, stroke and HIV/AIDS – with root causes including poor child and maternal malnutrition, unsafe water/sanitation/handwashing, air pollution, high blood pressure and alcohol use.²⁵ Despite gains in health coverage, shortages of qualified staff remain, especially in rural areas where the Church’s presence is key to meeting basic needs. Catholic healthcare institutions seek to provide holistic and high-quality care in needy areas of the country. To do this, they must overcome critical issues of management, consistently applied approaches, range of services and especially sustainability.

GOAL: Comprehensive, holistic and quality healthcare provided for all

OUTCOME 1: Leadership and management are enhanced in Catholic Health institutions to ensure transparency and accountability

OUTCOME 2: Strong relations, engagement and advocacy with the government and stakeholders are established at all levels

OUTCOME 3: Harmonized health care information system is integrated at each level of Church health services

OUTCOME 4: Healthcare specialization in public-private and external partnerships is researched and explored



Missionaries of Charity providing care



The Church fulfills her mission with the support of competent ordained ministers, religious men and women, catechists, lay leaders and professional staff. Furthermore, the Church needs material and financial resources to fulfil her mission. The Operational Ministry oversees responsibilities related to human and financial resource management as well as administration of temporal goods. As the Code of Canon Law states in Article 1254, “to pursue its proper purposes, the Catholic Church, by innate right, is able to acquire, retain, administer and alienate temporal goods independently from civil power. The proper purposes are principally: to order divine worship, to care for the decent support of the clergy and other ministers and to exercise works of the sacred apostolate and of charity, especially toward the needy.” However, it is recognized that the Church currently faces multiple challenges that hinder its operational effectiveness as well as its sustainability. Internally, there is an urgent need to enhance operational excellence and maturity in key functional areas such as finance, human resources and asset management. Furthermore, decisions must be based on more readily available data and information; statutory and contractual compliance requirements must be met comprehensively and expediently; and control systems need strengthening and streamlining. Externally, ease of doing business has declined in recent years, posing additional challenges to functioning effectively. Church leaders at all levels are expected to demonstrate good stewardship by maintaining the highest standards of management of her human, financial and physical resources. Through the implementation of this strategy, the Church aspires to build staff capacity, upgrade technology and systems and establish uniform and shared operational functionalities throughout. Finally, with strengthened operating and control systems, the Church will be better positioned to sustain its pastoral and social ministries towards the realization of her Church-wide vision and mission.

GOAL I: Unified operational excellence across all Church structures

OUTCOME 1: Efficient, standardized and automated financial management system established throughout the Church

OUTCOME 2: Human resources structures, strategies and performance reflect a culture of excellence in all areas of Church activity

OUTCOME 3: Transparent and productive asset management is established at all levels in the Church structure – especially in terms of procurement and property management

GOAL II: The Catholic Church in Ethiopia achieves financial sustainability while pursuing its evangelization mission

OUTCOME 1: An efficient cost-structure is established across the Church

OUTCOME 2: Church-owned productive assets are fully mobilized in order to generate income

OUTCOME 3: Innovative resource mobilization streams – via new structures, strategies and approaches – are established across the Church

SYSTEMIC COMPETENCIES

These cover all ministries, structures and programs, and are essential for achieving outcomes and progressing toward Church goals in this strategic period.

SYSTEMIC COMPETENCY ONE

Safeguarding and Protection

Ethiopia is a country rich in tradition and values, although also experiences harmful attitudes and practices – in particular to children and vulnerable adults. The Church emphasizes a clear and firm belief in the inherent rights, freedom, dignity and equality of all people, and commits to providing a healthy and safe working environment. “Human dignity originates from God and is of God because we are made in God’s own image and likeness.”²⁹ As such, the Church takes a zero-tolerance approach that all forms of abuse are unacceptable – and commits to do everything in her power to prevent harm and abuse as well as care for those who have been subject to it. Our aim is an environment for all with whom we have contact regardless of sex, age, identity, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc. to have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation – including human trafficking. The Church holds herself fully and swiftly accountable in the event of allegations and incidents. In order to achieve this, leadership and commitment are essential, as are awareness-raising, standardized approaches and responsive case management.



Children residing at Bete-Selam shelter run by CBCE-GS

GOAL: The Church provides a safe and engaging environment for children and vulnerable adults where they may enjoy physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development at all stages of their lives

OUTCOME 1: The Church’s safeguarding and protection systems and structures are established and strengthened at all levels

OUTCOME 2: The case management system is strengthened, with feedback and reporting systems put in place - and survivor accompaniment and pastoral counseling reinforced

OUTCOME 3: Knowledge, attitudes and practices are strengthened throughout Church structures with respect to safeguarding and protection of children and adults

OUTCOME 4: Effective safeguarding and protection measures are integrated throughout Church structures, programs and MEAL

SYSTEMIC COMPETENCY TWO

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL)

Current challenges are acute in monitoring our work, aggregating data and reporting – as well as assessing impact. Consistent approaches must be developed, along with strengthened staff qualifications and skills. Systemic investment decisions must be taken in order to meet essential data and information needs, ensuring responsiveness to Church structures as well as those of external partners. To this end, data-informed decision-making and overall institutional culture must be reinforced through effective leadership, commitment and communications.

GOAL: An institutional, digital MEAL system, integrated throughout the Church's structures, established

OUTCOME 1: Standardized, responsive and user-friendly MEAL system is established and integrated into project cycles across the Church

OUTCOME 2: A culture of learning and research, data-informed and evidence-based decision-making as well as performance-orientation is established



SYSTEMIC COMPETENCY THREE

Empowerment and Inclusion

As of 2022, Ethiopia rated moderate to severe in terms of disparities between women and men, with rural areas more acute.³⁰ First, basic rights of women are too often not respected, with one in four having experienced violence and one in ten some form of sexual violence.³¹ Second, they participate in less than three-quarters of major household decisions.³² Furthermore, women are less likely than men to be paid for productive work: over half of all women engaged in the agricultural sector receive no payment,³³ and women spend nearly three times as much time on unpaid domestic care than men.³⁴ Women's unemployment rates are 20% higher than men's,³⁵ and when they are employed they represent only a quarter of management positions in the workplace.³⁶ Much of this stems from fewer opportunities earlier in life, as too few enter secondary school as noted above and they are often married before becoming adults.³⁷ The Church embraces strong roles of men, women, boys and girls in society, ensuring equal opportunities for education, employment and influence in decision-making.

GOAL: A society in which women, men, girls and boys are fully recognized and included in all pastoral and social services of the Church

OUTCOME 1: All Church ministries integrate gender in their planning and implementation of all programs

OUTCOME 2: An enabling environment is created and promoted for women, men, boys, and girls

SYSTEMIC COMPETENCY FOUR |

Communications and Advocacy

Scripture emphasizes, “my dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”³⁸ By being patient and attentive listeners, we can better understand the needs and concerns of others and communicate well. At its foundation, the Church proclaims the Good News for the salvation of all men and women – and the effective use of social and communications media is essential. With this evangelical priority in mind, communications are guided by the Church’s overall aims and goals. Excellent communications are critical to strong leadership, high levels of functionality and strategic implementation. Internally, the flow and quality of information internally must be strong in order to ensure staff have all they need to carry out their job duties at all levels. Furthermore, given that Church operational interactions are largely paper-based, much may be gained in automating information and data processes. Finally, it is important that the story of the Church be shared externally as well as for her to have a strong voice in advocating for issues which face the poor and vulnerable as well as the institution itself and her evangelical mission.

GOAL: Full authenticity in all Church communications and engagement

OUTCOME 1: Evangelization is promoted through all available media and communication channels

OUTCOME 2: Flow and quality of information and data sharing is increased throughout ecclesiastic structures

OUTCOME 3: Digitization throughout the Church is strengthened, automating manual and paper-based processes

OUTCOME 4: The story of Church initiatives is shared and branded clearly and effectively

OUTCOME 5: Church alliance-building and voice is strengthened in advocating for key issues affecting the poor and vulnerable, the Church in carrying out her mission and Ethiopian society as a whole

Strategic Implementation

Strengthen Our Foundation

- Reinforce institutional hopes and ambitions
- Unify and streamline structures
- Increase and widen linkages, alliances and partnerships
- Deepen subsidiarity
- Standardize approaches

Deepen Our Synodal Journey

- Continue listening and strengthening communications
- Follow-up annual action planning by NSC and internal stakeholders
- Cascade and align planning and policy development with dioceses and congregations as well as with sectoral and systemic competency offices
- Walk together and enrich cross-learning
- Widen communion and spiritually enrich all encounters internally and externally

Empower Our Faithful

- Cultivate zeal and commitment
- Strengthen leadership, capacity, ownership and achievement
- Increase transparency and accountability
- Promote prayerful culture of fruitfulness and impact
- Increase participation in planning and decision-making



Footnotes

1. Acts of the Apostles 6:4
2. Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, no 11
3. Ephesians 5:27
4. Evangelii Gaudium, 26
5. Cf. Ephesians 5:23-25
6. Vatican II, Apostolic Constitution, Lumen Gentium 8
7. Per the spirit of the Pastoral Letter of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ethiopia of this title (2002)
8. <https://www.afro.who.int/countries/ethiopia/publication/who-ethiopia-annual-report-2022>
9. Galatians 6:2
10. The papal encyclical Laudato Si can be accessed in full at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
11. Psalm 24:1
12. Matthew 5:9
13. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ETH/ethiopia/youth-unemployment-rate#:~:text=Ethiopia%20youth%20unemployment%20rate%20for,a%200.51%25%20decline%20from%202020>
14. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ETH/ethiopia/unemployment-rate#:~:text=Unemployment%20refers%20to%20the%20share,a%200.2%25%20decline%20from%202020>
15. Heb 13:1-2
16. <https://disabilitydata.ace.fordham.edu/country-briefs/et/#:~:text=In%20Ethiopia%2C%20the%20share%20of,9.3%25%20and%202.8%25%20respectively>
17. <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njihr/vol19/iss1/5/#:~:text=Official%20estimates%20suggest%20that%2095,poverty%20line%20and%20are%20unemployed>
18. Canon Law 795 - https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib3-cann793-821_en.html
19. <https://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>
20. This article quotes an announcement by the ministry of education – <https://allafrica.com/stories/202301300041.html>
21. Proverbs 22:6 - Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.
22. 59% drop since 1990, but remains high at 59/1,000 live births - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9289410/#:~:text=Conclusion,of%20health%20care%20is%20improving>
23. 96.5% drop since 1990 - <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fitd.2021.771030/full>
24. 52% drop since 2010 - <https://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia/hivaid#:~:text=As%20a%20result%20of%20these,52%25%20compared%20to%202010%20figures>
25. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)02868-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)02868-3/fulltext)
26. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1257237/ease-of-doing-business-score-in-ethiopia/#:~:text=Ethiopia%20scored%2048%20points%20in,business%20environment%20in%20the%20country>
27. Matthew 25:14-30
28. 1 Corinthians 16:2
29. Genesis 1:26-27.
30. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IQ.CPA.GNDR.XQ?locations=ET>
31. <https://um.dk/en/danida/results/stories/ethiopia-support-to-survivors-of-gender-violence#:~:text=According%20to%20figures%20from%20the,has%20been%20victims%20of%20rape>
32. <https://www.usaid.gov/ethiopia/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>
33. Ethiopia Gender Diagnostic Report – Priorities for Promoting Equity (World Bank, 2019) – <https://documents1.worldbank.org>
34. <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/ethiopia/#:~:text=In%20Ethiopia%2C%20the%20labor%20force,labor%20force%20participation%20has%20increased>
35. https://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_886385/lang--en/index.htm
36. <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/ethiopia/#:~:text=In%20Ethiopia%2C%20the%20labor%20force,labor%20force%20participation%20has%20increased>
37. Several sources quote a 40% of pre-adult marriages among young women including UNICEF's "Child Marriage in Ethiopia: A review of the evidence and an analysis of the prevalence of child marriage in hotspot districts" – www.unicef.org/Ethiopia
38. James 1:19



Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ethiopia