

Kenya:

Coping International contacted the Kenyan Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2017 regarding children of Catholic Priests. In September 2017, the Chairman of the Kenyan Conference of Catholic Bishops contacted Coping, stating:

“The question of Priest Fathers and the related Child Abuse are matters that the Catholic Bishops in Kenya have taken seriously since it became apparent the world over, that such issues were becoming critical. [...] It is instructive to advise you that the foregoing documents should largely guide the official position and procedures that the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) has put in place. As you will notice in the same documents, there is clarity in the event of a priest fathering a child.”

Bishop Anyolo stated further:

“The Bishop is also guided by the relevant sections of the Canon Law. Furthermore, the priest is required to undertake parental responsibility over the child until the legal age of maturity is attained.”

Coping notes that under Canon Law, fathering a child is not a canonical crime and thus a priest may not be dismissed from the priestly state for fathering a child. The document Bishop Anyolo refers to is the called "Safeguarding Children. Policy and Procedures."

Bishop Anyolo concluded:

“These official standard documents of the Catholic Church in Kenya, will guide you and any of the victims that may be willing to pursue justice in a truly honest and justifiable spirit. Such justice will definitely be availed.”

The document defines emotional and abuse, as well as neglect (both central experiences of children of clergy) as follows:

“Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child by conveying that he/she is unloved, inadequate or even worthless; or by over-protection and limiting exploration, learning, and normal social interaction. (§ 2.4.)

Neglect can be defined as an omission or the failure to protect a child. This is often evidenced in the child by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, safety, affection from adults, and failure to access appropriate medical care. (§ 2.6.)”

In July 2018, Coping International wrote to His Eminence, Cardinal Njue asking, “can the Church in Africa welcome [children of priests]?” His Eminence cardinal Njue replied: “I welcome your message and kind requests with open arms. And I assure that I will do anything withing my office to grant your requests. [...] I will continue to strive for best. May God bless you and your holy aspirations!” Coping encourages children of priests and their mothers or priests who have children, if they have not had success with the local bishop to contact Cardinal Njue at the Archdiocese of Nairobi, under the principle of subsidiarity.