NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CENTENARY HOUSE, NEAR TETTEH QUARSHIE INTERCHANGE

Tel: +233-0302-500491/0302-976222
E-mail: president@cbcgha.org/
secretarygeneral@cbcgha.org

P. O. Box KA 9712
Airport - Accra
Ghana/West Africa

PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE SEASON OF ADVENT ISSUED BY THE GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

"We are the clay, and thou art our potter" (Isa. 64:8 RSV)

Introduction

We the Catholic Bishops of Ghana send you this Pastoral Letter for the season of Advent. Advent is the pre-Christmas season in which we spiritually prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ, while readying ourselves for his second coming.

The theme of this Letter is taken from the first reading (see Isa 63:16-17; 64:1,3-8) of the First Sunday of Advent: "***We are the clay, and thou art our potter" (Isa. 64:8 RSV)***. It is hoped that as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas and throughout the New Year, we will each remain clay in the hands of our Creator, so that *He* will continue to mould us according to His divine purpose.

As this Letter comes only a few days after the Communique we issued on "Integral Pastoral Care for the Family in the light of Amoris Laetitia", we take the opportunity to pray that every family in our nation will be shaped by the Divine Potter according to the purposes for which He established these families.

Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1,3-8

The first reading of the First Sunday of Advent from Isa 63:16-17; 64:1,3-8 takes up the imagery of the "*Potter and the clay*", which appears several times both in the Old and the New Testament. This image, used consistently in the Bible, sums up the various dimensions of God's relationship with man, especially with the people of God.

God as the Creator and our Potter

The background to this image can be traced to the account of the creation of man in Gen 2:7: "*Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*". The Hebrew term **yṣr** (to form), used in this passage to describe the forming of man, is the same which is used to describe the work of the potter in Isa 64:7. The value of pottery in the ancient world is well attested to in texts like Lam 4:2, in which the poet compares pottery with gold.