

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
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Parish Life Survey

*Survey of the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on
Catholic Parishes in Kenya*

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Survey of the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Catholic Parishes in Kenya

Introduction

This study on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Catholic Church in Kenya surveys priests, religious sisters/brothers, and catechists in parishes. They responded online and on paper as well as in phone calls and face to face interviews.

Kenya Catholic Church at a Glance

With a population of about 51.39 million people, Kenya is a country that is highly international by nature. It houses people of diverse origins and races. While the country is a secular state, it is ironically a religious nation. Approximately 70 percent of Kenyans are Christians whereby, 38 percent are Protestants and 28 percent Catholic. About 25 percent are adherents of indigenous religions and 6 percent are Muslim. Among the Asian community there are smaller numbers of Hindus, Sikhs, Parsees, and Bahais.

Approximately 28 percent of the population in Kenya identifies as Catholic. The Roman Catholic Church in Kenya is composed of 20 Dioceses, 4 Archdioceses, one Vicariate Apostolic and one military Ordinariate. Catholics also practice their faith in the midst of a large number of other believers, as already mentioned.

The Corona Virus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was an unexpected and an unprecedented chaotic event that has seemingly been seen to plunge the whole world into a crisis. Kenya continues to experience devastating episodes of infections with some people succumbing to the disease. Due to the great impact being experienced, the government has so far given and implemented various measures since March, 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Among the measures stipulated by the Ministry of Health in Kenya and fully enforced are:

- i) All entertainment places, bars and other social spaces, were initially to close their doors to the public by 7.30 pm every day until further notice, effective Monday, 23rd March 2020. Social distancing of 1.5 m to be observed during allowed periods. Today the same is maintained but with more relaxed restrictions in some cases.
- ii) All supermarkets were required to limit the number of shoppers inside the premises at any given time, in a manner that conforms to the social distance requirements of at least 1.5 m apart. This measure is still in place. As one enters a shopping mall, they must either wash hands from outside or sanitize themselves. In all public places temperatures are checked by use of thermo guns.
- iii) The management of local markets have been directed to ensure that the premises are disinfected regularly to maintain high standards of hygiene.

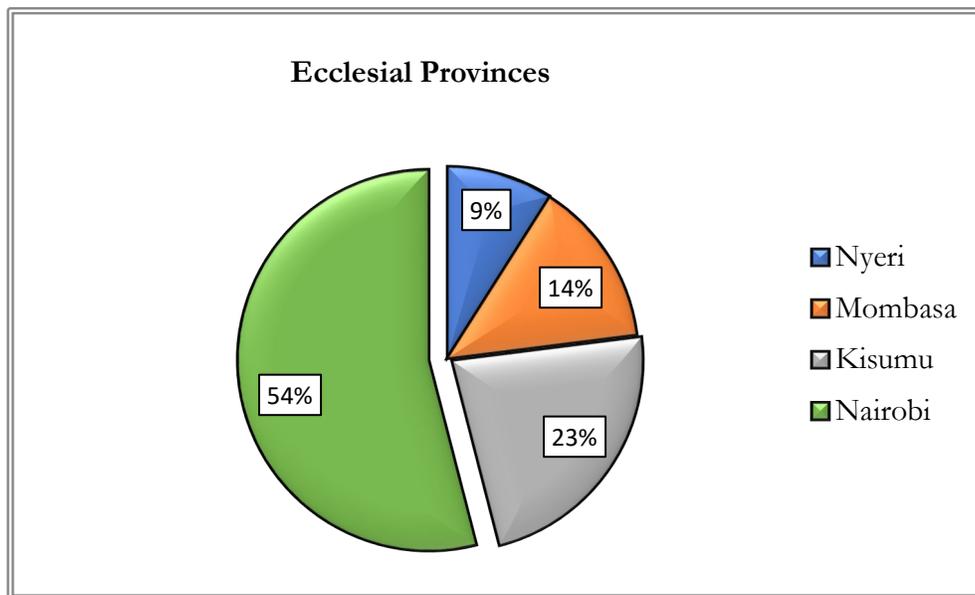
- iv) The County Governments are required to prioritize garbage collection and cleanliness of all markets as well as ensure provision of soap and clean water in all market centers.
- v) Corporations and businesses are encouraged to allow, where, possible employees to work from home.
- vi) To ensure business continuity for the manufacturers and industries, factories are required to operate using minimum workforce on a 24-h shift rotation system.

Church’s Response

Initially all churches and places of worship were closed. Public worship was prohibited. Three months following this strict government protocol, churches were allowed to open with age restrictions, adherence to the social distancing rule, wearing of masks, hand sanitizing and temperature checks of all individuals entering a Church. The government further ordered the registration of all Church attendees for tracking purposes in case a member manifested symptoms. In the second phase of the pandemic, churches have remained open to all people so long as all the prescribed protocols are observed.

Ecclesial Provinces Surveyed

Analysis of this study was based on Ecclesial Provinces rather than individual Dioceses. This is because participants from some Dioceses were too few to be analyzed independently. Thus, four archdioceses or ecclesial provinces in Kenya were represented in this survey but at different levels of participation. As is shown in the figure below, Nairobi had the greatest participation (61 respondents or 54 percent), followed by Kisumu (25 respondents or 23 percent), Mombasa (15 respondents or 14 percent), and Nyeri (11 respondents or 9 percent).

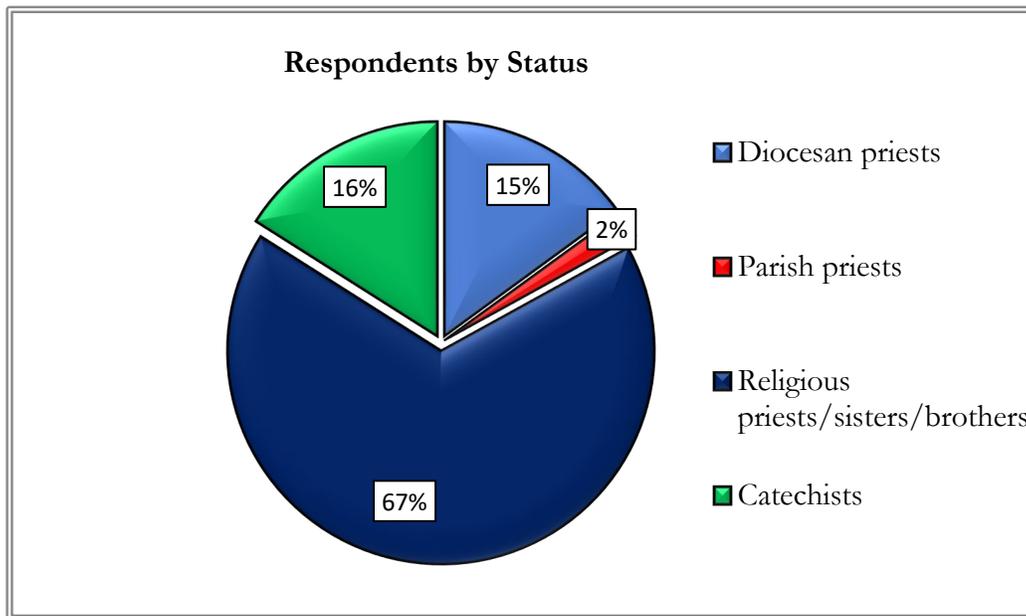


These ecclesial provinces are broken down into their respective suffragans (Archdioceses and Dioceses) in the table below.

Nairobi Ecclesial Province	Nyeri Ecclesial Province	Kisumu Ecclesial Province	Mombasa Ecclesial Province
✓ Nairobi	✓ Nyeri	✓ Kisumu	✓ Mombasa
✓ Machakos	✓ Murang'a	✓ Kisii	✓ Malindi
✓ Ngong	✓ Nyahururu	✓ Bungoma	✓ Garissa
✓ Nakuru	✓ Marsabit	✓ Eldoret	
✓ Kiambu		✓ HomaBay	
		✓ Kericho	

Parish Status of the Respondents

This study surveyed priests, both religious and diocesan, religious men and women, and catechists. These included 55 religious priests/sisters (49 percent), 20 Religious brothers (18 percent), 18 catechists (16 percent), 17 diocesan priests (15 percent), and 2 parish priests (2 percent).

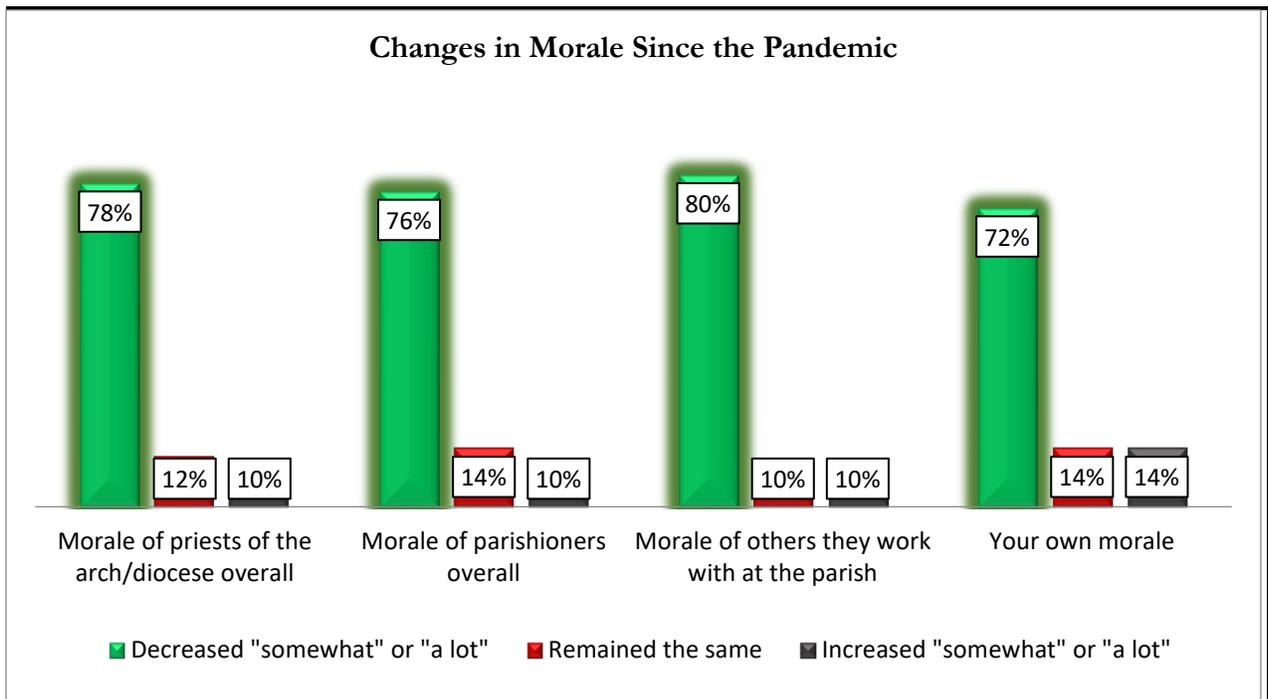


- Concerning the status of respondents of this study, religious priests/sisters/brothers combined together present a higher number of those participating in the study. They account for 67 percent of all the participants.
- From the results of this study there are fewer parish priests (2 percent) respondents than categories of priests. This low response would be explained on the basis of their busy schedules as chief administrators of parishes.

Part I: Responses to Closed-ended Questions

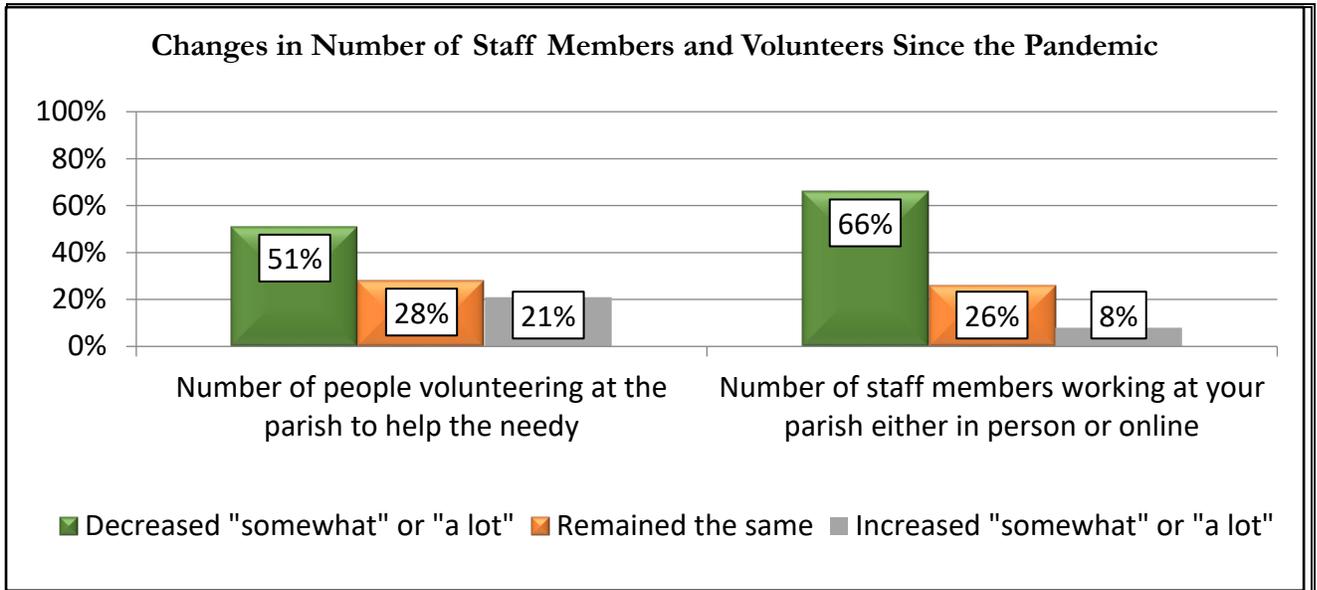
Evaluation of Parish Morale and Presence of Staff and Volunteers

Generally, since the pandemic menace in Kenya, more than seven in ten of respondents say that morale has decreased “somewhat” or “a lot”: among priests (78 percent), parishioners overall (76 percent), others they work with at the parish (80 percent), and their own morale (72 percent). One tenth or slightly more says the morale of these people in the parish has “remained the same” among these groups. About one in ten also reports that morale in these groups increased “somewhat” or “a lot”.



Number of Staff Members and Volunteers since the Pandemic

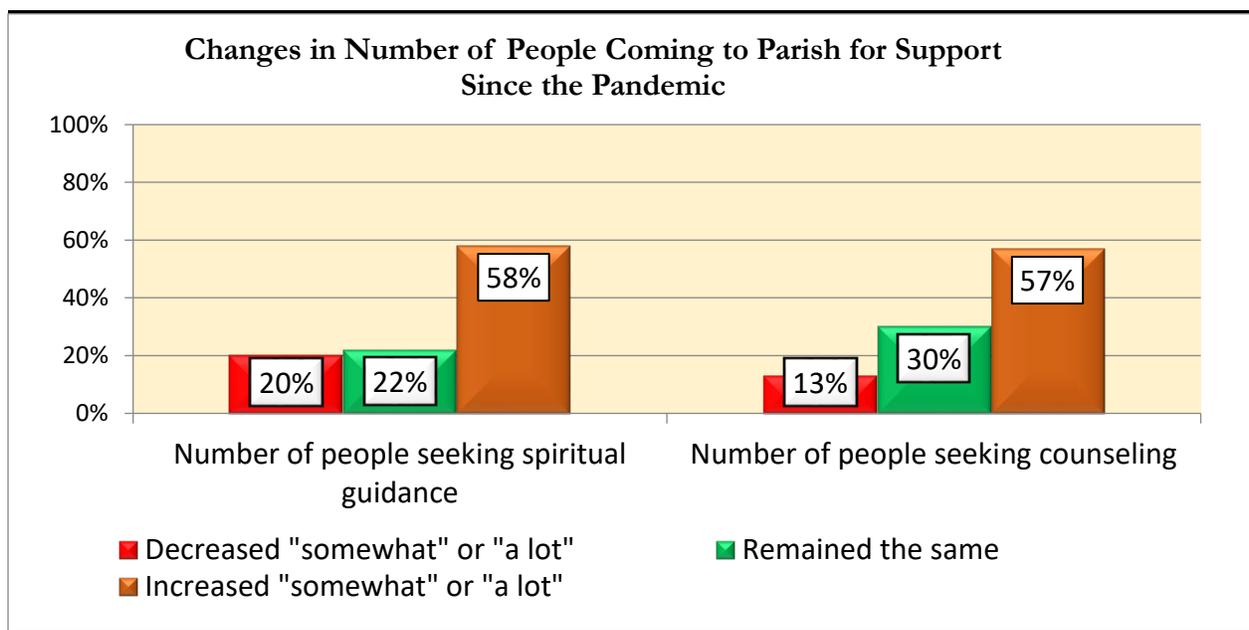
In view of the number of staff members and volunteers since the pandemic, overall, half of parishes (51 percent) have experienced a decrease in the number of volunteers helping the needy while just under three in ten (28 percent) respondents say the numbers have remained the same. Two in ten (21 percent) report an increase in the number of volunteers helping the needy in the parish.



Concerning the number of staff members working at the parish either in person or online, two thirds (66 percent) report a decrease in this element. A quarter (26 percent) say it has remained the same, with just under one in ten saying it has increased.

Frequency of People Seeking Parish Support

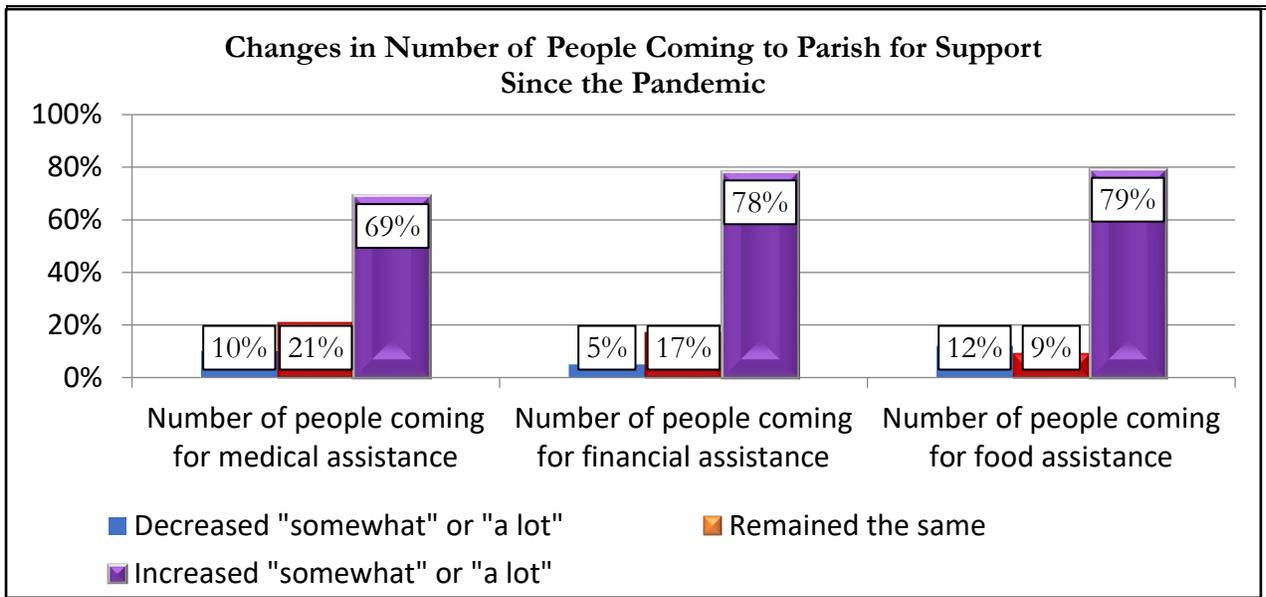
In reference to COVID-19, nearly six in ten (58 percent) respondents say the number of parishioners seeking spiritual guidance has increased “somewhat” or “a lot”. Another lot of respondents of just over two in ten (22 percent) assert that this element has remained the same while two in ten (20 percent) respondents say the numbers have decreased “somewhat” or “a lot”.



- Reporting about counseling, six in ten (57 percent) report that the number of people seeking counseling has increased “somewhat” or “a lot”.
- Three in ten (30 percent) say the number has remained constant.
- Just over one in ten (13 percent), reports that the number has decreased somewhat” or a lot”.

Number of People Coming to Parish for Support since the Pandemic

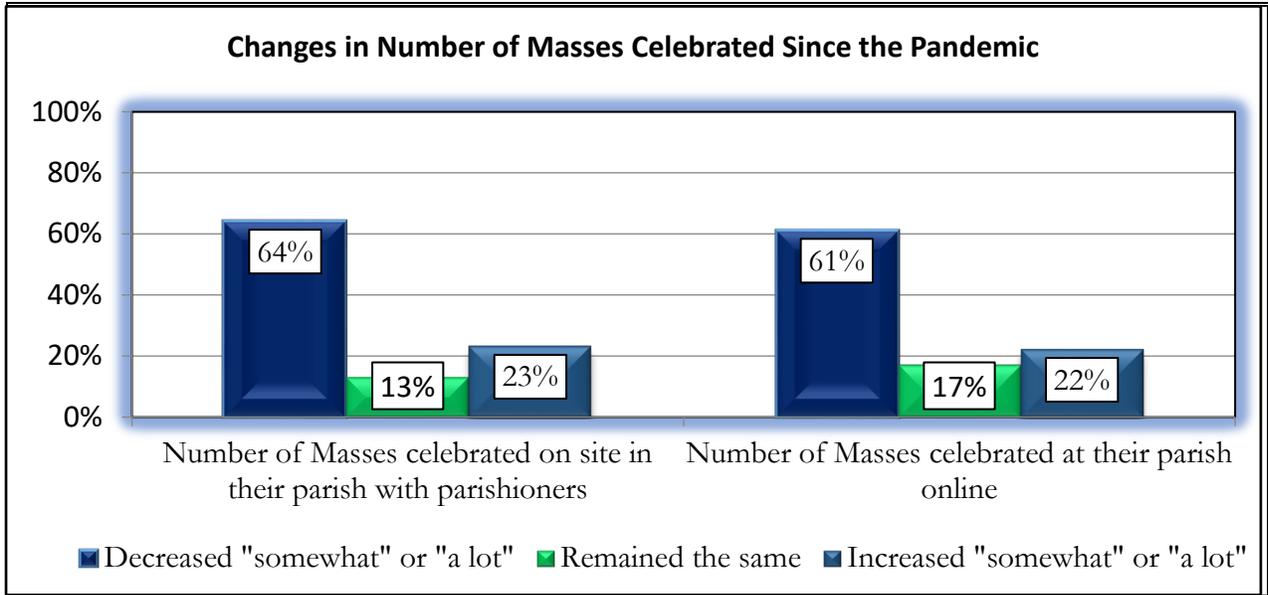
The study further sought to establish whether or not the pandemic situation has impacted changes in the number of people coming to the parish for assistance. Between seven in ten and eight in ten respondents report that the numbers have increased “somewhat” or “a lot” of people coming for medical assistance (69 percent), number of people coming for financial assistance (78 percent) and the number of people coming for food assistance (79 percent).



- One in ten (10 percent) says the numbers of those coming to the parish in search of medical assistance have decreased “somewhat” or “a lot”, while two in one say this element has not changed.
- Concerning the people coming to the parish in search of financial assistance, one in twenty (5 percent) says the numbers have decreased “somewhat” or “a lot”, while one in six reports that the numbers have not changed.
- Reporting on people coming to the parish for food assistance, just over one in ten (12 percent) reports that the numbers have decreased “somewhat” or “a lot”, while one in ten (9 percent) says that this element has remained constant.

Masses, Sacraments and Rites Offered

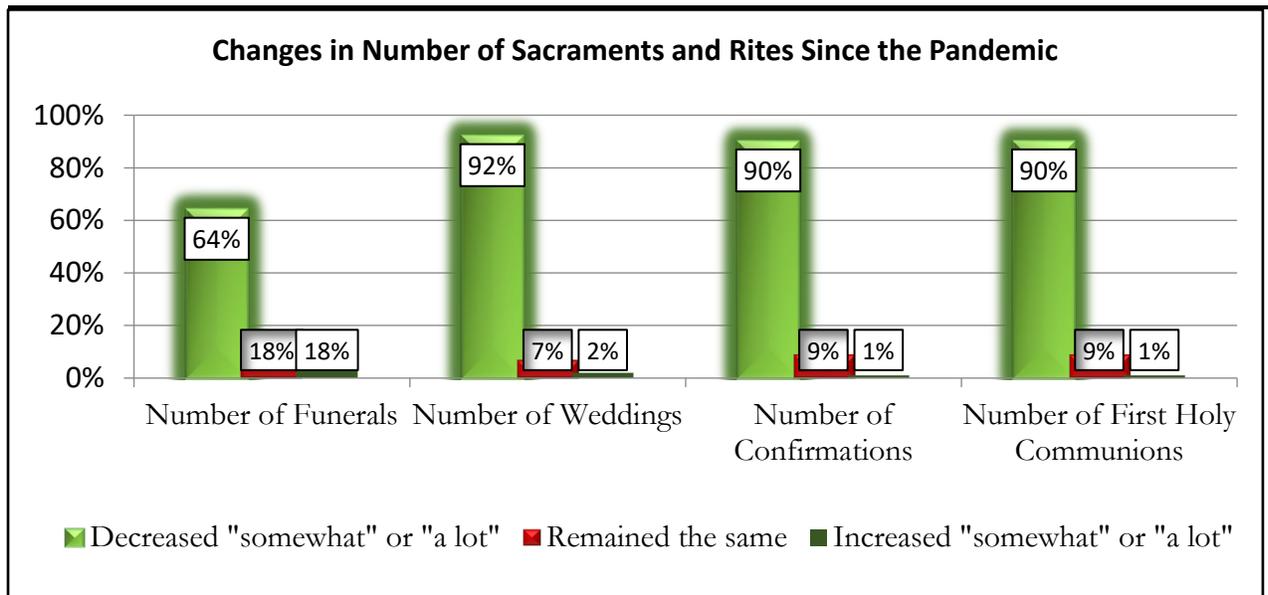
Concerning changes in the number of Masses celebrated in the parish since the pandemic, more than six in ten reports “somewhat” or “a lot” of decrease in the number of Masses celebrated at their parish online (61 percent) and the number of Masses celebrated on site in their parish with parishioners (64 percent). About one in six says these elements have remained the same. On the contrary, (22 percent) and just less than one in four (23 percent) report an increase in the number of Masses celebrated both on site and online in their parishes.¹



¹ “We suspend the public daily and Sunday Masses, and other liturgical and pastoral activities involving the gathering of the Faithful,” reads part of the March 23 statement by the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) seen by ACI Africa. In the statement, the Bishops in Kenya instruct Priests to “continue celebrating daily Mass privately without the Faithful for the intentions of the Parishioners and the Nation.”

Number of Sacraments and Rites since the Pandemic

About changes in the number of sacraments and rites since the pandemic, respondents commonly report a decrease in these celebrations. Comparing the number of sacraments celebrated during the pandemic, respondents are more likely to report fewer celebrations of weddings (92 percent) confirmations (91 percent) and Holy communions (91 percent) than funerals (65 percent).

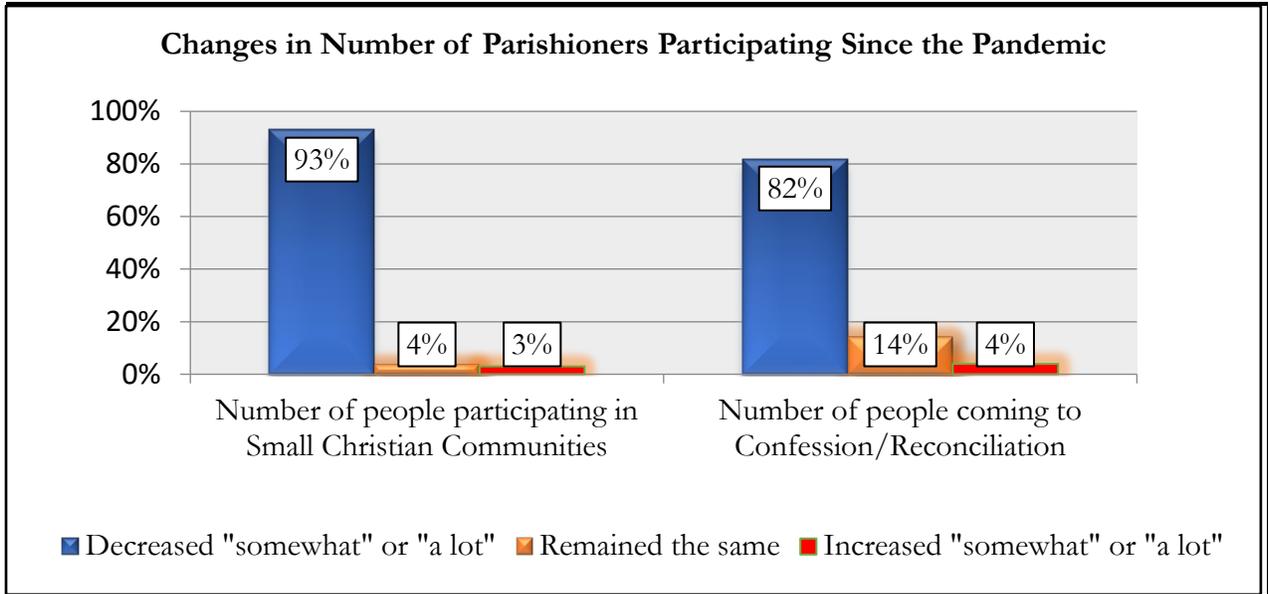


- About one in twenty says that the number of weddings celebrated in the parish have remained the same. One in ten reports that Confirmations and First Holy Communions respectively celebrated in the parish have remained the same. One in six says that funerals have remained the same.
- Compared to other sacraments celebrated during the pandemic, respondents are more likely to report higher numbers of celebrations (1 percent for wedding, 1 percent for Holy Communion and one in six for funerals).²

² The story of Francis and Veronica Gitonga, a young couple from Nairobi archdiocese is a true reflection of how the pandemic influenced how the sacraments would be celebrated. They had planned their wedding for 5 April 2020. They invited 500 guests to witness the big moment when they would each say, "I do!" But when they did, only six people were allowed inside the church - the bride, the groom, their best couple and two presiding pastors. No parents, no family, no village mates were allowed in.

Number of Parishioners Participating in Sacraments and Programs

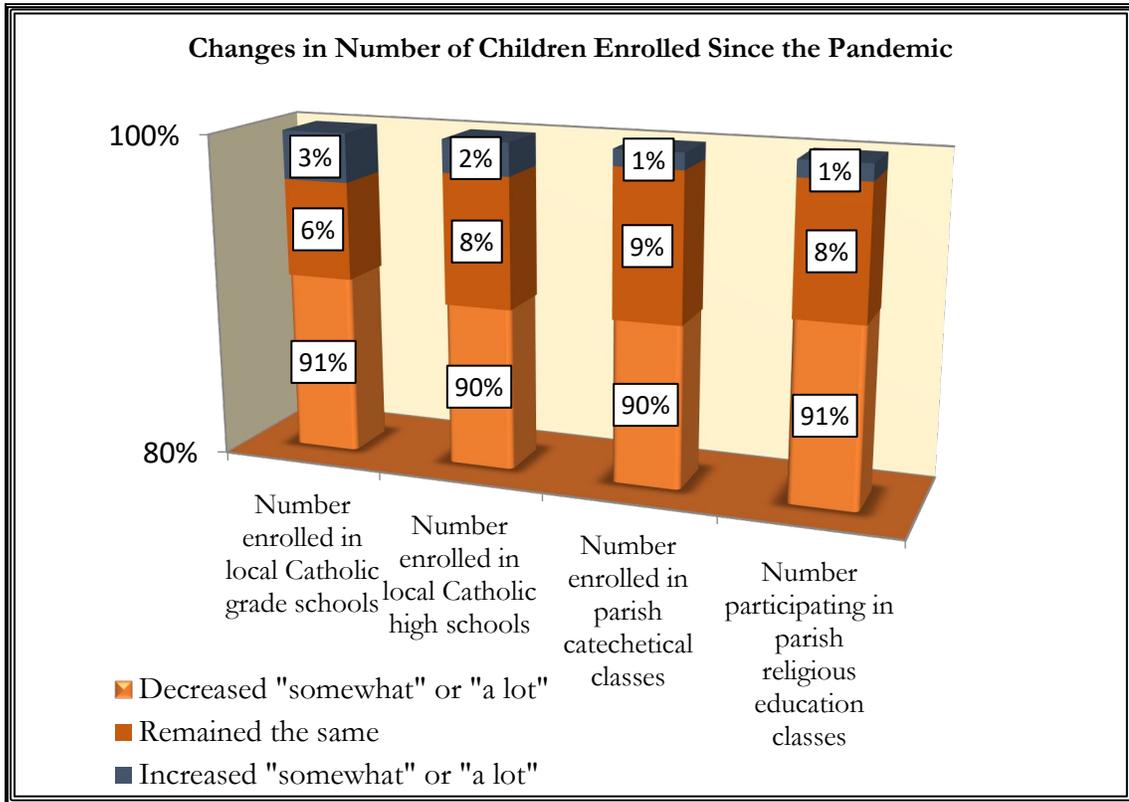
Besides the number of sacraments offered, the survey also asked whether the number of people participating in parish sacraments and programs have increased, decreased, or stayed the same. More than eight in ten say the number of people coming to confession/reconciliation and those participating in Small Christian Communities has decreased “somewhat” or “a lot” (82 percent for confessions and 93 percent for confessions and 93 percent for Small Christian Communities).



A significantly small number (4 percent) of respondents say the number of people participating in Small Christian Communities remained the same, while about one in ten says the number of those coming to confessions (14 percent) has remained the same. In both sacraments 4 percent of respondents say the number of people participating in these sacraments has increased “somewhat” or “a lot”.

Enrollment of Children since the Pandemic

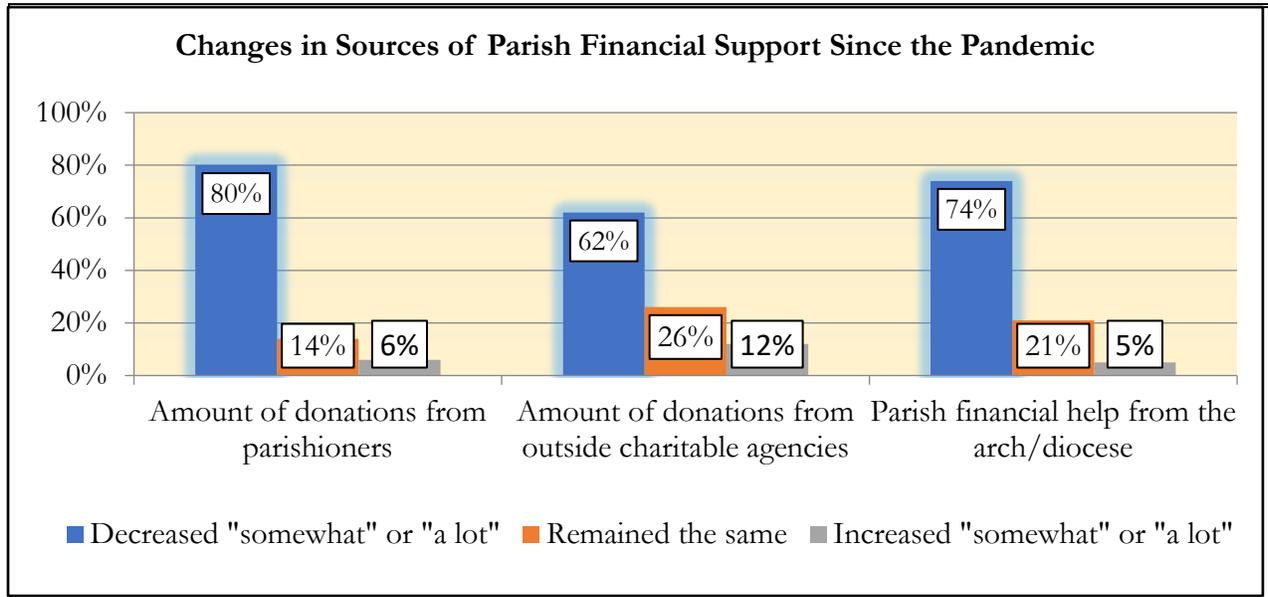
The study also sought to investigate changes in the number of children enrolled in various parish activities since the pandemic. In all cases, nine in ten (90 percent for the number enrolled in local Catholic high schools, 90 percent for the number enrolled in parish catechetical classes, 91 percent and 91 percent for the number of people participating in parish religious education classes) respondents say these enrolments have decreased “somewhat” or “a lot”.



- One in twenty, nearly one in ten and one in ten respectively says these elements have remained the same.
- A smaller number – between 1 percent and 3 percent – says the participation in these elements has “somewhat” or a lot” increased.

Financial Health of the Parishes

While donations to their parishes are decreasing, the amount of help parishes receive from their diocese or archdiocese is more evenly split. Just over six in ten (62 percent) respondents say the amount of donations from outside charitable agencies has decreased “somewhat” or “a lot” while a quarter says this element has remained the same, with one in twenty saying donations from outside have increased.



- Three quarters report that the parish financial help from the archdiocese has decreased “somewhat” or “a lot”, while just over two in ten say this element has remained the same. One in twenty say that this element has increased “somewhat” or “a lot”.
- Eight in ten reports that the amount of donations from parishioners (80 percent) has “somewhat” or “a lot”, with about one in ten asserting that donations from parishioners have remained the same. One in ten asserts that there has been an increase in the amount of donations from parishioners.

Part II: Responses to Open-ended Questions

The study had four open ended questions. All the four questions cover different aspects of COVID-19 and its impact on parishes in Kenya. A brief summary of each item has been presented one after the other. A more complete version of responses has been provided as an appendix. All responses have largely been presented as reported by respondents with minimal edits.

The Pandemic's Effect on the Parish's Financial Health

Q 27. Please describe how the pandemic has affected the financial health of your parish. In what ways have you tried to address those issues?"

Respondents were asked to respond to a number of open ended questions. In the first question they were asked to state how the pandemic had affected the financial health of the parish. In their responses, they cite the lack of funds to run the parish projects, to cater for the needs of the priests or the poor and needy families of the parish that needed the financial assistance and foodstuffs. They attribute the massive lack of funds to the lockdown which made Christians to remain home and to the loss of jobs. They point out the following effects:

Impact on Parish Projects

- *Since the pandemic has led to the loss of jobs, many parishioners that helped the parish financially have become incapacitated. Very few people are giving tithe and the amount of cash given as offertory has also reduced. Some of the parish projects are on a stand off until the situation improves.*
- *Projects for the parish have slowed down for lack of funds*
- *The number of students in our institutions has gone down with no fees up-coming. The pandemic has grossly affected the financial health of the parish with only a few projects running.*
- *In our religious communities, we are unable to undertake any major new developments development so as to meet basic needs such as food, health and utilities of the sisters and those under our care in our ministries.*
- *The pandemic has made the parish activities not to run smoothly because Sunday offerings were the main source of income.*

Low Income to the Parish

Respondents say that due to the pandemic, many people lost their jobs affecting their level of support to the Church. They state that:

- *Financially, the pressure was experienced at both levels affecting both parishes and dioceses. For example, some church contributions from Christians have been suspended for lack of funds.*

- *Reduction of finances hence the workers were paid less.*
- *Financial health of my parish has been affected by COVID- 19 in different ways: most of the money has been used in putting up control measures to fight the pandemic. Experienced shortage of funds to run the health centers.*
- *The Christian financial offering given during Mass is the main source of income for the parish upkeep. COVID 19 has made it impossible for Christians to attend Church services meaning there that would be no more offerings from them. The Christian's income has reduced a lot making the parish lose a lot of income since a large portion of finance comes from the Christians. Secondly, the parish has to use a lot of finances to support the Christian in their life since majority of them list the source of their livelihood.*

Impact on Christians' Well-being

- *The Parish depends on donations from the Christians who are now suffering the effects of the Pandemic. Many of them struggle to feed their families. They could therefore not think about the Parish when their own Children slept hungry.*
- *Lack of enough funds has led to hunger and starvation. Some priests temporarily suspended their duties and went to their nearby homes. However, due to emergency of a few well-wishers who provided some food and financial support to the parish, this helped to increase the priest's morale who in turn got back to their duties.*
- *Lack of support from Christians due to loss of jobs. Lack of money has contributed to hunger to the needy who rely on the parish.*
- *A number of our parishioners here lost their job opportunities thus they have no income and in consequence they are unable to support the parish.*
- *The pandemic has affected the parishioners yet they are the bread winners of the parish. This then filtered down the parish financial health. Only the opening of economy will save the situation, and enable parishioners to support the parish significantly.*

Reduction of Priests' Expenses

- *With reduced numbers of Christians, offerings and tithes went down. We also cut down our expenses.*
- *There was lack of basic needs even fuel for priests.*
- *Lack of money for pastoral activities.*
- *Little monetary assistance to the parish, budget minimized now.*

Ways of Solving the Issues Encountered

As a way of addressing the issue of parish financial dilemma during the pandemic, some respondents say that the Church leaders asked Christians to give some donations to the Church. They also provided a pay-bill number so that offertory gifts can be deposited directly to the parish account. To sustain workers we have had to reach out to well-wishers for financial assistance. They have this to say:

- *We try to some income generated activities although there is no place to sell them this is because no money to feed all.*
- *In response, the Church leaders asked Christians to give their donations. They also provided a pay-bill number so that offertory can be sent directly to the parish account.*
- *In response, the Church leaders asked Christians to give their donations. They also provided a pay-bill number so that direct offertory can be sent to the parish account.*
- *To sustain workers we had had to reach out to well-wishers for financial assistance*
- *The parish has allowed daily offering during Mass although this had earlier been discouraged by the diocese to avoid infections.*
- *We are solving the problems by going back to old practices of allowing people to bring their offerings to the altar as before, sending out the parish pay-bill number to Christians for their contributions.*

Challenges Continuing Ministry during the Pandemic

Q 28. Please describe how your parish/ministry has continued ministering to parishioners and others during this time of the pandemic. Also, what problems have you encountered and how have you addressed those problems?

In response to the question how one's parish/ministry has continued ministering to parishioners and others during the pandemic, diverse answers have been shared. Respondents commonly say that their parish has maintained several pastoral activities such as, visiting Christians at their homes, online communication, Eucharistic celebration, anointing of the sick and charitable works among others. Below are full responses:

Masses, Sacraments and other Rites

As the pandemic continues to bite, the priests have enhanced the celebration of some sacraments. Respondents commonly mention Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation and anointing of the sick. According to some respondents, these sacraments were mostly celebrated at homes. Some of their responses are:

- *We continue to celebrate some sacraments with the Christians especially the Holy Eucharist, Baptism and anointing of the sick which was only by request. The Priests have done their best to visit the Christians in their homes and to offer Masses for them.*
- *By administering to them the sacraments of reconciliation, anointing of the sick and baptizing in the occasions of danger.*
- *We celebrated some Masses on Sunday with a lot of restrictions especially social distancing for fear of attracting the virus to the parish.*
- *Following the COVID 19 guidelines we had on-site services with restricted numbers at the beginning. Masses were offered for those who called the priests for the same.*

Other Forms of Pastoral Care

Respondents further indicate that priests and other pastoral agents continue to interact with the Christian community for several essential services. Respondents point out corporal works of mercy particularly visiting the sick and burying the dead. They say:

- *Visiting the sick, burying the dead and encouraging Christians to pray and hold their faith high.*
- *We continued with house to house visitations to encourage the Christians.*
- *Since the lock down stopped people from gathering, we visited Christians in their homes for pastoral care.*
- *Priests and religious sisters and brothers together with the seminarians have engaged in home visits.*
- *By providing pastoral care to those in need of it in the form of counseling and home visits to the sick.*
- *The parish has embarked on family visits so as to assess the needs of the Christians in order to support them, pray with the families and encourage them to maintain their hope.*
- *Despite the pandemic we continue to visit the poor and the sick in our parish but the medical, financial and other assistance that we used to provide has reduced a lot because we do not have much now. We appealed to some of our benefactors for help but only few of them responded to our requests.*

Enhancement of COVID-19 Containment Measures

Besides pastoral activities, respondents say that parishes continue to enhance among the Christians the COVID 19 rules for their safety. Some common rules that the leaders continue to remind the people are wearing of masks in public places, keeping social distance and hand washing among others. Some of their responses are:

- *Taking measures of distancing, use of masks and consistent hand washing and ensuring that each individual coming to the Church compound behaves responsibly. We also taught Christians to be serious with this disease and observe all safety measure as stipulated by the government. Anyone with a cough was requested to remain at home for safety purposes. Each is pre-cautioned to remain focused and to be each one's brother or sisters' keeper.*
- *We continued to serve our parishioners by sending to groups encouraging messages via whatsApp, Family Masses, and Teaching them the measures to prevent the virus.*
- *As a parish we provided sanitizers and water points for use by those people who came to the parish compound.*

Humanitarian/ Charitable Services

- *We continued ministering to Christians through health care in our hospitals, health centers, and dispensaries. We have continued offering online classes in our academic institutions particularly to examination classes. We are providing some help in our hospitality centers though with some limitations.*
- *Being committed to giving health services to those in need through the kind assistance of some donors.*
- *To the needy we distributed foodstuffs from donors.*
- *We have also supplied foodstuffs to needy and poor families.*
- *Helping poor parishioners by giving them foods.*

Spiritual and Psychological Counseling

Counseling services were also mentioned as some of the ways of continued service to the Christians. Respondents report the following:

- *We offered counseling services to them.*
- *Offering counseling services, out-sourcing for assistance to the needy families in terms of food stuffs and clothing.*
- *Some families were in conflict since everyone was in the house with no money and food. We tried to visit where we could and the priests did their best. I counseled several families that were almost breaking.*

- *Through programmes such as counseling were some of the means by which we continued serving the Christians.*

Evangelization by Modern Technology

Respondents further report that, parishes in Kenya are reaching out to their parishioners by use of modern technology. Among other modern ways of communication they mention the use of internet for online masses, WhatsApp messages and radio channels.

- *The Parish is able to reach the parishioners through the radio station in the Parish for morning Masses as well as for on-line catechetical classes.*
- *The parish has been offering Masses on radio stations. The challenge has been lack of adequate funds and personnel to administer services to Christians due to the effects of the pandemic.*
- *My parish continued with online services though it was too challenging. The network sometimes became a problem. Most of the parishioners could not access these online services. The parish priest resulted to accepting family requests for Masses.*
- *The online Masses before churches were opened were being offered and these were of great help. Some Christians came to the parish for assistance while others did not make it. Although I listened to some confessions I was afraid of being infected.*
- *Online Masses and Masses at homes were offered upon request. The online communication was the only way out for many especially in reaching out to all, whether near or far.*
- *The Masses and other liturgical events were transmitted through the Local Radio Station*

Problems Encountered

The study went on to enquire the problems that parishes encountered in their effort to minister to the Christians during the pandemic and how they resolved them. Some common responses to this question are fear of infection, suspicion, hunger and lack of money to cater for poor families.

- *The fact that the pandemic has caused a lot of fear and suspicion, majority of the members stopped financial contribution to the parish, there were no more meetings and getting Christians online was futile*
- *Mass hours were limited, few Christians were to attend services and the age gap of those attending was limited to below 58 years. This decreased the morale of those who couldn't fit into this range. In addition, those who were to attend Mass were supposed to be few in number and this added to the grief of bereaved persons who were mourning. This also decreased the morale of priests as well. Despite all this, priests could manage to find a way of attending some of these ceremonies in order to condole with the bereaved families.*

- *Our priests have tried to source for more funds in order to cater for the needs of the priests and needy persons. Priests in the parish have turned to agriculture in order to reduce on some of the expenses. They have also reduced the number of workers.*
- *Biggest challenge was technology limitations, financial support.*
- *The administration of other sacraments is still a challenge. We are handling a case by case and the administration of the sacraments is done individually.*
- *The problem faced was the curfew which somehow made things impossible for the priests to accomplish their planned schedules for each day.*

Solutions Employed

- *Nothing much done but Christian's received Masses from the parish from time to time. As sisters we visited the very vulnerable especially the poor and the sick. We gave them foods and sanitizers as well as face masks. We did counseling to those in need. We had frequent home visits.*
- *We had online Masses, use of Whats.App messages to parishioners and having spiritual lessons through the parish bulletin. We experienced the problem of molested children around us.*
- *The problems are being addressed through resource mobilizations and utilization of available resources.*
- *Through the celebration of Masses in Small Christian Communities. The problem we continue to experience is fear among Christians. They do not know what to do especially with rising of positive cases. One way of addressing the problem has been home visit in pursuit of creating awareness to the people.*

Diocesan or Religious Order Support During the Pandemic

Q29. How has your diocese or religious order supported your parish during this time of pandemic? How might your diocese or religious order better support priests/sisters like yourselves during the pandemic?

Concerning support from the diocese or one's religious Order to the parish, respondents commonly mention moral support, stipend for priests, foodstuffs and prayers. Their responses include:

- *The Diocese through the office of the bishop gave us some stipends during the time of the pandemic.*
- *Not much assistance came from the diocese other than moral support and the usual stipend for priests.*

- *The diocese especially the bishops office send pastoral letters and other guidelines to parishes. The bishop also called for meetings with the priests.*
- *Through prayers.*
- *Very little assistance came from the diocese other than moral support and the usual stipend for priests.*
- *The diocese has been on the forefront in safeguarding the interests of Christians at both diocese and parish levels. They have worked with the government collaboratively to ensure that the safety protocols are observed.*
- *My religious order provided us with food. I think it would have given us money to buy what we wanted.*
- *My community supported the parish through prayer, pastoral visits and counseling to affected families. My congregation offered foodstuffs while sisters who are catechists were encouraged to visit families for spiritual and moral support.*
- *The diocese has offered some foods to the needy Christians affected by the pandemic. The diocese has helped the parish with some resources to sustain itself.*
- *My religious Order has offered counseling services to the affected .It Would have better supported the parish if it had a reserve finance account for emergencies.*

The study also sought to understand ways in which one's diocese or religious Order might better support priests/sisters like themselves during the pandemic respondents opine that:

- *The Diocese or Religious order mighty need to communicate with the priests then the priests organize the small community to collect some food stuffs for the priests.*
- *To myself, I could be helped by providing me with all that the preventive measures of the*
- *by ensuring that I have been protected. Such help could consist of providing me with means of transport so as to avoid public transport for safety purposes. Hosting of other religious in our community to celebrate Masses together while following the health protocols.*
- *There is great need to support the poor financially and also to have a team to visit the aged and vulnerable who are feeling isolated because of the new form of lifestyle that the elderly are finding strange at times.*
- *Mostly by giving advice on how to handle the pandemic challenges. The diocese can support the mostly affected parishes financially.*

- *For the future: The diocese or congregation can support parishes or sisters through workshops, sermons on emotional well-being in navigating post COVID-19.*

Post-Pandemic Plans

Q 30. Hoping that the current situation may change soon or later, what post-pandemic plans do you have for your parish/ministry?

Respondents of this study were further invited to highlight some plans they could have for their parish/ministry in the event that the pandemic situation eased. Some respondents strongly feel there is need to strengthen the small Christian Communities because they are the backbone of the Church because once strengthened they will strengthen other Christians close to them. Most respondents express the need for recovery workshops and seminars for parishioners, initiating projects for self-reliance and outreach programs among others:

Workshops and Seminars

As one of the strategies for one's parish or ministry, respondents mention seminars and workshops. According to respondents, these should focus on instilling new knowledge and understanding of their ministries and parish situations better for better performance. In their view, the pandemic unexpectedly hit the parish and their ministries hence the need evaluation and planning seminars towards revival and preparedness.

- *Seminars and faith formation programs.*
- *To train workers for different skills.*
- *Holding re-awakening workshops and seminars for parishioners.*
- *Christians to be more prepared and their parishes for such eventualities.*
- *We hope to continue with the plans that were there before the pandemic.*

Strengthening Small Christian Communities

- *To strengthen the small Christian communities because they are the backbone of the Church. Once strengthened they will strengthen other Christians close to them.*
- *We need to strengthen groups including the small Christian communities because they are the church of tomorrow.*

Prayer, Repentance and Mass

- *Christians and the parish as a whole need a day of prayer and mind-calming workshops*
- *We need to pray more because the world seems headed for deeper challenges. People should return to God and repent of their sins for better times under God's mercy.*
- *Organizing Masses in Small Christian Communities.*
- *Renewal of the faith and conviction towards God as well as better collaboration with God's grace and mercy in life while using and spending all that He has given wisely and prudently.*
- *Need to be more committed in prayer.*

Outreach Programs

- *Opening up more online programs to reach parishioners.*
- *Many people have been affected by this pandemic. Many have lost their loved ones to this pandemic, some have lost their jobs and many affected psychologically. Reaching out to them and listening to their stories will be necessary.*
- *To hold seminars with Christians Initiate new programs such as microfinance Initiate different faith-based movements for spiritual and moral support of Christians*

Parish Savings Account

- *Saving for emergencies, sensitize people on use of means of communication like zoom and e learning.*
- *Introduction of a saving culture for other eventualities in future.*
- *To open a savings account for the parish for mitigation of such challenges in future.*

Health Protocols

- *Following the health ministry guidelines, training people on how to handle future challenges of the same nature and living in hopeful faith that all will remain well.*
- *Installation of more water sanitation points.*
- *Keep hopes high, encourage people to follow guidelines.*
- *To continue keeping healthy guide lines to reduce other related diseases like flu, typhoid etc.*

- *Encouraging people to work hard so as to earn their living. Take strict health precautions so as to protect ourselves and others because the pandemic is still a threat to human health.*

Counseling Services

- *There is need to organize some psycho-social services and counseling in order to tone down existing levels of trauma.*
- *Psychological counseling.*
- *Increase pastoral works and counseling services to restore faith back on their feet.*
- *Increase number of workers.*
- *First of all to restore spiritual/ counseling activities that have somehow collapsed*

Self- Help Projects

- *Engage individuals in alternative creative and adaptive skills like handiwork and gardening so as to sustain self in the event that such a situation reoccurs.*
- *To build economic capacities of our parishioners, to become more connected with them, give them hope, train the priests and religious in media skills and put the affected through a counseling program.*
- *To ensure better health care, education of communities around the institution on how to pick up their broken pieces and start again, assist our people to learn and to take care of themselves. Offer necessary services required for recovery such as psychological support.*
- *To strengthen pastoral activities such as increased interaction with different groups of parishioners; giving more moral, faith and social formation instructions. Giving workshops and talks*
- *We will embark on the future plans that we had laid down for our communities both long and short term but of course with different approaches and strategies owing to the new challenges posed by economic strain.*
- *Start a reserve financial account for emergencies in the parish. Have post- pandemic workshops or seminars for different groups in the parish such as Catholic Men Association (CMA), Catholic Women Association (CWA), youth groups, the Choir and Pontifical Missionary Childhoods (PMC) among others.*
- *To align activities of different programs, Introduce online workshops,. Explore other options for financing different activities and introduce online learning other than stagnating on traditional ways of learning.*

Appendix I: Complete Transcription of Open-ended Questions

Please describe how the pandemic has affected the financial health of your parish. In what ways have you tried to address those issues?

Respondents were asked to respond to a number of open ended questions. In the first question they were asked to state how the pandemic had affected the financial health of the parish. In their responses, they cite the lack of funds to run the parish projects, to cater for the needs of the priests or the poor and needy families of the parish that needed the financial assistance and foodstuffs. They attribute the massive lack of funds to the lockdown which made Christians to remain home and to the loss of jobs. They point out the following effects:

- *Since the pandemic has led to the loss of jobs, many parishioners that helped the parish financially have become incapacitated. Very few people are giving tithe and the amount of cash given as offertory has also reduced. Some of the parish projects are on a stand off until the situation improves.*
- *Projects for the parish have slowed down for lack of funds*
- *Most of the church projects stopped..*
- *The number of students in our institutions has gone down with no fees up-coming. The pandemic has grossly affected the financial health of the parish with only a few projects running.*
- *In our religious communities, we are unable to undertake any major new developments development so as to meet basic needs such as food, health and utilities of the sisters and those under our care in our ministries.*
- *The parish development contributions have gone down due to the effect of pandemic*
- *The pandemic has made the parish activities not to run smoothly because Sunday offerings were the main source of income.*
- *The number of students in our institutions has gone down with no fees forthcoming.*
- *In our parish the Christians were contributing to construct a church and when the pandemic came everything came to a standstill.*
- *Many church projects have stalled. Church visits, adoration and daily Masses as well as Sunday Masses have decreased. Many church employees have been suspended from work.*
- *Since there were no Masses celebrated in the parish there was very little cash flowing. Parish projects stopped and there was almost n activity going on in the compound.*
- *Affected parish projects.*

- *There is no money.*
- *Financially, the pressure was experienced at both levels affecting both parishes and dioceses. For example, some church contributions from Christians have been suspended for lack of funds.*
- *Reduction of finances hence the workers were paid less.*
- *Financial health of my parish has been affected by COVID- 19 in different ways: most of the money has been used in putting up control measures to fight the pandemic. Experienced shortage of funds to run the health centers.*
- *Financial health has been affected a lot.*
- *The Christian financial offering given during Mass is the main source of income for the parish upkeep. COVID 19 has made it impossible for Christians to attend Church services meaning there that would be no more offerings from them. The Christian's income has reduced a lot making the parish lose a lot of income since a large portion of finance comes from the Christians. Secondly, the parish has to use a lot of finances to support the Christian in their life since majority of them list the source of their livelihood.*
- *No Christians no money.*
- *There is no money in the parish as before.*
- *The Christian's income has reduced a lot making the parish loose a lot of income since a large portion of finance comes from the Christians. Secondly, the parish has to use a lot of finances to support the Christian in their life since majority of them list the source of their livelihood.*
- *The income is now about 30% lower than last year.*
- *With small numbers coming to church, this affects the financial situation of the parish. There is the establishment of parish finance and development committee to start establishing some income generating projects in the parish.*
- *The finances have significantly reduced. The financial health has been affected negatively since most of the parish projects have not been bringing in incomes and since the closure of churches there has not been offertory.*
- *The backbone of parochial finance sourcing is through offerings from the faithful and this was greatly affected when the church was closed.*
- *Sunday Offering has gone down. Christians have not even committed to future financial plans. We have tried to cut down our expenses.*
- *The contribution from Christians went low during the pandemic*
- *No offertories because there were no Masses celebrated.*

- *Since people are not giving sadaka and they were the major source of income. we have resorted to farming.*
- *The financial health of the parish has gone down because the Christians who were supporting the Church were at home.*
- *Tithes went down as well as offertory*
- *This pandemic has affected the financial health of my parish, Christians do not have jobs. Without jobs there is no money to give as offertory. Secondly, even if one had the money there was no access to the Church.*
- *Generally, COVID -19 pandemic has caused decline in the running of our parish because offerings\tithes from the faithful were the main sources of income. The closure of churches resulted into lack of funds.*
- *Financial health has gone down.*
- *Financial health has been affected a lot.*
- *The pandemic Left us financially paralyzed.*
- *Financial assistance to the parish has gone down significantly. It has become difficulty for the priests to sustain themselves even the Christians. The situation is difficulty.*
- *The Christian financial offering given during Mass is the main source of income for the parish upkeep. COVID 19 made it impossible for Christians to attend Church services meaning there was no more offertory.*
- *The pandemic has affected the parishes due to the limited number of Christians attending services especially those who used to give offerings*
- *Since Christians were not supposed to come to the Church due to the lock down, there was no offertory and no tithes or other usual gifts to priests or the parish.*
- *Seemingly there is very little money getting to the parish account.*
- *The Parish depends on donations from the Christians who are now suffering the effects of the Pandemic. Many of them struggle to feed their families. They could therefore not think about the Parish when their own Children slept hungry.*
- *Lack of enough funds has led to hunger and starvation. Some priests temporarily suspended their duties and went to their nearby homes. However, due to emergency of a few well-wishers who provided some food and financial support to the parish, this helped to increase the priest's morale who in turn got back to their duties.*
- *Lack of support from Christians due to loss of jobs. Lack of money has contributed to hunger to the needy who rely on the parish.*

- *A number of our parishioners here lost their job opportunities thus they have no income and in consequence they are unable to support the parish.*
- *The pandemic has affected the parishioners yet they are the bread winners of the parish. This then filtered down the parish financial health. Only the opening of economy will save the situation, and enable parishioners to support the parish significantly.*
- *Christians having lost their jobs and businesses due to the pandemic have not been able to make their usual contributions to the parish. There was and there is still less cash flowing in.*
- *The economic situation of some Christian is badly affected hence they have no money to give to support the parish activities. Some could still support the parish.*
- *Most Christians lost their jobs or had not enough money. Therefore it means that they would not support the Church financially. This affected the priests in that they didn't the amount of money that they needed*
- *People not working that leads to no payment, reduced salaries which has led to some families broken because what they are getting is not enough and Lack of food and shelter because some have no Jobs to pay for their house rent houses which gave made them to go back to their rural homes. Some people became depression because they cannot make to raise their families hence now they are sick*
- *In my parish we usually take care of the poor every Sunday by bringing to the Altar some food donations. This one also stopped and the poor were in difficult situation.*
- *Solved by encouraging Christians to donate to the parish and to do their tithe by M-PESA or pay-bill options.*
- *With reduced numbers of Christians, offerings and tithes went down. We also cut down our expenses.*
- *There was lack of basic needs even fuel for priests.*
- *Lack of money for pastoral activities.*
- *Little monetary assistance to the parish, budget minimized now.*

Ways of Solving the Problems Encountered

In response to the second part of the question whereby respondents were asked to state ways in which the issue of financial hitch in the parish is being resolved, they have this to say:

- *We try to some income generated activities although there is no place to sell them this is because no money to feed all.*
- *In response, the Church leaders asked Christians to give their donations. They also provided a pay-bill number so that offertory can be sent directly to the parish account.*

- *In response, the Church leaders asked Christians to give their donations. They also provided a pay-bill number so that direct offertory can be sent to the parish account.*
- *To sustain workers we had to reach out to well-wishers for financial assistance*
- *With reduced numbers of Christians, offerings and tithes went down.*
- *Following the ministry of health guidelines.*
- *To address the issue, we had to cut down our expenses.*
- *The parish has allowed daily offering during Mass although this had earlier been discouraged by the diocese to avoid infections.*
- *There are more Masses offered in the parish now and this means an increase in the cash to the parish*
- *By encouraging them to hold to their faith through prayer and other Christian practices.*
- *To the needy we distributed foodstuffs from donors, we continued to offer spiritual services to those who called for it and we visited the sick as before and administered the sacraments to them.*
- *We have started some income generating projects.*
- *With reduction of finances workers were paid less.*
- *People of good will supported, farm products and rentals sustained our parish..*
- *We try to do some income generating activities although no place to sell them this is because no money to feed all.*
- *The parish has addressed the situation by starting poultry farming and planting vegetables to boost the activities of the parish.*
- *We also have had to rethink our ministries that were brought to a standstill by the pandemic such as education.*
- *What we have done is to come up with the ways of identifying those who are in difficulty situations and support them with food, counseling those families under depression which is not easy. We are only trying to do what we can to meet the needs of those that we can reach.*
- *We have had seminars to make people aware of the dangers of COVID 19 and how to protect themselves.*
- *Our communities had to cut down many expenses that may possibly be unnecessary during this time and only prioritize on what is more important.*

- *Small Christian Communities took the initiative to take care of the needs of priest through monthly contributions.*
- *Small Christian Communities were to collect some funds locally and forward to the parish.*
- *We are solving the problems by going back to old practices of allowing people to bring their offerings to the altar as before, sending out the parish pay-bill number to Christians for their contributions.*
- *So far we have started farming and focused on short term crops to aid our financial status. We have reduced our budgets and majority of our parish workers have been dismissed from work.*
- *Prudence is needed in the management of the available savings and the little that is being collected from various ways.*
- *I have tried to encourage the parishioners to continue supporting the parish.*
- *Christians encouraged each other on the importance of onsite church visits other than online.*
- *Various small groups have been provided with food and money which has brought hope to priests.*
- *Ways in which we are addressing the issues: Making an appeal to those with something to support the parish, initiating small self-reliance projects such as vegetable gardens, zero grazing and poultry.*
- *To sustain workers we have had to reach out to well-wishers for financial assistance*

Please describe how your parish/ministry has continued ministering to parishioners and others during this time of the pandemic. Also, what problems have you encountered and how have you addressed those problems?

In response to the question how one's parish/ministry has continued ministering to parishioners and others during the pandemic, diverse answers have been shared. Respondents commonly say that their parish has maintained several pastoral activities such as, visiting Christians at their homes, online communication, Eucharistic celebration, anointing of the sick and charitable works among others. Below are full responses:

- *We continue to celebrate some sacraments with the Christians especially the Holy Eucharist, Baptism and anointing of the sick which was only by request. The Priests have done their best to visit the Christians in their homes and to offer Masses for them.*
- *By administering to them the sacraments of reconciliation, anointing of the sick and baptizing in the occasions of danger.*

- *We celebrated some Masses on Sunday with a lot of restrictions especially social distancing for fear of attracting the virus to the parish.*
- *The priests celebrated the Eucharist, Baptism and anointing of the sick.*
- *At times we have home Masses for fear of the pandemic. This is in order to reduce fear among the Christians and also as a way of observing the rule of social distance.*
- *Following the COVID 19 guidelines we had on-site services with restricted numbers at the beginning. Masses were offered for those who called the priests for the same.*
- *The priests continued to offer Masses in Religious houses, home visits and visiting sick parishioners.*
- *Our priests are trying to reach out to Christians through different ways. They have increased the number of Masses to curb the problem of congestion.*
- *Generally, services offered to Christians are quite minimal unlike before. This is because people are afraid of coming to Church. However, priests continue to celebrate some sacraments with Christians especially the Holy Eucharist.*
- *In case of funeral Masses, the Eucharistic service was only done in private. Due to social distance rule, celebrations of Mass if at all they were there were limited to 30 minutes only. The number of attendees in the services was limited to 25. This in fact made the bereaved family to fear, being rejected and discriminated thereafter. The priests had to risk themselves and come back to comfort the families, the sick and the dying.*
- *We have family Masses in order to minimize on the number of Christians coming to the parish. In all this, the reality is that the turn up of worshippers is very low while the number of those coming for assistance is high.*
- *There is celebration of daily Masses, confessions.*
- *Individual confessions were in plenty. There were however no Masses to nourish the soul!*
- *.Visiting the sick, burying the dead and encouraging Christians to pray and hold their faith high.*
- *We continued with house to house visitations to encourage the Christians.*
- *Since the lock down stopped people from gathering, we visited Christians in their homes for pastoral care.*
- *Priests and religious sisters and brothers together with the seminarians have engaged in home visits.*
- *By providing pastoral care to those in need of it in the form of counseling and home visits to the sick.*
- *The parish has embarked on family visits so as to assess the needs of the Christians in order to support them, pray with the families and encourage them to maintain their hope.*

- *Visiting homes and offering pastoral services.*
- *We continued to offer spiritual services to those who called for it and we visited the sick as before and administered the sacraments to them.*
- *Ministering by visiting the sick, the poor and needy.*
- *Visiting the sick and creating time to listen to people's stories of devastation so as to provide hope.*
- *At times the priests visited homes whenever needed.*
- *Active ministry to parishioners especially giving hope and encouragement to those who have lost it.*
- *There were responsibilities which were not significantly affected. Individual baptisms were continued since they didn't require crowds. Visits to the sick continued as well as taking care of spiritual needs of the Christians. This has helped them not to despair.*
- *By encouraging them to hold to their faith through prayer and other Christian practices.*
- *In this COVID pandemic period I collected address details of all parishioners for continued communication with them through mobile calls and messages. This was necessary especially during home visits.*
- *There is an effort to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, confessions and spiritual counseling as well as food donations. Giving spiritual guidance and support to our Christians and others has remained our mission.*
- *Helping the needy in various ways.*
- *Our priests in the parish kept meeting the Christians in Small Christian Communities. They however faced the problem of the curfew hours.*
- *We visited the sick, burying the dead and encouraging Christians to pray and to keep calm.*
- *Limiting the number of participants and following the ministry guidelines.*
- *As a community we have been having a special visits to all our so known parishioners as well as our neighbors and sharing our little blessings with them, e.g. food stuffs, The number of people needing food has been increasing day after leading to a decrease in our supplies. It has also brought about fear and insecurity due increasing poverty and lack of education, jobs etc.*
- *The parish ministry was very minimal due to lack of contact with parishioners. A few Christians had the courage to move to the parish for assistance and were given foodstuffs.*
- *Pastoral visits to Small Christian Communities were there but minimized to individual families.*

- *We made some efforts to visit the sick while at the same time encouraging Christians to pray and to hold their faith high.*
- *Our pastoral activities included visiting the sick for anointing and distribution of foodstuffs to poor and needy families.*
- *We visited and encouraged Christians from their homes and prayed with them either as a group or individually.*
- *My parish has stopped some services like the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament of confirmation, the sacrament of confession and the sacrament of matrimony. The Parish has avoided gathering crowds in the parish compound because of the pandemic.*
- *The priests visit families while guided by the Catechist.*
- *Due to lack of contact with Christians the ministry has very much gone down because of the rules ordered by the government for people to stay in their homes. This made it quite difficult to access a church minister.*
- *Despite the pandemic we continue to visit the poor and the sick in our parish but the medical, financial and other assistance that we used to provide has reduced a lot because we do not have much now. We appealed to some of our benefactors for help but only few of them responded to our requests.*
- *Taking measures of distancing, use of masks and consistent hand washing and ensuring that each individual coming to the Church compound behaves responsibly. We also taught Christians to be serious with this disease and observe all safety measure as stipulated by the government. Anyone with a cough was requested to remain at home for safety purposes. Each is pre-cautioned to remain focused and to be each one's brother or sisters' keeper.*
- *We encouraged Christians to observe the COVID guidelines. The measures were already set by the ministry of health but adherence to these by the people was not easy. In this state, we offered moral and spiritual support to our parishioners who either called or came to us. We too were afraid of going to their homes.*
- *We continued to serve our parishioners by sending to groups encouraging messages via whats.App, Family Masses, and Teaching them the measures to prevent the virus.*
- *As a parish we provided sanitizers and water points for use by those people who came to the parish compound.*
- *We continued to connect with our Christians by giving them moral support*
- *We continued ministering to Christians through health care in our hospitals, health centers, and dispensaries. We have continued offering online classes in our academic institutions particularly to examination classes. We are providing some help in our hospitality centers though with some limitations.*
- *Being committed to giving health services to those in need through the kind assistance of some donors.*

- *To the needy we distributed foodstuffs from donors.*
- *We have also supplied foodstuffs to needy and poor families.*
- *Helping poor parishioners by giving them foods.*
- *We offered counseling services to them.*
- *Offering counseling services, out-sourcing for assistance to the needy families in terms of food stuffs and clothing.*
- *We helped to give counseling services to those who were open to receive it.*
- *Some families were in conflict since everyone was in the house with no money and food. We tried to visit where we could and the priests did their best. I counseled several families that were almost breaking.*
- *Through programmes such as counseling were some of the means by which we continued serving the Christians.*
- *We organized online programs such as counseling.*
- *By providing online spiritual direction and counseling.*
- *We have continued to serve our Christians mostly through counseling*
- *The Parish is able to reach the parishioners through the radio station in the Parish for morning Masses as well as for on-line catechetical classes.*
- *We continued to serve the community through online Holy Masses.*
- *The parish has been offering Masses on radio stations. The challenge has been lack of adequate funds and personnel to administer services to Christians due to the effects of the pandemic.*
- *We continue to evangelize through Virtual Masses and homilies.*
- *We have been online but some Christians and children and especially those not connected to internet networks are missing out.*
- *My parish continued with online services though it was too challenging. The network sometimes became a problem. Most of the parishioners could not access these online services. The parish priest resulted to accepting family requests for Masses.*
- *The online Masses before churches were opened were being offered and these were of great help. Some Christians came to the parish for assistance while others did not make it. Although I listened to some confessions I was afraid of being infected.*

- *Online Masses and Masses at homes were offered upon request. The online communication was the only way out for many especially in reaching out to all, whether near or far.*
- *They continued to serve through phone messages and other modes of online communications.*
- *Through online communication such as by mobile phones some services were continued.*
- *With minimal Church and office visits, the parish communication lines have remained more open than before. Online groups have actively been used to encourage worship and other Church services for continuity.*
- *The parish organized online Masses and bible classes.*
- *The parish continued helping the parishioners through online services and prayer.*
- *Through social media and the few Christians are getting services in Church. The parish has tried to organize online Masses and spiritual talks.*
- *In my teaching ministry, I have advised the parishioners and their children to follow the on line lessons in the media.*
- *The parish priest maintained communication with Church leaders of all groups through whatsApp messages.*
- *We are in touch with our Christians through online Masses, retreats, seminars and other forms of spiritual guidelines. There is online communication by mobile phones and whatsApp messages.*
- *By preparing daily readings and sending reflections through whatsApp and radio channels, celebrating Holy Mass and listening to confessions of those who came to the parish. Online services e.g. through u-tube. Sharing food with those in the compound.*
- *Online liturgical celebrations and teaching forums for encouragement. We have been ministering through live stream and zoom for Sunday school children, through mobile communications and visits to Christians who needed it.*
- *The Masses and other liturgical events were transmitted through the Local Radio Station*

Problems Encountered

The study went on to enquire the problems that parishes encountered in their effort to minister to the Christians during the pandemic and how they resolved them. Some of their responses are:

- *Mass hours were limited, few Christians were to attend services and the age gap of those attending was limited to below 58 years. This decreased the morale of those who couldn't fit into this range. In addition, those who were to attend Mass were supposed to be few in number and this added to the grief of bereaved persons who were*

mourning. This also decreased the morale of priests as well. Despite all this, priests could manage to find a way of attending some of these ceremonies in order to condole with the bereaved families.

- *Our priests have tried to source for more funds in order to cater for the needs of the priests and needy persons. Priests in the parish have turned to agriculture in order to reduce on some of the expenses. They have also reduced the number of workers.*
- *Biggest challenge was technology limitations, financial support.*
- *The administration of other sacraments is still a challenge. We are handling a case by case and the administration of the sacraments is done individually.*
- *The problem faced was the curfew which somehow made things impossible for the priests to accomplish their planned schedules for each day.*
- *In general, ministries towards the parishioners have been disturbed. The problem is that Christians are not supposed to gather in crowds. Each one has to stay home to keep safe.*
- *Before churches were re-opened, virtual methods were used to minister to Christians. But after reopening, normal interaction has been taking place.*
- *There are many problems. It's not easy to minister to the ailing and those not able to come to Church. Churches also have a limited number of Christians that can attend Mass.*
- *Problems encountered: Fear of infection, suspicion, hunger and lack of money to cater for poor families. The fact that the pandemic has caused a lot of fear and suspicion, majority of the members stopped financial contribution to the parish, there were no more meetings and getting Christians online was futile. Solutions: Offering psycho-spiritual services and reaching out to persons that could donate money, food stuffs or clothing among other items.*
- *Some problems encountered included lack of adequate funds to run the parish as before, increase in the number of needy persons coming to the parish forcing the parish to reach out to persons or groups that could assist these people. Many people have been gripped by the fear of being infected and so they prefer to remain home. Getting some of these people back to the Church has proved difficult since they are now used to online Masses. Some of the guidelines outlined by the bishops in collaboration with government demand that children stay home. Many of these are now undergoing moral challenges making it difficult both for the Church and their families.*
- *Problems: People afraid of coming to the Church compound, Fear of infection, preference of online Masses Solutions: Counseling and pastoral home visits, encouraging prayer and other devotions The problems experienced were lack of sufficient manpower to reach out to the Christians. There were inadequate funds to cater for the needs of challenged persons.*
- *Lack of resources to carry out the ministry and lack of man power to help in the ministry. The parish has addressed the problems by assigning leaders of Small Christian Communities to check the status of the people in the group.*

- *The parish stopped all activities and services to parishioners.*
- *Problems encountered were: Fear, suspicion slow adjustment to the situation, homilies and reflections on biblical teachings.*
- *Problem encountered was lack of data bundles and smartphones. Advised them to look for free data bundles.*
- *Some people were too afraid to mix with others even in very small groups. Some Christians who were even sick before the pandemic now had no people to visit them.*
- *Problems: We were unable to raise enough funds to cater for every needy person. Solutions: Seeking donor and local funding.*
- *The challenge we have encountered is that those who need counseling or confession don't come due to the fear of infection. As a solution, we have formed a whatsApp group for the Church where people can share their issues.*
- *Problems: Not all Christians could access media for online reflections*
- *We were not able to reach out to all parishioners due to inadequate facilities such as televisions for online Masses.*
- *Problems faced were financial problems and low Christian turn up for parish Masses.*
- *Problems encountered were high expectations from people and lack of enough funds to cater for the occurring needs.*

Solutions to Problems Encountered

- *Nothing much done but Christian's received Masses from the parish from time to time. As sisters we visited the very vulnerable especially the poor and the sick. We gave them foods and sanitizers as well as face masks. We did counseling to those in need. We had frequent home visits.*
- *We have engaged in some indoor projects and activities such as farming and poultry.*
- *The parish priests have continued to minister to the Christians through, u-Tube and phone calls. Others had virtual meetings to discuss parish matters.*
- *We had house to house visits to encourage the Christians.*
- *Services being rendered are minimal as we are tried to adjust to the current situation.*
- *All the priests tried to listen to those who came to the parish as well as reaching out to those in need of spiritual help from their homes.*
- *We had online Masses, use of WhatsApp messages to parishioners and having spiritual lessons through the parish bulletin. We experienced the problem of molested children around us.*

- *The problems are being addressed through resource mobilizations and utilization of available resources.*
- *The parish continued as usual since permission was given in our country....although most people were afraid but nevertheless attended Masses. Other activities continued within the main parish station and out stations as well. The only problem that had encountered was FEAR though later on the life went on as usual.*
- *Through the celebration of Masses in Small Christian Communities. The problem we continue to experience is fear among Christians. They do not know what to do especially with rising of positive cases. One way of addressing the problem has been home visit in pursuit of creating awareness to the people.*

How has your diocese or religious order supported your parish during this time of pandemic? How might your diocese or religious order better support priests/sisters like yourselves during the pandemic?

Concerning support from the diocese or one's religious Order to the parish, respondents commonly mention moral support, stipend for priests, foodstuffs and prayers. Their responses include:

- *The Diocese through the office of the bishop gave us some stipends during the time of the pandemic.*
- *Not much assistance came from the diocese other than moral support and the usual stipend for priests.*
- *The diocese especially the bishops office send pastoral letters and other guidelines to parishes. The bishop also called for meetings with the priests.*
- *Through prayers.*
- *The diocese provided sanitizers and face masks.*
- *Little has been done.*
- *Through prayers, distribution of foodstuffs and water tanks and encouraging messages to the affected.*
- *The dioceses' bishop kept close to his priests and Christians. Food stuffs were given to the needy, Counseling and other pastoral services were provided. My Congregation donated foods and water tanks to those who needed it.*
- *The diocese provided moral support and COVID 19 protocol.*
- *Have received moral, spiritual and financial support from the congregation.*

- *The bishop assisted the priests by giving them finances to continue ministering to Christians in their stations. He also organized workshops about the pandemic as well as counseling sessions to those who needed it.*
- *By sharing ideas and ways to deal with the pandemic and encouraging each other to be focused in following the necessary precautions.*
- *Donation of money and items.*
- *There was no support from the diocese.*
- *Little support. They suffer the same.*
- *By giving moral support to the parish and parishioners.*
- *We set up an account and had a team formed to reach out to those bodies that were deemed to be in urgent need including some sister congregations.*
- *Actually my diocese has tried to help though it is not enough to settle the needs of the parish. I would therefore wish that the diocese increases its support to the parish.*
- *Very little assistance came from the diocese other than moral support and the usual stipend for priests.*
- *The diocese has been on the forefront in safeguarding the interests of Christians at both diocese and parish levels. They have worked with the government collaboratively to ensure that the safety protocols are observed.*
- *My religious order provided us with food. I think it would have given us money to buy what we wanted.*
- *The diocese is dependent on the parishes, so it is absolutely difficult to support its parishes. This is because it has many dependents from their diocesan religious communities.*
- *Cushioning needy parishes. Giving out some monies for basic needs.*
- *The bishop's office send pastoral letters and other guidelines to parishes.*
- *Not aware of any assistance given.*
- *Mobilizing parishioners to support clerics and parish staff!*
- *First is through online seminars, generation of projects for self-sustenance.*

- *My community supported the parish through prayer, pastoral visits and counseling to affected families. My congregation offered foodstuffs while sisters who are catechists were encouraged to visit families for spiritual and moral support.*
- *My religious Order provided financial support to the parish.*
- *Through pastoral letters and other guidelines to parishes. The bishop also called for meetings with the priests and some other leaders as need arose.*
- *We always treasured the close connection through media and sought out ways to help each other and also shared the little things together.*
- *By giving material support to the parish for poor families.*
- *It looked as very little assistance came from the diocese but I may not be correct.*
- *Prayer especially novenas and moral support of the parish.*
- *Since much of the financial aid came from the parish, not much help came in terms of finances from elsewhere. The diocese has however been active in relaying information about health.*
- *The diocese has offered some few basic needs to the Christians. My community has been encouraging members to find ways of managing the COVID - 19 challenges in relation to spiritual and material support.*
- *My religious Order has supported us financially by giving money to parishes to start some projects.*
- *Our religious order has supported the parishioners through online services and giving some food to the poor.*
- *We have had one of the sisters speak about coping with life after COVID 19. The diocese has tried to cater for some needs but things did not move as the way we anticipated.*
- *My religious congregation supported us with some basic needs. Other than finances they also offered us moral support.*
- *The Diocese through the office of the bishop gave us some stipends during the pandemic. However, each priest was encouraged to find means of survival through pastoral activities.*
- *I don't know about the Diocese but our congregation offered free human labour to support the Christians.*
- *The diocese has supported the parishes through pastoral letters that gave hope to Christians. The letters reiterated God's presence and control over all challenges. Encouraged Christians to observe the rules to protect themselves from this pandemic.*

- *Not much came from the diocese since everyone was struggling.*
- *Because we are running a private institution we didn't manage to support the parish but instead received support from the Christians.*
- *Our religious Order has commissioned more members to support the parish pastoral activities.*
- *There was some little financial support to the parish as well as foodstuffs.*
- *We tried to reach out to Christians through online communication.*
- *My religious Order supports priests through Mass stipend, pastoral stipend and financial support of social work in the parishes.*
- *My Order supported the parish by offering counseling services and giving food stuffs to the elderly.*
- *Through prayer Pastoral counseling and Material donations of foods.*
- *Some sisters of my congregation gave seminars and pastoral counseling to Christians. We also offered some material assistance to the very needy.*
- *We supported morally and advising people to keep safe and to protect one another by adhering to the Government's health protocols.*
- *By encouraging the priests and Christians in general.*
- *Although I am a priest I belong to a religious congregation. My Congregation assisted the parish through prayer and moral support. Members visited the parish every now and then to find out from the parish priest what they could do in form of assistance.*
- *The religious Order helped in providing food stuffs to the needy as well as counseling services.*
- *I saw more prayer done.*
- *Sent some donations to cater for the activities of the parish.*
- *This has been done through the sharing of available resources.*
- *Nothing much from the diocese since the diocese has also been affected.*
- *Through prayer and moral support.*
- *I think very little came to parishes because many priests were seen struggling trying to make ends meet.*

- *By giving foods, prayers and some kind of counseling.*
- *The diocese has offered some foods to the needy Christians affected by the pandemic. The diocese has helped the parish with some resources to sustain itself.*
- *My religious Order has offered counseling services to the affected .It Would have better supported the parish if it had a reserve finance account for emergencies.*
- *The diocese was also suffering and so everyone was trying to survive even the Cardinal meaning there was no surplus to offer.*
- *The diocese and the religious Order did give support especially of basic needs to the poor.*
- *Our congregation supported the sisters with extra foodstuffs, some little stipend to meet our daily basic needs and through psycho-spiritual support.*
- *Diocese has not supported us. The diocese can support financial.*
- *Not aware of any assistance.*
- *The problem is that the pandemic affected everybody. Much of the help was spiritual and moral.*
- *The diocese somehow cushioned the parishes in kind. Encouraged parishes to establish income generating projects and by educating the faithful on emergencies and unforeseen pandemics.*
- *Giving support to the priests and some foods to share with the needy groups.*
- *Due to various projects they have, the parish depended on its own investments*
- *Offering nutritional foods to the most affected.*
- *Have gotten support from the Catholic Men Association by giving us food for to support of our street children.*
- *Provided the religious with food.*
- *Creation of awareness and communicating the government regulations to the Christians.*
- *Through prayers and encouragement.*
- *Visiting the needy.*
- *Through prayer, counseling and chats.*

- *My religious Order has tried to provide foods and other items such as water tanks to the very needy families. With the lock down, many people have been stuffing in Kenya. My religious Order did distribute to different communities of the sisters isolated foodstuffs to supplement their diet.*
- *The diocese support declined during the pandemic*
- *Treatment of those who got sick, after insurance firms abandoned them.*
- *Through sending some assistance in terms of subsidies on monthly basis.*
- *Since I work in a religious owned institution, we did not receive any external help.*
- *My congregation has kept us posted on what's happening even to our sisters who are outside the country. It has also been issuing some guidelines geared towards self-protection as well as suggesting some ways to engage ourselves to be self-reliant where possible.*
- *My diocese supported me by giving suggestions on how I could be successful in my service to parishioners.*

How the diocese or religious institute might support individuals

When asked to explain how one's diocese or religious Order might better support priests/sisters like themselves during the pandemic respondents opine that:

- *The Diocese or Religious order might need to communicate with the priests then the priests organize the small community to collect some food stuffs for the priests.*
- *To myself, I could be helped by providing me with all that the preventive measures of the pandemic, ensuring that I have to been protected. Such help could consist of providing me with means of transport so as to avoid public transport for safety purposes. Hosting of other religious in our community to celebrate Masses together while following the health protocols.*
- *There is great need to support the poor financially and also to have a team to visit the aged and vulnerable who are feeling isolated because of the new form of lifestyle that the elderly are finding strange at times.*
- *Mostly by giving advice on how to handle the pandemic challenges. The diocese can support the mostly affected parishes financially.*
- *Assisting the needy Parishes financially and taking care of medical bills for the Clergy. The diocese to continue supporting the needy cases and helping the Parishes to come up with some income generating projects in the future.*
- *Catering for the needs of individual Sisters medically, economically and psychologically and providing the necessary support and encouragement whenever required.*

- *More emphasis was put especially on how to follow the COVID measures that were to be taken.*
- *For the future: The diocese or congregation can support parishes or sisters through workshops, sermons on emotional well-being in navigating post COVID-19.*

Hoping that the current situation may change soon or later, what post-pandemic plans do you have for your parish/ministry?

Respondents of this study were further invited to highlight some plans they could have for their parish/ministry in the event that the pandemic situation eased. In response, most respondents express the need for recovery workshops and seminars for parishioners, initiating projects for self-reliance, outreach programs

- *Seminars and faith formation programs.*
- *To train workers for different skills.*
- *Holding re-awakening workshops and seminars for parishioners.*
- *Christians to be more prepared and their parishes for such eventualities.*
- *We hope to continue with the plans that were there before the pandemic.*
- *To strengthen the small Christian communities because they are the backbone of the Church. Once strengthened they will strengthen other Christians close to them.*
- *We need to strengthen groups including the small Christian communities because they are the church of tomorrow.*
- *Christians and the parish as a whole need a day of prayer and mind-calming workshops*
- *We need to pray more because the world seems headed for deeper challenges. People should return to God and repent of their sins for better times under God's mercy.*
- *Organizing Masses in Small Christian Communities.*
- *Renewal of the faith and conviction towards God as well as better collaboration with God's grace and mercy in life while using and spending all that He has given wisely and prudently.*
- *Need to be more committed in prayer.*
- *Opening up more online programs to reach parishioners.*

- *Many people have been affected by this pandemic. Many have lost their loved ones to this pandemic, some have lost their jobs and many affected psychologically. Reaching out to them and listening to their stories will be necessary.*
- *To hold seminars with Christians Initiate new programs such as microfinance Initiate different faith-based movements for spiritual and moral support of Christians*
- *Saving for emergencies, sensitize people on use of means of communication like zoom and e learning.*
- *Introduction of a saving culture for other eventualities in future.*
- *To open a savings account for the parish for mitigation of such challenges in future.*
- *Following the health ministry guidelines, training people on how to handle future challenges of the same nature and living in hopeful faith that all will remain well.*
- *Installation of more water sanitation points.*
- *Keep hopes high, encourage people to follow guidelines.*
- *To continue keeping healthy guide lines to reduce other related diseases like flu, typhoid etc.*
- *Encouraging people to work hard so as to earn their living. Take strict health precautions so as to protect ourselves and others because the pandemic is still a threat to human health.*
- *Christians need to be more united for a better future*
- *There is need to organize some psycho-social services and counseling in order to tone down existing levels of trauma.*
- *Psychological counseling.*
- *Organizing counseling sessions for parishioners.*
- *Increase pastoral works and counseling services to restore faith back on their feet.*
- *Increase number of workers.*
- *First of all to restore spiritual/ counseling activities that have somehow collapsed*
- *Engage individuals in alternative creative and adaptive skills like handiwork and gardening so as to sustain self in the event that such a situation reoccurs.*
- *The first plan would be going back to the new normal, then continue with the pending projects.*

- *Start up a Farm to support the parish like piggery project.*
- *Come up with some income generating projects within as well as self-employment e.g. start a small scale investment from within.*
- *Creation and innovation of online projects and business, for instance petroleum stations, M- Pesa shops and online agricultural shows. This may ensure stabilize the parish is financially*
- *To be a more holistic active member in Church.*
- *See how those who have been affected can be helped materially and morally.*
- *Opening online accounts for interactions and encourage many to visit the sites.*
- *A strategic plan is needed.*
- *To initiate self-sustaining projects.*
- *To re-catechesis the faithful on worship of God.*
- *Encourage people to pray and to save more for future parish needs.*
- *Increasing the number of pastoral worker and counselors*
- *Christians need to be educated on how to keep the parish account well fed.*
- *To have disaster control panel that will try to foresee all future possible problems and a good response strategy.*
- *I have planned to give hope to the Christians because some of them have lost hope during the pandemic.*
- *Administering educational and spiritual talks mostly to those who have been affected psychologically and creating project activities.*
- *We hope to engage in some projects for revival.*
- *I will form youth groups to start income generating projects like planting of trees and doing charity works.*
- *We are planning to create programs that will help the parish to be self-supportive and most parishioners to be self-reliant.*
- *If the pandemic is over, am going to do a lot of pastoral work especially to build the faith of the Christians. I need to help them know God better.*

- *Creating more opportunities especially in projects and seminars that will empower the parishioners in all perspectives of life.*
- *To educate people more on the importance of hygiene and to strengthen them spiritually so that they may not lose hope in God when such calamities occur.*
- *Ensuring that we have employed better ways of doing things. To ensure that we have met the needs of the people in society more especially in our apostolates.*
- *Reaching out to the Christians for the pastoral care and administration of sacraments. To continue coming up with income generating projects.*
- *Enhancement of various projects, businesses and also online services. This will help the parish in time of need and also enable them to invest for the future.*
- *Looking for more donors to support parish activities considering the area where we are located. Offering counseling services, home visits and following up with affected families.*
- *Training of parishioners in order to create awareness on emergency issues like COVID-19.*
- *To look to the future in a more organized manner.*
- *To have income generating activities and projects.*
- *Give counseling services.*
- *Strengthening online platforms for future communication and sharing.*
- *To improve online transmission of preaching and pastoral ministering.*
- *Educate people on how to improve their way of prayers, devotions etc.*
- *To utilize every single minute in offering services so as to recover the time mismanaged during the pandemic.*
- *We need to keep giving hope encouragement to the Christians.*
- *To build economic capacities of our parishioners, to become more connected with them, give them hope, train the priests and religious in media skills and put the affected through a counseling program.*
- *To ensure better health care, education of communities around the institution on how to pick up their broken pieces and start again, assist our people to learn and to take care of themselves. Offer necessary services required for recovery such as psychological support.*

- *To follow the health measures by the ministry of Health so as to avoid being infected.*
- *Organizing on site events.*
- *To offer counseling services to the parishioners.*
- *The plan is to restart all the Church programmes that had collapsed during the pick of the pandemic. We need more use of on-line services.*
- *To offer some workshops that will enable people to have broader minds always to have a plan B incase A fails for example, not to depend so much on employment but to see ways towards self-employment.*
- *To train people for disaster preparedness.*
- *All Christians to train on emergency response.*
- *To strengthen pastoral activities such as increased interaction with different groups of parishioners; giving more moral, faith and social formation instructions. Giving workshops and talks*
- *To create a savings account for the parish.*
- *We will embark on the future plans that we had laid down for our communities both long and short term but of course with different approaches and strategies owing to the new challenges posed by economic strain.*
- *Initiating self-sustaining projects for different groups in the Church to support themselves during such difficult moments.*
- *Training and preparedness for such occurrences. Encouraging Christians to save as much as they can for themselves and for the Church.*
- *Continuing to keep the COVID 19 rules of hand wash and sanitizing to avoid opportunistic deceases like common colds.*
- *Encouraging the people to engage in small business projects has been the order of the day and this must continue for self-sustenance.*
- *Seminars to help people to be focused and to be united and prayerful at all times.*
- *Our people need to be more prepared for risk factors in life. This one caught everyone by surprise. We need reserves of money and material things.*
- *Encourage Christians to come back to church since most of them are comfortable with online Masses and services now.*

- *Starting long term projects of planting the vegetables and poultries. Having an account to deposit the income from such projects.*
- *The pandemic has taught us to diversify our projects in future and in case of another pandemic strikes we will be more prepared.*
- *Embark on a serious engagement of the youth who have been carried away by the online services.*
- *Conscientizing Christians on the need to save money for future parish projects.*
- *To conscientise all Christians of the need to set aside emergency funds for the parish and for themselves.*
- *People to know that things do happen and so preparedness is the solution. To train many youths to deal with risk factors.*
- *Opening an account for the parish as well as opening a business which may generate significant income.*
- *Start a reserve financial account for emergencies in the parish. Have post- pandemic workshops or seminars for different groups in the parish such as Catholic Men Association (CMA), Catholic Women Association (CWA), youth groups, the Choir and Pontifical Missionary Childhoods (PMC) among others.*
- *There is need to save some money, church leaders should be realistic and get Christians to look ahead and not just to spend here and now.*
- *Advise people to diversify their projects and have open minds in facing new challenges.*
- *To align activities of different programs, Introduce online workshops,. Explore other options for financing different activities and introduce online learning other than stagnating on traditional ways of learning.*
- *Teaching catechism online catechumen as well as holding some Small Christian Community activities.*
- *A plan of action is needed to avoid a repeat of messes.*
- *The best plan I see is to be financially prepared by saving during peaceful times so that in case of any such an eventuality the parish economy is not caught up in a surprise drop. We should make parishioners aware of this through all means; seminars, homilies etc.*
- *Lay preparedness measures, educate Christians on protective measures, follow the laid down protocols, and to establish self-sustaining methods to aid oneself in hard times.*
- *To do more of pastoral work on women empowerment being an area women have no say.*

- *Invest in improving online apostolate by ensuring good technological preparations and also establish income generating projects to support parish apostolates.*
- *People to be aware of such unwanted events and save some money.*
- *To continue supporting and giving hope to those who are in need.*
- *Training and alertness.*

When asked to state their designation, respondents say they are:

Diocesan priest	17
Parish priest	2
Religious priest/Sister	52
Parish catechist	10
Seminarian	9
Lay	2
Brother	2
Seminarian	2
Religious sister	2
An ordinary Christian	1
Religious brother.	1
Parishioner.	1
Religious brother	1
Seminarian	1
Religious brother	1
Aspirant to the religious life	1
A Church leader and teacher of the faith	1
A brother in formation	1
Church Minister	1
Priest within a Catholic institution	1
Lay minister in the parish	1
Lay minister	1

Please indicate the Country, Diocese or Religious Institute in which your parish or primary ministry is located:

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Nairobi | 39. Machakos | 77. Machakos |
| 2. Nairobi | 40. Ngong | 78. Kericho |
| 3. Machakos | 41. Nairobi | 79. Nakuru |
| 4. Nakuru | 42. Mombasa | 80. Nairobi |
| 5. Nairobi | 43. Garissa | 81. Eldoret |
| 6. Nairobi | 44. Machakos | 82. Mombasa |
| 7. Machakos | 45. Bungoma | 83. Nairobi |
| 8. Kisii | 46. Kericho | 84. Eldoret |
| 9. Malindi | 47. Nakuru | 85. Nairobi |
| 10. Nairobi | 48. Nairobi | 86. Nairobi |
| 11. Nairobi | 49. Ngong | 87. Nairobi |
| 12. Nairobi | 50. Machakos | 88. Nairobi |
| 13. Machakos | 51. Marsabit | 89. Garissa |
| 14. Machakos | 52. Kisumu | 90. Nairobi |
| 15. Bungoma | 53. Eldoret | 91. Machakos |
| 16. Nairobi | 54. Murang'a | 92. Garissa |
| 17. Machakos | 55. Malindi | 93. malindi |
| 18. Kericho | 56. Murang'a | 94. Mombasa |
| 19. Kisii | 57. Machakos | 95. Mombasa |
| 20. Nairobi | 58. Nairobi | 96. Kisii |
| 21. Nyahururu | 59. Kisumu- | 97. Nairobi |
| 22. Nairobi | 60. Marsabit | 98. Nairobi |
| 23. Nairobi | 61. Nairobi | 99. Mombasa |
| 24. Nairobi | 62. Nairobi | 100. Nairobi |
| 25. Homobay | 63. Eldoret | 101. Nairobi |
| 26. Kisii | 64. Nairobi | 102. Kisii |
| 27. Nairobi | 65. Garissa | 103. Nairobi |
| 28. Machakos | 66. Nyahururu | 104. Nairobi |
| 29. Kisii | 67. Garissa | 105. Machakos |
| 30. Eldoret | 68. Kericho | 106. Nairobi |
| 31. Garissa | 69. Nairobi | 107. Kisii |
| 32. Murang'a | 70. Murang'a | 108. Ngong |
| 33. Nakuru | 71. Malindi | 109. Nairobi |
| 34. Kericho | 72. Nairobi | 110. Nairobi |
| 35. Busia | 73. Machakos | 111. Nairobi |
| 36. Bungoma | 74. Nairobi | 112. Nairobi |
| 37. Eldoret | 75. Meru+ | |
| 38. Ngong | 76. Muranga | |