



A tribute to Dr. Stephen K. Karanja.

6th May 2021.

My Lord Bishop, Local Administration, Elected Leaders, Chairman of the Kimotho Family, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen! I greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Kenya Catholic Doctors Association (KCDA) is a membership association that brings together doctors who have sworn to practice and audit the practice of medicine while respecting, adhering to and defending the teachings of the magisterium of the Catholic Church and the unadulterated Hippocratic oath, including the respect for human dignity and the sanctity of life.

Dr. Karanja pursued the registration of KCDA with zeal, making its existence one of the many legacies he has left behind in this country. He was our founding chairperson and the face of KCDA, a role he held until his death.

Many people will remember Dr. Karanja for leading KCDA in promoting the dignity of human life, chastity, fertility awareness training for the girl child and protection of the family unit as moral alternatives to fight the social ills of contraception, abortion, homosexuality and comprehensive sexuality education among others.

Dr. Karanja was well known for his courage, fearlessness, zeal and bare-knuckle fights but one quality went largely unnoticed - he was fiercely patriotic! Dr. Karanja loved this country and was ready to do whatever it takes to protect the people of this country from harmful underhand agenda of some evil cabal of international players driven by a superiority complex and guided by Eugenic principals.

His greatest armor and source of his strength was his fear and honour of God. He led KCDA into taking the right position guided by the truth, scientific facts and common good as opposed to taking positions because they were politically correct or as dictated by funding agencies. He was not cowed by name-calling or intimidation from whatever quarter.

Dr. Karanja always insisted that the KCDA position be supported by facts and science and put in writing to allow for a fair exchange of ideas in finding solutions to the county's problems. He could not understand why the opposition never responded by presenting their facts and instead resorted to quoting unsupported assurances by international organizations or to name-calling and personalized attacks when everything else failed.

A good example is the KCDA advisory on Covid-19 vaccination given on the 3rd of March 2021. While the media and the Covid-19 vaccination sponsors and supporters criticized the KCDA position, they did not dispute the science. Further, they didn't tell Kenyans that the main reason for KCDA's position was the availability of affordable medication for treating Covid-19, a matter that is hardly being given the prominence it deserves. Whereas Dr. Karanja and KCDA were portrayed as being anti-vaccine, KCDA was and is actually complementing the government's efforts of fighting Covid-19 through promoting treatment for the benefit of all Kenyans as is expected of professional and honest doctors.

The last engagement of our chairperson was when he was spearheading the fight against Covid-19 through medication to prevent the disease in the vulnerable and treatment of early disease. We appreciate Dr. Karanja's effort in this endeavor – many lives have and will continue to be saved through his direct intervention as a

doctor and as the leader of KCDA, but there is still a lot more work to be done as a country before we can win this war - a matter we shall discuss at a more appropriate time.

Covid-19 is an occupational hazard for all doctors in clinical practice and Dr. Karanja was no exception. He knew he was not young and had underlying conditions that made him susceptible to contracting and developing severe disease. In fact, from the time KCDA went public about treatment, Dr. Karanja's clinic attracted many Covid-19 patients that increased his risk of exposure. Yet true to his character, training and Hippocratic oath, he refused to abandon his patients.

He protected himself with the standard PPE's and took preventive medication and other supplements just as he advised his vulnerable patients. However, on the night of 6th April, Dr. Karanja personally nursed a critically ill relative dear to him from 10 pm to 3 am before they could get an ICU bed. The relative later passed away. Dr. Karanja knew he was in trouble from that point on and he took his treatment and continued to monitor his oxygen levels regularly. On the night of 18th April, he noted his oxygen level was low and through the assistance of Dr. Ndonga, he was taken to hospital in an ambulance. Despite oxygen supplementation, his blood oxygen levels continued to drop. His doctors had only two choices – to watch him die or take him to ICU and use mechanical ventilation to breathe for him as they fought the brewing cytokine storm and accord him a 50% chance of survival. After a long 10 days, Dr. Karanja left us.

The severity of disease as stated on page one of our advisory on Covid-19 dated 3rd March 2021, depends on: (1.) The dose of infective organism received at the point of infection; (2.) Robustness of the individual's natural immune system; and (3.) Virulence of the infective agent. In the case of Dr. Karanja, we suspect that the dose of infective material may have been the cause of his rapid deterioration.

Losing a patient is a very painful but humbling experience for doctors – why is it that faced with two patients with the same diagnosis and same risks put on the same treatment one survives and one dies? It's because doctors treat their patients but it is God who cures. Death is inevitable and the only difference between Dr. Karanja, you and I, who are here today is time – for each one of us will have to leave this earth one day – when or how is an irrelevant detail.

To the doctors and nurses of the Mater Hospital who took care of Dr. Karanja during his admission, we thank you very much for your effort. For all those who joined the family and KCDA after the call for prayers, we thank you. We know there were many masses said for Dr. Karanja's recovery, many private prayers from individuals and congregations whose lives he touched in one way or another.

To the family, if there is anywhere you feel we can be of assistance as an association, we will be more than glad to help.

Dr. Karanja has finished the work he was sent to do and God has called him back home. We thank God for the gift of his life. Dr. Karanja died a true hero – a general in the battlefield and at the frontline. KCDA members will continue to uphold the truth, guided by authentic science and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, for the good of this country, humanity in general and the glory of God.

I request you contemplate on this challenge posed by Dr. Karanja to a young Christian couple that visited his office recently – “young people today have become cowards – not willing to stand for what they believe in. If you are not bold and courageous, our children will suffer the consequence of your inaction.”

May Dr. Karanja's soul rest in eternal peace!



Dr Wahome Ngare.