



Peter Cardinal Kodwo Appiah Turkson

### **Early life and Priesthood**

His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson was born 11 October 1948 in Nsuta Wassaw, a mining town in the Western Region of Ghana, to a Methodist mother and a Roman Catholic father. His mother later converted to Catholicism. She sold vegetables in the open market, while his father worked as a carpenter in the Manganese mines. He had a paternal uncle who was a Muslim. He is the fourth of ten children.

### **Elementary Education**

Primary School Education was at the Roman Catholic Primary School, Nsuta Wassaw. Middle School Education was at the Urban Council Middle School, Nsuta Wassaw.

### **Secondary Education**

Secondary Education was at St. Teresa's Minor Seminary in Amisano, as a seminarian for the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Cape Coast. Ordinary Level Studies (1962-1967) and Advanced Level Studies (1967-1969).

### **Post-Secondary Education/Theological Studies**

Peter Turkson did an Integrated course of Philosophy and Theology at St. Peter's Regional Seminary in Pedu, Cape Coast (1969-1971), before going on to do Theology at St. Anthony-on-Hudson Conventual Franciscan Seminary in Rensselaer, New York, where he graduated as a Master of Divinity and Master of Theology.

His desire to do Science (Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry) after theology was providentially replaced by the study of the Bible.

### **Ordination**

He returned to the Archdiocese of Cape Coast in 1975, to be ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop John Kodwo Amisah at the St Francis de Sales Cathedral in Cape Coast on 20th July, 1975.

## **Rev. Fr. P. Kodwo Turkson (Priestly Ministry)**

After his ordination, he taught Geography and Religious Studies at St. Teresa's Minor Seminary in Amisano, 1975-1976, and was the curate in charge of the Catholic community of Amisano. This year of pastoral ministry was a requisite for post-ordination studies. Thus, from September 1976 to 1980, Fr. Turkson did licentiate studies in the Sacred Scriptures at the Pontifical Biblical Institute (Rome & Jerusalem).

He returned from his studies for the Licentiate in Scripture to resume teaching:

- ✓ 1980 to 1981, he taught Sixth Form *Religious Studies* in the Minor Seminary, Amisano.
- ✓ 1981-1987, he taught Sacred Scriptures at St. Peter's Regional Seminary, Pedu. He also taught Biblical Studies (Introduction to Scripture, the Gospel of John and the Historical Books of the Old Testament) at the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Cape Coast. In 1983-1985, he taught part-time, as a visiting lecturer, at the *Grande Séminaire de la Côte d'Ivoire* at Anyama.
- ✓ In this period, Fr. Peter Turkson was the priest-in-charge of the St. John the Baptist Catholic community at Pedu, and a chaplain for the Catholic community of the University of Cape Coast (1984-1986).
- ✓ 1987-1992 he returned to Rome to work on a Doctorate Degree in Sacred Scriptures. The conclusion of his studies and defense of thesis were taken away by his nomination in October 1992 as Archbishop of Cape Coast to replace Archbishop John Kodwo Amissah (+September 1991).

He started a column, "*Thus says the Lord...*", in the national Catholic monthly magazine *The Catholic Voice*, where he contributed regular monthly teachings on the Scriptures.

## **Archbishop P. Kodwo Turkson (Episcopacy)**

On 6<sup>th</sup> October 1992, he was appointed the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Cape Coast by Pope John Paul II. He was consecrated and installed Archbishop of Cape Coast in the Cathedral of St. Francis de Sales, Cape Coast on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1993 by Archbishop Dominic Kodwo Andoh (Principal consecrator), Archbishop Peter Poreku-Dery and Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong (co-consecrators).

### **Assignments**

Four years after his episcopal ordination and three years after joining the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, he was elected as the President of the Bishops' Conference at the Plenary Assembly of the Conference in Ho (1997). At the same time, the Vatican also named him a member of the Pontifical Commission for Catholic-Methodist Dialogue (1997-2005); member of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity (2002-present); and a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church (2002-present). He was a member of the Governing Council of the University of Ghana, Legon (2001-2006); a member of the Board of Directors of Central Region Development Commission (CEDECOM, 2002-2008) and a member of the National Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Environment of the Government of Ghana.

He pushed for the establishment of the Catholic University College of Ghana in 2003 at Fiapre (Sunyani), and serves, to date, as its Chancellor. In the same year, he led the Bishops' Conference to start the Quality Insurance Company (QIC). From 2003 to 2007, he

became the chairman of the Ghana chapter of the Conference of Religions for Peace, beginning a very useful pilgrimage of inter-faith relationship and cooperation.

In the Archdiocese and in the area of healthcare and social services, Cardinal Turkson created and coordinated several charitable and social service activities in the Archdiocese of Cape Coast: the establishment of a hospital in Buduburam (a Liberian refugee settlement camp), a maternity and fistula repair hospital at Mankessim, an addiction treatment center at Brafu-Yaw, Cape Coast, Summer Schools to upgrade the learning experience of students in less-endowed and rural Secondary Schools, and lay theology formation for Catechists.

**Cardinal P. Kodwo Turkson (Cardinalate)**

St. John Paul II created and proclaimed him Cardinal-Priest of S. Liborio in his last consistory of 21 October 2003. Cardinal Turkson is the first Ghanaian cardinal, and was one of the cardinal electors of Benedict XVI (2005) and of Pope Francis (2013). He was described as “one of Africa’s most energetic church leaders” by *The Tablet*, a Catholic International weekly Review, published in London.

Cardinal Turkson was the Vice President of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) from 2004-2007. When AECAWA merged with its francophone counterpart, the Conférence Épiscopale de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (CERAO) in 2007, he was elected the first President of the joint Conference of English-speaking and French-speaking Bishops of West Africa. He was also elected the treasurer of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in the same year (2007). He was also named an Honorary President of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP).

He was appointed by the President of Ghana, Agyekum Kuffuor, to be the chairman of the first National Peace Council (2006-2010). He led a joint committee of the Christian Council and the Catholic Bishops to negotiate a peaceful outcome of the 2008 elections.

**The Vatican and its Synods**

A year after his Episcopal Ordination, Archbishop Turkson was invited to attend the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops (April 10 to May 8, 1994), as a member. This introduced his participation in subsequent Synods of the Holy See (Vatican) from 1994 to date:

<p><b>2021-2023</b> <b>6-27 Oct. 2019</b></p>	<p>2021-2023 Synod: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission. Special Assembly on the Amazon, new pathways for an Integral Ecology</p>
<p><b>3-28 Oct. 2018</b></p>	<p>XV General Ordinary Assembly on the Youth</p>
<p><b>4-25 Oct. 2015</b></p>	<p>XIV General Ordinary Assembly on the Family. Its mission in the Church and contemporary Society</p>
<p><b>5-19 Oct. 2014</b></p>	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> General extraordinary Assembly on Pastoral Challenges to the family</p>

<b>7-28 Oct. 2012</b>	XIII General Ordinary Assembly on New Evangelization for transmission of Christian Faith
<b>10-24 Oct. 2010</b>	Special Assembly on the Catholic Church in the Middle East
<b>4-25 Oct. 2009</b>	Second Special Assembly for Africa: <i>The Church in Africa in Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace</i>

Pope Benedict XVI appointed him as the General Relator of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, with the theme: “*The Church in Africa, at the Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace. ‘You are the salt of the earth, ... you are the light of the world’*” (4-25 October 2009).

At the conclusion of that Synod, on 24 October 2009, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Cardinal Turkson President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

With that appointment, Cardinal Turkson transferred to the Vatican, where he lives to date.

### **Roman (Vatican) Curia**

His first assignment in the Vatican was to preside over the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In 2016, Pope Francis merged the four Pontifical Councils for *Justice and Peace*, *Migrants, Refugees and Itinerant People*, *Healthcare*, and *Cor unum* (humanitarian assistance) under the name, *Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, and appointed Cardinal Turkson its first Prefect.

On 6 June 2022, Pope Francis appointed him Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

Cardinal Turkson is also a member of the following Dicasteries of the Roman Curia:

- The Congregation: for the Doctrine of the Faith
- The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
- The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
- Pontifical Council for Catholic Education
- Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
- Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses
- General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops
- Member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (2011-2021)
- Head of the *Vatican Covid-19 Commission*

### **Holy See Missions**

On 30 March 2011, Pope Benedict XVI announced at his weekly general audience that he was sending Cardinal Turkson, as a Vatican mediator, to contribute to a possible diplomatic, non-military solution to the potentially explosive civil conflict in Ivory Coast. Subsequently, he visited South Sudan twice on behalf of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Since 2014, Cardinal Turkson has carried the message of the Holy Father to the *World Economic Forum* at Davos-Klosters and represented his Dicastery.

### **Honours and Awards:**

Throughout his years as an Archbishop and as a Cardinal, he has received numerous honours and awards, including:

- ***Honorary doctorate degrees*** from the University of Ghana, Legon; the University of Education, Winneba; the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; the Holy Cross College, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA; Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Canada; Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, New York, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, USA; St. John's University, Queens, New York; Fu Jen University, Taiwan; University of St. Francis, Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA.
- ***Decorations***: The *Order of the Star*, National Honour of the Republic of Ghana; the *Order of the Rock*, from the Anomabo Traditional Area in Central Ghana; *Honorary Citizen of the City of Vittoriosa*, Malta.

He is a member of the European Academy of Arts and Sciences (Philosophy & Religion division) and a member of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

His addresses and speeches at Universities and at national and international events are numerous: Integral Ecology in *Laudato si'* ... Murcia (Madrid, 2 March 2016), Gregorian University (Rome), Leuven University (Amsterdam), Sacro Cuore University (Milan), Vienna, Granada etc.; the UN General Assemblies (on the MDGs and SDGs), at the ECOSOC (on ecology), EU Parliament at Strasbourg (religious freedom), UNESCO in Paris (on Integral Ecology), World Economic Forum, Davos-Klosters (on the Economy of Pope Francis); OECD (on integral ecology); Stockholm International Water Institute and Vrij University, Amsterdam (on Water and Oceans), etc.

He has published several articles and book chapters, including:

- “Inculturation: A Biblical Perspective”, in: *Inculturation* (eds. Peter Turkson and Frans Wijzen, KTC, Kampen 1994, 1-9);
- “Evangelization in Africa”, in: *John Paul II and the New Evangelization* (eds. Ralph Martin and Peter Williamson, Servant Books, Cincinnati 2006 pg. 94-111);
- “An Integral Ecology for Integral Society: The great challenge of our time”, in: *The Integral Ecology of Pope Francis for safeguarding our common home*, Milan 2019;
- “Integral Peace, Development and Ecology”, in: *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining*, ed. Gerard Powers and Caesar A. Monteverchio, Notre Dame, 2019;
- and booklets of the series, „Kirche und Gesellschaft, Grüne Reihe“:
  1. Peter Kardinal Turkson, *Integraler Humanismus und Wirtschaftsökologie, Überlegungen aus Anlass der Amazonas-Synode*, Hrsg. Ksz, Nr.463, 2019;
  2. Peter Kardinal Turkson & Peter Schallenberg, *Fratelli tutti: Eine theologische-Sozialethik der politischen Liebe*, Hrsg. Ksz, Nr.475, 2020;
  3. Peter Kardinal Turkson / Peter Schallenberg / Ulrich Schürenkrämer, *Investment in der Sicht einer Ökonomik der Gratuität nach Laudato si' (2015) und Fratelli tutti (2020)*, Hrsg. Ksz, Nr. 485,

4. Peter Kardinal Turkson, „*Oeconomicae et Pecuniariae Questiones*“:  
*Überlegungen zu einer ethischen Abwägung einiger Aspekte des  
gegenwärtigen Wirtschaft- und Finanzsystems*, (in the press).

- Peter K.A. Turkson & Vittorio Alberti, *Corruzione, Combattere la corruzione nella Chiesa e nella società*, Rizzoli 2017, Milano.

Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson speaks, reads and writes Fante, English, Italian, French, German, Hebrew. He reads and writes Latin, Greek and Spanish.