



## **NIGERIAN POLITICAL LEADERS BERATED FOR NATION'S RETARDED DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABEOKUTA, NIGERIA -**

Nigerian Political leaders have been berated for not utilising the great potentials of the Nigerian nation in terms of human and natural resources to make her a great nation. This contention of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria was contained in the communique issued at the end of their 2019 second Plenary Assembly, held recently at the Divine Mercy Pastoral Centre, Agbamaya, Obada Oko, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

According to the communique, signed by Archbishop Augustine Obiora Akubeze of Benin City, and Bishop Camillus Raymond Umoh of Ikot-Ekpene Diocese; President and Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), respectively; "The Nigerian State is much endowed with natural, human and spiritual resources. Sadly, political authorities have not been completely diligent in relating to these resources neither have they been fair and equitable in distributing them".

The Bishops added: "Justice requires them to give everyone their due, from sharing of resources to caring for the human person. Where there is no fair sharing of wealth and opportunities, there is bound to be crisis. It is only when

we have justice that we can have true peace and sustainable development. We enjoin all Christians and people of good will to preach daily this message of justice and peace, and to live it out coherently.”

The Bishops also used the occasion to reiterate the sanctity of marriage and the importance of the family in any nation, noting that this sacred and inviolable union between one man and one woman, is under pressure throughout the world. They noted particularly that the situation in Nigeria has been aggravated by economic and social crisis that have lasted for several years. They added: “As a result, many a family is no longer stable enough to fulfil the traditional roles of the family in the Church and the society.

They therefore urged: “... as the cradle of life and development, the family needs to be helped to rediscover as well as to cherish its divine mandate as the first school of virtues and values. Parents are called upon to, by their words and examples, uphold the ideals of decency, discipline, honesty and marital fidelity.” They added: “The pursuit of wealth and ‘success’ must be guided by those values if families are to bequeath to the wider society responsible young people, who cherish hard work and merit, who respect elders, value the sacredness of life, the sanctity of the sacrament of marriage and are willing to honestly contribute to the building of the nation and the growth of the Church.”

The Bishops called on parents “to keep vigilance over their children and wards, in order to provide moral guidance and protection from unhealthy influences, sexual deviance and exploitation. In spite of present economic challenges, we urge the members of families never to throw away the important African and Christian values of respect and care

for the elderly”.

On the life of priests and religious, the Bishops while acknowledging the sacrifice on the parts of the priests and religious, admonished them to uphold the sanctity of their vocation and never give up in serving the people of God. They added “All priests and religious must exercise discretion and be committed to a life of simplicity that is consistent with the life of the Master, who had nowhere to lay his head (cf. Lk 9:57-58). An ostentatious and materialistic life of luxury draws unnecessary attention and portends counter witnessing.”

They enjoined all priests and religious to have a healthy relationship with young people and do more to inculcate the faith in them; adding that: “All forms of abuse of minors and vulnerable adults are to be abhorred, since they are a betrayal not only of the confidence our people repose in us but also of our vocations and ministry as priests and religious.”

Other areas addressed in the communique were: the allegiance, solidarity and communion of the Bishops with the Holy Father Pope Francis; the state of the Nigerian nation, with particular attention to the issue of insecurity and the need for respect for human life, with a call for the decentralization of the security agencies to make them more vibrant and active; necessity for national integration; religious politics and life; events in the Nigeria Church, since the last Conference; and an unequivocal condemnation of the Xenophobic attacks on Nigerians and other African nationals by South African citizens.

