



CBCN DIRECTIVE ON TENURE OF OFFICE FOR OFFICERS OF CHURCH SOCIETIES IN THE INTEREST OF THE COMMON GOOD - Rev. Fr. Ralph Madu

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The decision of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria to peg the tenure of officers of Church societies, organizations and sodalities to a four-year non-renewable tenure is aimed at ensuring equity, justice and peace as well as provide an opportunity for the utilization of the gifts of many members of the societies, for the common good of the Church in the country.

This explanation was given by the Secretary General of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Rev. Fr. Ralph Madu, during an exclusive interview the Catholic News Service of Nigeria (CNSNig), in Abuja, recently.

According to the CSN Secretary General, this decision was taken by the Bishops at their first plenary meeting for 2017, held in Abuja, in February; and reaffirmed by the CBCN Administrative Board at its recent meeting in Calabar, this month, "after revisiting the issue subsequent to the conflicting interpretations of the directive".

Fr. Madu stated that, the directive which became effective from February this year, irrespective of the year-of tenure presently adopted by the various groups, does not permit elongation of tenure, under any guise; and officers presently serving in various capacities in the societies are expected to vacate their offices on completion of their present tenure and will not be eligible to be voted for.

The CSN Secretary General further clarified: “Those who are already in their leadership role, having been sworn in with their constitutional provision of three years or by common understanding of three years as a policy, will not serve four years as a result of the new policy. They will finish their three years; however, the clause of non-renewable binds them. Those to be elected hereafter will serve four years non-renewable.”

He noted that many factors prompted the decision of the Bishops in this direction including the fact that most lay groups are constantly faced with leadership problem because from experience, “most of them aspire to the position of leadership in order to control power and finances of the particular association, organisation and sodality they lead”. He added: “When such leaders assume office, they create empires which encourage sit-tight syndrome. More often than not, seeking for the second tenure gets mired in unchristian behaviours.”

He reiterated the position of the Bishops that leadership is essentially an opportunity to serve others in the sense of being all things to all people (cf 1 Cor. 9:23). His words: “The CBCN, aware of this, resolved that leadership in all

church related associations and sodalities will henceforth be a term of four years non-renewable, so that those who aspire to lead will truly aspire first to be slaves (cf Mk 10:44) for the good of others.”

He urged leaders of all organizations in the Church to strictly comply with the directive adding that chaplains of all the societies should further educate their members on the directive and facilitate compliance.