



HEALING, A COLLABORATION BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AND MEDICAL PROCESSES

Jul 19, 2017

ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, John Cardinal Onaiyekan has described spiritual healing as an integral part of the healing process of the medical feat pointing out that “healing is the work of God in collaboration with the efforts of human beings”.

This remark was made by the Cardinal in his reflection at a recent international Faith Based Organizations Consultation Conference organized in Abuja by the Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN) in collaboration with United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and US President’s Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief(PEPFAR). The three-day programme took place at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja.

The theme of the Regional Consultation which focused on Early Diagnosis and Treatment for HIV- positive Children, was: **Strengthening Engagement of Faith-based Organizations**. It was attended by about 150 delegates from Nigeria, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DCR); the primary countries of focus and other parts of

the world.

Cardinal Onaiyekan however expressed concern on the continuous assertion of miraculous healing through prayer alone by some pastors, without recourse to medical attention. While noting that healing was a major aspect of the work life of Jesus and that the effect of spiritual healing cannot be separated from human efforts through medical science; the Cardinal declared: "Without, in anyway denying that miracles do happen, many of us and indeed the main stream of Christianity would not reduce our concern for healing to simply praying for miracles".

He continued: "We are talking of HIV and AIDS, we saw how much when people were given false assurances, like once you are born again and you believe in the Lord Jesus, HIV cannot be your portion. I wonder whose portion it is, and we have pastors, so called religious leaders who peddle this kind of theories. I dare not judge their intentions, but I definitely look at the impact of what they say and can't say it is positive."

Cardinal Onaiyekan buttressed his point on this collaboration by pointing out that the first hospital – *De hospital insatus* was built in Rome by the Pope; adding that in Nigeria, the first hospital, Sacred Heart Hospital was built in Abeokuta, Ogun State, by a Catholic Rev. Father.

The Archbishop of Abuja Archdiocese further stated that since God created and designed the complex human body

he knows how best to fix it. He continued: "It is therefore not stupid to have recourse to spiritual support when we are making our feeble effort to redress the situation when our bodily function go out of order". He added: "As Christians, we are not surprised that healing the sick was a major aspect of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, while on earth."

Cardinal Onaiyekan while noting this healing collaboration with spiritual power is not limited to the medical field; and also reflects in the African tradition, pointed out that Jesus' healing miracles is "as a point of contact to deal with the inadequacy of humanity and our human insufficiency." The Cardinal stressed the need for collaboration between the state and faith based organizations in the provision of health care delivery service, especially in the area of focus by the Regional Conference; adding that for this to be very successful, faith based organizations must have access to public funds to play their roles effectively.