



## CATHOLICS URGED TO HELP SANITIZE NATION'S POLITICS

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### EKPOMA, NIGERIA -

Catholics with means and desire have been urged to participate actively in the country's politics in order to save the country from further socio-economic and political crisis. The call was made by the Vicar General of the Uromi Diocese, Very Rev. Fr. Francis Ononlumen, during the opening Mass to flag-off Nigeria, held at (NEC) meeting of the Catholic Laitv Council of Brother Romanus Catechetical Renewal Centre, Ekpoma, Edo State, recently.

Fr. Ononlumen, who represented the Bishop of the diocese, Most Rev. Donatus Ogun; made the call during his homily at the celebration of the Mass. He pointed out that there is need for the sanitization of the country's political system, for the realization of democratic governance beneficial to majority of Nigerians and guarantee equity and justice in all strata of life.

Reflecting on the readings of the day, the homilist stressed the importance of the spirit of the law as against the letters of the law as exhibited by the Pharisees. He therefore called on Christians, especially Catholic faithful, to show love in all their dealings with one another, especially when relating with the poor.

Fr. Ononlumen urged lay leaders to emulate the virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and “call on her in times of difficulties as she will never fail you”. He emphasised the importance of Family Rosary and admonished Catholics to engage in healthy politics in order to sanitize the political arena with Christian values.

In the communiqué issued at the end of the meeting titled: *Mary, Queen of the Family: The Fatima Experience*; the delegates pointed out that the Fatima message is rooted in prayer, penance, sacrifice and reparations for sins. They called on Catholic faithful to participate actively in politics with a view of sanitizing the nation’s political life with Christian virtues and positively contribute to nation building as an evangelization apostolate.

Other areas on which the NEC members commented included: support and compliance with the decision of the Bishops on the four-year single tenure for all laity group executive officers; admonition on all Church societies to cooperate and collaborate with the Laity Council at all levels and the state of the nation; condemning in strong terms the use of hate speeches by some groups of people in the country, noting that these are not in the interest of the majority of Nigerians, unity, progress and development of the country.

They also used the opportunity to express gratitude to Pope Francis for his fatherly intervention in the Ahiara Diocese crises; urging the priests, religious and lay faithful of the diocese to comply with the directives of the Holy Father, accept and install Bishop Okpleke as their Local Ordinary and collaborate with him to move the mission of Christ forward in Mbaise land. They also called on all Catholics in the

country to actively participate in the 33-Day Prayer Novena for the re-dedication of Nigeria to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The communiqué was signed by Barrister Chizoba Nagboh and Sir Idonin Anthony, National President and Secretary of the Council, respectively.