



CATHOLIC FAITHFUL URGED TO EMBRACE SUFFERING WITNESSING TO CHRIST

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah has called on Catholic faithful to embrace the tragedy of persecution and other sufferings associated with witnessing for Christ. According to the bishop the call to mission in the Catholic faith is the continuation of reaching out with the Good News of Christ to all parts of the world without counting the cost.

Bishop Kukah made the call in his homily at the celebration of the Mass to mark this year's Mission Sunday celebration at the Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Pro-Cathedral, Area 3, Garki, Abuja, recently. Speaking extensively on the message of the Holy Father Pope Francis, he told the congregation that the Holy Father "again reminds us that our responsibility is to go to the street that we have to be a Church 'that is bruised, a Church that is dirty' because of our engagement on the street."

Noting the progress of the Church can only be measured by her missionary achievements within and outside the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, bishop added: "We cannot be a comfortable Church, we cannot be a Church that measures progress by the sizes of our cathedrals we cannot be a Church that measures its

progress by the kinds of cars you drive ...”The bishop expressed concern that people are increasingly making themselves missionaries and pastors without been anointed by God. He declared: “They build the church and then ask God to anoint them. This is not what we are witnessing to. Our responsibility as we are told in the acts of the Apostles is to continue the message of Jesus who preached the gospel that turned the world upside down.”

While re-echoing the successes of foreign missionaries who brought the Catholic faith to the country, Bishop Kukah expressed satisfaction with good works of Nigerian priests and religious now on missionaries in different parts of the world, including the countries of those who brought the faith to Nigeria.

His words: “the Catholic Church is actually doing more work than the Federal Government of Nigeria as far as our relationship with international communities is concern, because the only people who come to the Nigerian Embassy anywhere in the world are people who want to get visa to come to Nigeria; and anywhere in Europe and other parts of the world Nigerian priests and sisters are there educating children they are in hospitals they are in schools,” missioning to people.