



HOLINESS OF LIFE PRIMARY MISSION OF CHRISTIANITY; Says Archbishop Kaigama

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BOMADI, NIGERIA -

The President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama has described holiness of life as the primary mission of the Christian faith as against the present preaching of prosperity and miracles being presently orchestrated by some Christian pastors and Church leaders.

Archbishop Kaigama reemphasized this fact of the Christian faith in his homily at the celebration of the Mass on the occasion of the canonical erection of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi and the installation of Most Rev. Hyacinth Oroko Egbebo as its Bishop. The ceremony which took place recently at the Our Lady of the Waters Cathedral, Bomadi, Delta State, was performed by the Apostolic Nuncio to Nigeria, Archbishop Antonio Guido Filippazi.

Pointing out that this is the primary evangelization focus of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Archbishop of Jos declared: “At a time when some preachers present Christianity as a project of miracles and prosperity or a matter of cult personality, we owe it a duty to insist that holiness of life, good daily conduct and performance of good works especially helping the weak and the poor irrespective of tribe, status or religious affiliation should be our priority.”

He continued: “Our doors must be wide open to the poor and the underprivileged who ate so many in Nigeria today, especially those lacking the basic necessities of life, those owed months of salaries, retired and grieving pensioners, the army of unemployed youths and the growing numbers who are poor due to no fault of theirs.

Archbishop Kaigama also used the occasion to reiterate the need for government to bring about development at all levels and to look seriously challenges facing the country and the people. Challenges listed by the CBCN President include: the poor conditions of

most roads, the incessant strikes by workers in health or educational institutions, the developing culture of mediocrity linked to the god father syndrome or whom you know, the kidnapping of innocent people, etc.

He continued: "Up to now, six Rev. Sisters of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus are languishing in captivity suffering the terrible traumatic experience many kidnapped persons have undergone." He pleaded with the kidnappers of the Rev. Sisters and the Postulants to release their victims in the name of Almighty God and in the name of our common humanity.

He also appealed to the faithful to intensify their prayers in this respect. He added: "We also call on the government to respond to the yearnings of the teeming unemployed youths especially here in the Niger Delta - the area that lays the golden egg."

Advising the people of the newly erected diocese Archbishop Kaigama advocated that in

spite of their ethnic diversity, There should be visible unity, a special characteristic of the Catholic Church. His words: “Priests, Religious and the Laity should see the Bishop as a father, a friend and a brother while the Bishop ministers to them as his sons, daughters, friends and co-responsible agents of evangelization.

The ceremony was attended by members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, government functionaries and dignitaries from all walks of life from within and outside the country. The CBCN members present at the ceremony included: Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference and Archbishop of Jos; Archbishop Augustine Akubeze, Vice President of the Conference and Metropolitan of Benin City Ecclesiastical Province; Archbishops Anthony Obinna of Owerri and Matthew Ndagoso of Kaduna; and emeriti Archbishops Patrick Eboeli Ekpu of Benin City and Felix Alaba Job of Ibadan. Others were: Bishops Martin Uzuokwu of Minna; John Ayah of Uyo; Charles Hammawa of Jalingo; John Afareha of Warri; Michael Elue of Iselle-Uku; Gabriel Dunia of Auchi and Camillus Umoh of Ikot-Ekpene.

Also present were: Bishops Emmanuel Badejo of Oyo; Anthony Adaji *MSP* of Idah;

Paulinus Ezeokafor of Awka; Augustine Ukwuoma of Orlu; Matthew Hassan Kukah of Sokoto; Peter Okpaleke of Ahiara; Godfrey Onah of Nsukka; Donatus Ogun of Uromi; Donatus Akpan of Ogoja; Anselm Umoren, Auxiliary of Abuja; Jonas Benson Okoye, Auxiliary of Awka and Denis Isizoh, Auxiliary of Onitsha. Bishops George Dodo of Zaria and Camillus Etokudoh of Port Harcourt were represented by Very Rev. Fr. Henry Atuma and Rev. Fr. Justin Njoku respectively.

The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) delegation, led by the Secretary General, Rev. Fr. Ralph Madu included: Rev. Fr. Ojaje Idoko, Director of Pastoral Affairs and Rev. Fr. Chris Anyanwu, Director of Social Communications. Also in attendance were: Msgr. Javier Fernandez, Counselor at the Apostolic Nunciature; Msgr. Thomas Greenan *SPS*, First Apostolic Administrator of Bomadi Vicariate; Fr. Kevin O'hara and Fr. Paul Hardy of St. Patrick's Missionary Society.