



## **PURIFY THE SOCIETY BY PRAYER AND WITNESSING, CATHOLICS TOLD**

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### **SOKOTO, NIGERIA -**

Catholics have been called upon to be inspired by their faith to purify the society by prayer and witnessing. The call was made by the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah in his homily at the ordination of three new Deacons for the diocese and the re-dedication of the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Sokoto, recently.

According to the local Ordinary of Sokoto Diocese, the assault been faced by Christianity in the present day world make it compulsory for the faithful to deepen their faith, intensify their prayers and witness without fear. His words: “ At no time has our faith been more tested than now, with more concerted efforts to literally wipe out our Christianity here and elsewhere.”

The Bishop continued: “The wave of persecution of Christians around the world now threatens the foundation of our values, built on our notions of the common good, modesty, prudence, charity forgiveness in keeping with the mind of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Reiterating the assurance of the words of the Holy Bible the Lord is always with us in times of tribulations, Bishop Kukah stated: “These are times of sobriety. We cannot pursue these agents of darkness on their own turf.” He however urged the faithful to remain resolute, strengthened by their faith.

Bishop Kukah who described the priesthood as the greatest gift from God to the Church outlined the duties expected of the priest. He said: “From the day of ordination, every priest must ceaselessly contemplate his life and his future. A priest must remain prayerfully calm and focused on his mission as a priest by constantly trying to answer the question, why me?”

Noting that after ordination, the focus of the priest should not be on the change of status

or the where the next assignment might be Bishop Kukah declared: “Our attention should be focused on the solemnity of the celebration not the externalities and the temptation by our sons and their families to wallow in a sense of triumphalism”

While outlining the challenges faced by the priest with particular reference to life of spirituality, the homilist warned in the words of Pope Gregory the Great: “ ... We are wrapped in the cares of the world, and the more we seem to busy ourselves in the cares of external affairs, the more spiritually insensitive we become”.

Noting that priest are bearers of the light of Christ, Bishop Kukah concluded that: “In moments of crisis, the priests are sources of consolation and encouragement. In an environment of hunger for justice, the priests strengthen their people. For the journey to eternity, the priests are constantly at the altar bringing God down from heaven to feed His people with His Body. This is God’s greatest gift to us. Without the priesthood, our story of salvation will be different.”