



## **LET US COLLABORATE TO LIBERATE NIGERIA - Cardinal Onaiyekan**

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### **OTUKPO, NIGERIA -**

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, John Cardinal Onaiyekan has called on all Nigerians to join hands in liberating the nation from its present socio-economic predicament and injustice caused by incessant killing of innocent people, kidnapping, armed robbery and other social vices being perpetrated by agents of darkness.

According to the Cardinal; “we should all put our hands together, our prayers together, our heads together and liberate our nation from this mess because it is the only way forward”. He emphasized that it is much easier that we put our hands together to build a united nation than tearing each other apart.

Cardinal Onaiyekan made this call in his homily at the Thanksgiving Mass to mark the blessing and dedication of the new Church building of St Augustine’s Catholic Church, Otukpo, built and donated to the Catholic Diocese of Otukpo by Senator David Mark, the immediate past President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

While commending Senator David Mark for the exceptional gesture of building a Church for the Lord, Cardinal Onaiyekan reminded the congregation that the people as a family are the real temple of worship for the Lord. He noted that the Church is a physical symbol and place of worship which provides opportunity for gathering and praying together as a people. It is a place of equality before God, where everybody feels at home, he added.

He however reminded the people: "... we don't worship God in the temple, we worship God by gathering in covenant and obeying His laws. The important thing is that the people of God are gathered together in faith and relate to one and other in love." He added that this is how it has been since the time of old.

The Archbishop also used the occasion to call on other privileged Nigerians blessed like David Mark to use their wealth to appreciate God by imitating him and helping the poor, the needy and marginalized in the society with utmost sincerity for the common good of humanity. Cardinal Onaiyekan also took a swipe at people "who through laziness don't go to church", pointing out that it's good to go to the Church to worship God adding that there is great joy and blessing in group worship. "There is power in the prayer we pray in the church of God," he said.

Using the readings of the day and other instances to assert that the heart and the people as the family of God are the real church and not the building Cardinal Onaiyekan stated: "All these show us that while it is good to build a house for God, it also means that if we live in union with God and no matter what happens, we are okay.

Stressing that the house of God made of human stone is the most important thing, Cardinal Onaiyekan declared: "When you have this spiritual house of God, to have a physical house comes as a matter of course. He added: "A house built with human stone, is a family of God that is brought together in faith and love, a family of God that is on mission."

The ceremony was attended by some Bishops of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), dignitaries from all walks of life, politicians, captains of industries and Catholic faithful from all parts of the country.