



NEW CBCN PRESIDENT EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

The success and strength of the Catholic Church in Nigeria, depends largely on the collective responsibility and one voice decision on crucial matters that affect the life of the Church. This declaration was made by the Catholic Bishop of Benin City Archdiocese, Most Rev. Augustine Obiora Akubeze, in his acceptance speech, following his election as the new President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), for the next four years.

Other executive officers of the Conference elected at the recently concluded first Plenary Meeting of the Conference held at the premises of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CSN), Durumi, Abuja, are: Bishop Lucius Ugorji of Umuahia, Vice President, Bishop, Camillus Umoh of Ikot-Ekpene, Secretary and Bishop Charles Hammawa of Jalingo, Assistant Secretary. New Episcopal Chairmen were also elected for most of the department and agencies of the Conference.

His words: "On behalf of my brother bishops who with me constitute the new CBCN executive, we want to thank God for giving us, unworthy as we are, the opportunity and the rare privilege to serve you and by extension the Church in Nigeria. As your servants, we will be very open to diverse opinions and we will seek to build consensus on matters that requires collective decisions. We appeal to all of you to ensure that we speak with one voice on crucial matters that affect the life of the Church.

Archbishop Akubeze assured his brother Bishops and the entire faithful of the Church in the country of a service oriented leadership from the newly elected executive officers. Using biblical references to buttress his point, the new CBCN President declared: “ ... Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many; we want to strive to make this command of Jesus our guide in our provision of leadership as we serve your excellences during our tenure for the next four years”.

The new CBCN President thanked his predecessor, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos for giving the Conference a wonderful leadership, in spite of various challenges and for leaving CBCN stronger than he met it. His words: Your courage to make tough decisions, your willingness to forgive, your openness to diverse opinions, your fidelity to the teachings of the Church and the love with which you enforce the laws of the Church has been amazing. Your struggle for justice and peace in our land is highly commendable.”

Archbishop Akubeze also expressed his gratitude to the Metropolitan of Abuja Provinces, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, his Auxiliary, Most Rev, Anselm Umoren and the entire faithful of Abuja province for “always creating an enabling environment for the first Plenary Meeting of the Conference in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja.